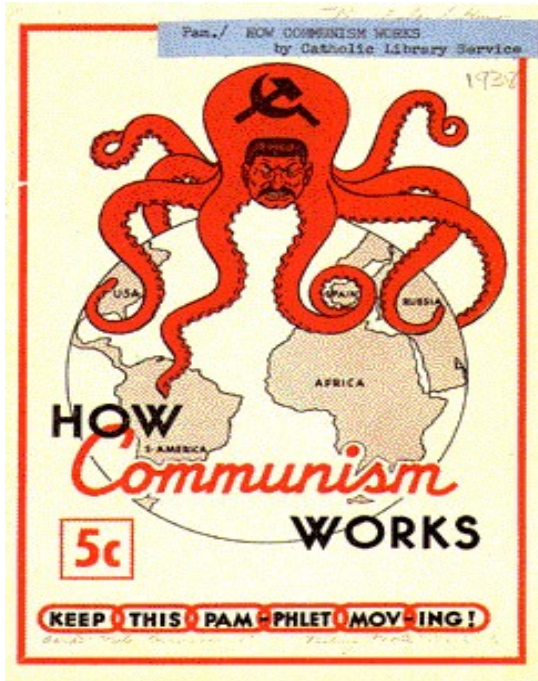


McCarthyism and the "Great Fear": DBQ Exercise

Document 1

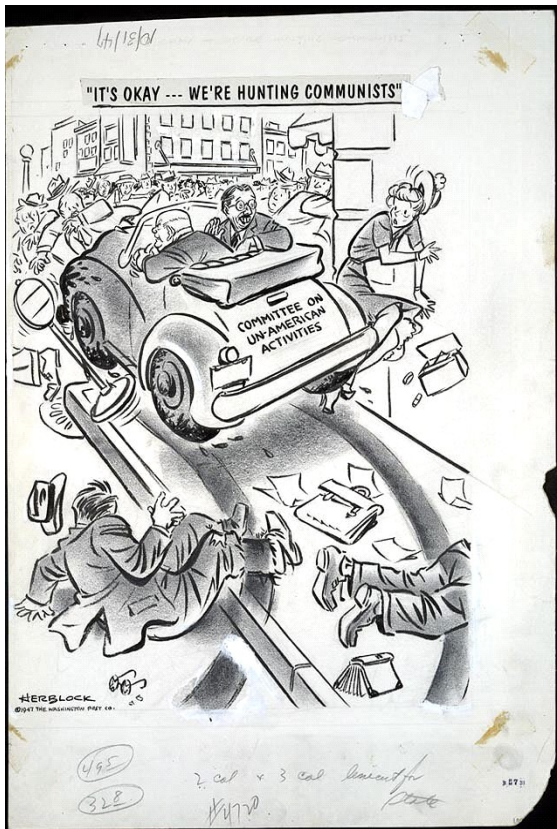


"How Communism Works"

1. Who might the Octopus represent?
2. Why did the author choose an octopus as the symbol for communism in this poster?
3. What is the message of this poster?
4. Who paid for the production of this poster and why is that important?

Source: Catholic Library Services, 1938

Document 2



"It's Okay, We're Hunting Communists"

By Herbert Block, Oct 31, 1947
Washington Post

1. What is happening in the cartoon?
2. How does the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) car parallel HUAC activities of the time?
3. How are people affected by the HUAC car in the cartoon?
4. What do you think is the author's attitude toward HUAC?

Document 3



“You Read Books, Eh?”

By Herbert Block, April 24, 1949
Washington Post

1. What are the men in the cartoon doing (collectively)?
2. What animal do many of the men look like? Is there any significance to this?
3. What evidence are the men finding that they might use against the teacher?
4. What is being ridiculed in this cartoon?

Document 4

Seattle Post-Intelligencer Are They Ashamed?

July 28, 1948

The professors at the University of Washington who refused to answer pertinent questions are indeed dumb if they think the public is not entitled to have the information requested by the investigators. Those teachers are working for the people of the State of Washington. The taxpayers, who are paying their salaries, have every right to know whether or not the professors are, or ever have been, members of the Communist Party.

Are They Ashamed?

Seattle Post Intelligencer, July 28 1948

Author Unknown

1. Is this editorial supportive of or oppositional against Communism?
2. What assumption is the author of this editorial making regarding the professors?
3. What type of a news story is the author of this editorial likely responding to?
4. What result is the author hoping to achieve?

Document 5

“One communist, one communist in the faculty of one university is one communist too many. One communist among the American advisors at Yalta was one communist too many. And even...even if there were only one communist in the State Department, even if there were only one communist in the State Department that would still be one communist too many.”

"One Communist"

By Senator Joseph McCarthy, July 7, 1952

1. What is the assumption regarding the result of having “one Communist” in any of the situations the author lists?
2. Who are the intended audiences for this speech (not necessarily who he is speaking to at the time of the speech, but who might he hope to get a response from)?
3. What type of response is McCarthy likely to get from this portion of his speech?

