

# Question:

- Why would America be scared of Communists?

# A New Red Scare

- Began in Sept 1945
- Igor Gouzenko had documents that revealed a massive effort by the Soviet Union to infiltrate organizations and government agencies in Canada and the U.S.
- Americans were afraid of Communist Subversion
  - ***Subversion: Effort to weaken a society secretly and overthrow its government***



# The Loyalty Review Program

- Established by Truman
- Designed to screen all federal employees of being loyal to America (making sure they weren't communist)
- Truman put this in place to calm America, but it seemed to confirm fears that communists had infiltrated the government which help increase the fear of communism sweeping the nation

- Between 1947-1951, more than 6 million federal employees were screened for their loyalty
- A person could become suspect for reading certain books, belonging to various groups, traveling overseas, or even seeing certain foreign films
- 2,000 employees quit their jobs during the check, many under pressure
- Another 212 were fired for “questionable loyalty”

# House Un-American Activities Committee

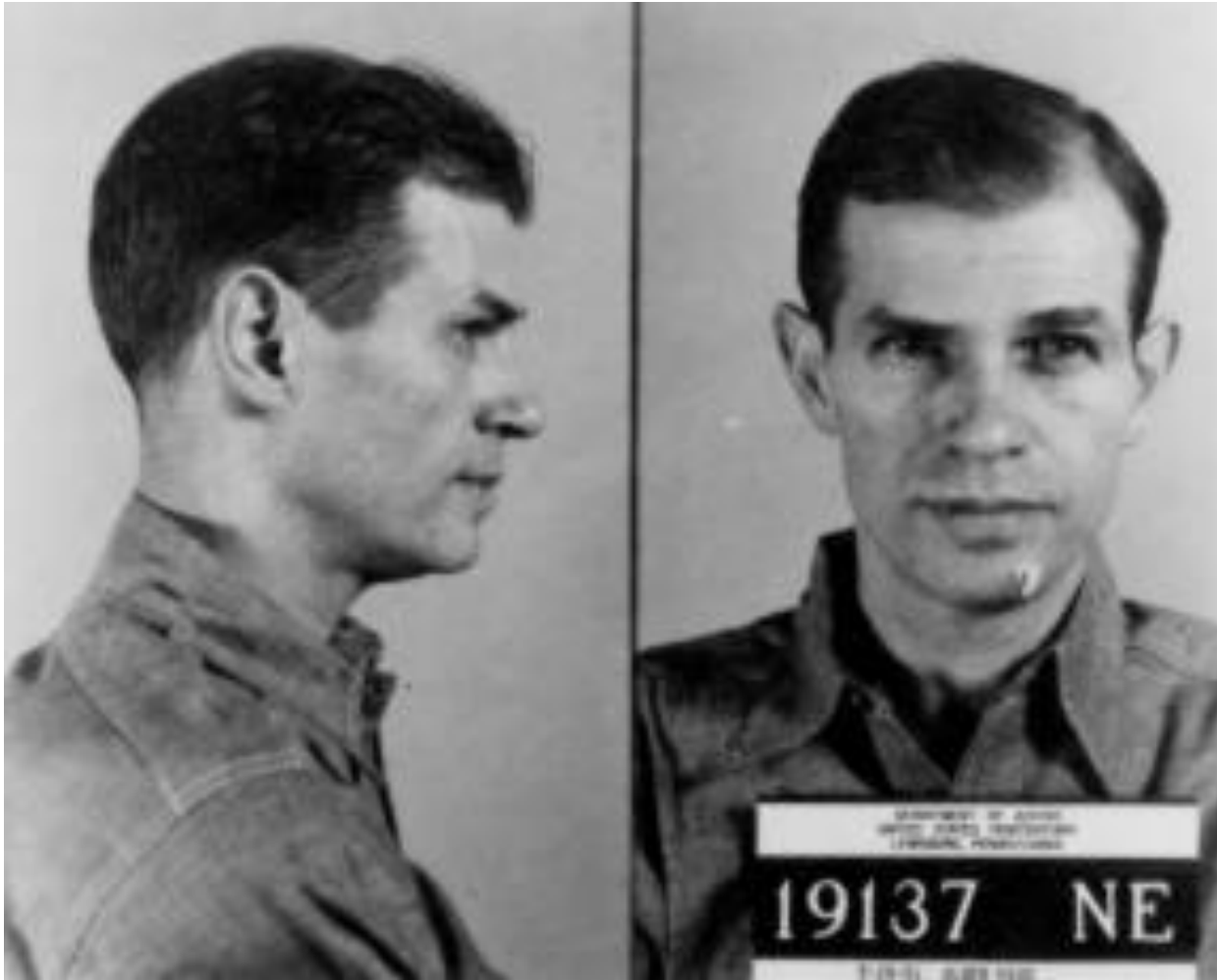
- HUAC for short
- Formed in 1938 to investigate both communist and fascist activities in the U.S.
- Only a minor congressional committee until FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover urged HUAC to hold public hearings on Communist subversion
- Hoover's aim was to expose not just Communists, but also "Communist sympathizers" and "fellow travelers."

