

Examine the effects of McCarthyism on society and culture in the United States from the late 1940s to the late 1950s.

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The beginning of the Cold War made the threat of Communism ~~is~~ a reality. Not only was the US foreign policy greatly effected in the '40's and '50's, but as was the domestic lives of American society. Senator Joseph McCarthy played a large role in the 'Red Scare', ~~evoking~~ ^{evoking} a hysterical fear of Communism amongst American citizens, & something that historians now look back on as "McCarthyism". McCarthy's extreme accusations and the witch hunt he ~~is~~ initiated played a ~~ra~~ great part in effecting society and culture in the USA from the late 1940s to late 1950s.

Neither Truman nor Eisenhower approved of McCarthy. While Truman was more public about his dislike for the man, Eisenhower worked behind the scenes in order to curb his power, claiming, "I will not get into a pissing contest with that skunk!" Although McCarthy's power climaxed in 1950, and was already ~~was~~ curbed by 1954, the damage was already done. McCarthyism effected every aspect of daily life, particularly entertainment. Filmmakers, actors, actresses and numerous roles in the film industry were targetted. Movies were accused of implementing subconscious Communist soviet propoganda. Every person who had worked on the accused films was in



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danger of facing trial and possibly even imprisonment. Thousands of trials commenced during this time. The film industry began churning out various anti-communist, pro-capitalism/pro-democracy films. The mass hysteria resulted in lack of security for many US citizens, as any body could be accused.

Not only were the accusations about propaganda, but many citizens were also accused of espionage for Moscow. Though almost all denied these charges, it did not always prevent them from imprisonment. ~~For example,~~ Most well known for this sort of treatment during the Red Scare were the Rosenbergs. Accused of espionage for Moscow, the pair denied all charges, and little proof was actually found. Due to the extreme hysterical reactions of society, ~~the court~~ highly under the influence of McCarthy, the court deemed them guilty, and the Rosenbergs became the only people to have faced execution due to one of McCarthy's accusations.

The film industry and average citizens lived in constant fear of both communism, and being accused of having communist tendencies or beliefs. However, McCarthy did not stop there. In 1950, Joseph McCarthy announced that he had, in his ~~possession~~ possession, a list of 100 names, of persons in federal employment, who he could prove had direct ties to Moscow and Communism. When asked to produce this list, however, McCarthy refused. Though his accusations were often too extreme, verging on ridiculous, and rarely added up, ~~or~~ corresponded, or remained consistent



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with one another, this did not alter the effect that ~~they~~ claims had on society. Though McCarthy was gradually destroying his credibility with his inconsistency, the Red Scare and McCarthyism remained in-tact throughout the '50s. In 1954, McCarthy was charged, by the Supreme Court, for abuse of power. However, the damage was already done. He had impacted Truman's domestic and foreign policy through HUAC, the House Committee of Un-American Activities, and by ~~through~~ accusing Truman of being "soft" on Communism. Although historians believe that Eisenhower's New Look foreign policy was more a result of his ~~aggressive~~ ^{hawk-like} military career, it is debatable as to whether McCarthyism could have impacted that as well. McCarthyism greatly effected the movie and entertainment industry, and for a while in the 1950's, it also resulted in an increased ~~back a~~ ~~emitted~~ degree of suspicion among Americans. Although the House Committee of Un-American Activities remained ~~in~~ intact ~~with~~ following McCarthy's fall from power, McCarthyism and the Red Scare gradually began to fade out by the late 1950s.

Overall, McCarthyism impacted almost every aspect of American life during the height of his power. Despite Presidential attempts to curb his power and reduce the effects of McCarthyism earlier, by the time these efforts finally succeeded, the worst was already over and the damage had already been done.



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