

## *Terminale OIB History*

### **Cold War 'Red Scare' – anti-communist hysteria (1947 –mid 1950's)**

Reaction to perceived threat of the Soviet Union and its expansionist tendencies in Eastern Europe, possibly Western Europe, and later in Asia (China, Korea, Indochina), the Middle East and its development of the atomic bomb in 1949; a fear verging on paranoia about communist infiltration of the US gov't and society. Republicans exploit fear in order to attack the Democrats for being 'soft on communism.'

1) 1947 **HUAC = House Un-American Activities Committee**: Congressional investigation of Hollywood (accusation that movies were subversive, filled with communist propaganda). Some actors and writers who refused to answer questions about their political beliefs (**Hollywood Ten**) were jailed for contempt. *"Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?"* Others were **blacklisted**.

2) 1948 **Alger Hiss case**: State Dept employee accused of being a Soviet spy and traitor in the 1930's by a former Soviet agent, Whittaker Chambers. California Congressman Richard Nixon relentlessly pursues Hiss who is convicted of perjury (lying under oath) and sentenced to five years in prison. Hiss case casts suspicion on Democrats and Truman.

3) 1947 **Loyalty Oaths**: required of all gov't employees and later of university professors and even high school teachers! Intimidation and harassment of alleged radicals and communists continues through 1950s by the F.B.I. under J. Edgar Hoover.

4) 1950 **McCarran Internal Security Act** passed by Republican controlled Congress. Restrictions placed on political groups and individuals considered to be subversive.

5) 1950 **Rosenberg spy case**: Ethel and Julius Rosenberg accused of giving secrets to the Soviets about the atom bomb; convicted and executed for treason in 1953 despite weak evidence (especially regarding Ethel's guilt).

6) **McCarthyism**: Wisconsin Senator (Republican) Joseph McCarthy exploits anti-communist fears, claiming there is a communist conspiracy inside the federal gov't.

In a speech at Wheeling, W. Virginia, Feb. 9, 1950, McCarthy states:

*"I have in my hand a list of 205 – a list of names which were made known to the Secretary of State [Dean Acheson] – of individuals who appear to be either card-carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy. One thing to remember in discussing the Communists in our government is that we are not dealing with spies who get thirty pieces of silver to steal the blueprints of a new weapon, but with a far more sinister type of activity because it permits the enemy to guide and shape our policy. . . ."*

R. Oppenheimer accused of being disloyal because he opposed the H bomb project.

McCarthy's attack against the loyalty of top Army generals (including George Marshall)

Is his undoing and he is censured (officially silenced) by the Senate.

7) 1952 Presidential campaign: Republican candidate General Dwight Eisenhower's slogan- **K1, C2 = Korea, communism and corruption**; chooses Nixon as vice-president to capture anti-communist support.