# Hollywood on Trial

- Believed the film industry was a powerful cultural force that Comm might manipulate to spread their ideas and influence
- Ronald Regan testified that there were Communists in Hollywood
- Hollywood Ten: Ten screenwriters that used their 5<sup>th</sup> amend rights to protect themselves from self-incrimination and refused to testify.
- They were “blacklisted” and not hired for work

# Alger Hiss

- Open your books to page 775. Read Hiss v Chambers, 1948 (Primary Source)
- A diplomat who had served in Roosevelt's administration



## Communists at the State Department:

- State Department official Alger Hiss was imprisoned for perjury in 1950.

- Hiss had lied under oath, denying that he was a part of a Soviet spy ring that sent U.S. government secrets to the Soviet Union.



# The Rosenbergs

- Read primary source page 775
- New York couple who were members of the Communist Party
- Government charged them with heading a Soviet Spy Ring



## Example of American fears of Communism:

- Americans, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, were accused of stealing nuclear secrets for the Soviets.



- Denied the charges, but the Rosenbergs were executed for their crimes in 1953.

# The Red Scare Spreads

- Following the Federal Government's example, many state and local governments, universities, businesses, unions, churches, and private organizations began their own efforts to find Communists.
- Examples:
  - University of California
  - Catholics
  - Unions

# Senator Joe McCarthy

- Republican Senator for Wisconsin
- Won the Senate seat in 1946 by accusing his opponent, Robert M. La Follette, Jr. of being “communistically inclined”, without providing evidence of this.



## **McCarthy's reckless claims:**

- In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy announced that he had a list of 205 State Department employees that were members of the Communist party.

# McCarthyism

- Senator McCarthy's tactic of damaging reputations with vague and unfounded charges
- Became known as Communist "Witch-Hunts"
- Why?

# The McCarran Act

- Internal Security Act
- Senator Pat McCarran
- Made it illegal to “combine, conspire, or agree with any other person to perform any act which would substantially contribute to . . . the establishment of a totalitarian government.”

# Restrictions on Communists because of the McCarran Act

- Required to:
  1. Publish their records and register with the United States Attorney General
- Could not:
  2. Have passports to travel abroad
- And:
  3. In cases of a national emergency would be arrested and detained



# McCarran Act Continued

- Not wanting to punish people for their opinions, Truman vetoed the bill
- Congress easily overrode his veto in 1950
- Later Supreme Court cases limited the scope of the McCarran Act

# McCarthy's Tactics

- Searched for disloyalty based on flimsy evidence and irrational fears
- When he questioned witnesses, he would badger them and then refuse to accept their answers.
- His tactics left a cloud of suspicion that McCarthy and others interpreted as guilt.
- People were afraid to challenge him for fear of being accused.

# McCarthy's Downfall

- Began to look for Soviets in the United States Army, made him unpopular
- Edward Murrow, CBS Journalist aired a special about Senator McCarthy that exposed the falsehood of his accusations
- After his popularity continued to decline, the Senate passed a vote of censure.
- *Censure: formal disapproval, one of the most serious criticisms it can level against a member*