Document 6

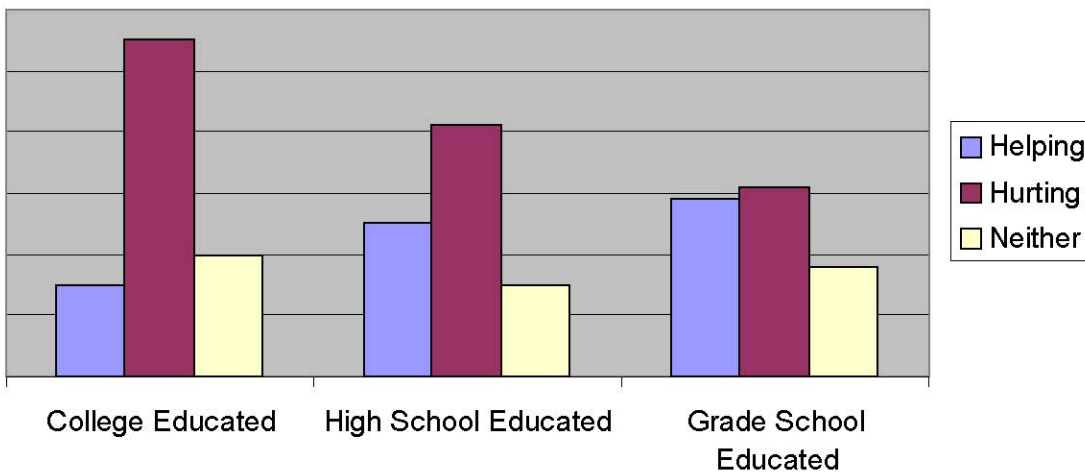
"THIS DEATH sentence is not surprising. It had to be. There had to be a Rosenberg case because there had to be an intensification of the hysteria in America to make the Korean War acceptable to the American people. There had to be hysteria and a fear sent through America in order to get increased war budgets. And there had to be a dagger thrust in the heart of the left to tell them that you are no longer gonna give five years for a Smith Act prosecution or one year for Contempt of Court, but we're gonna kill ya!"
--Julius Rosenberg in a letter to their lawyer Manny Bloch

Letter from Julius Rosenberg to Manny Bloch, 1953

1. Who is Julius Rosenberg and what is this letter a reaction to?
2. What does the quote reveal about Julius's feelings towards American policy during this time period?

Document 7

McCarthy's Impact on the United States 1954 Gallup Poll data



Response to the following question asked of those who heard about McCarthy's accusations: Some people say these charges are doing the country more harm than good. What do you think?

1. Does this poll suggest that people in the US are more likely support or oppose Senator McCarthy's actions?
2. What is the implication of education level on one's opinion of McCarthy's accusations?
3. What would you guess is the thinking behind people who answered "neither"?

Document 8

Judge Kaufman's Statement Upon Sentencing the Rosenbergs (April 1951)

Citizens of this country who betray their fellow-countrymen can be under none of the delusions about the benignity of Soviet power that they might have been prior to World War II. The nature of Russian terrorism is now self-evident. Idealism as a rationale dissolves . . .

I consider your crime worse than murder...In committing the act of murder, the criminal kills only his victim. The immediate family is brought to grief and when justice is meted out the chapter is closed. But in your case, I believe your conduct in putting into the hands of the Russians the A-bomb years before our best scientists predicted Russia would perfect the bomb has already caused, in my opinion, the Communist aggression in Korea, with the resultant casualties exceeding 50,000 and who knows but that millions more of innocent people may pay the price of your treason. Indeed, by your betrayal you undoubtedly have altered the course of history to the disadvantage of our country.

No one can say that we do not live in a constant state of tension. We have evidence of your treachery all around us every day--for the civilian defense activities throughout the nation are aimed at preparing us for an atom bomb attack. Nor can it be said in mitigation of the offense that the power which set the conspiracy in motion and profited from it was not openly hostile to the United States at the time of the conspiracy. If this was your excuse the error of your ways in setting yourselves above our properly constituted authorities and the decision of those authorities not to share the information with Russia must now be obvious . . .

In the light of this, I can only conclude that the defendants entered into this most serious conspiracy against their country with full realization of its implications . . .

The statute of which the defendants at the bar stand convicted is clear. I have previously stated my view that the verdict of guilty was amply justified by the evidence. In the light of the circumstances, I feel that I must pass such sentence upon the principals in this diabolical conspiracy to destroy a God-fearing nation, which will demonstrate with finality that this nation's security must remain inviolate; that traffic in military secrets, whether promoted by slavish devotion to a foreign ideology or by a desire for monetary gains must cease.

The evidence indicated quite clearly that Julius Rosenberg was the prime mover in this conspiracy. However, let no mistake be made about the role which his wife, Ethel Rosenberg, played in this conspiracy. Instead of deterring him from pursuing his ignoble cause, she encouraged and assisted the cause. She was a mature woman--almost three years older than her husband and almost seven years older than her younger brother. She was a full-fledged partner in this crime.

Indeed the defendants Julius and Ethel Rosenberg placed their devotion to their cause above their own personal safety and were conscious that they were sacrificing their own children, should their misdeeds be detected--all of which did not deter them from pursuing their course. Love for their cause dominated their lives--it was even greater than their love for their children."

1. What are the Rosenbergs found guilty of? Did the Judge believe that both Julius and Ethel were equally guilty?
2. What are some of the reasons the judge gave to support his decision to sentence the Rosenbergs to execution?
3. Who is the “enemy” in this statement?

Document 9

Walt Disney’s Testimony to HUAC,

In his testimony to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), Disney discusses the effect that he believes communists have had on his employees, who had recently unionized and gone on strike.

SMITH: Do you have any people in your studio at the present time that you believe are communist or fascist, employed there?

DISNEY: No; at the present time I feel that everybody in my studio is 100 percent American.

SMITH: Have you had at any time, in your opinion, in the past, have you at any time in the past had any communists employed at your studio?

DISNEY: Yes; in the past I had some people that I definitely feel were communists.

SMITH: As a matter of fact, Mr. Disney, you experienced a strike at your studio, did you not?

DISNEY: Yes.

SMITH: And is it your opinion that that strike was instituted by members of the Communist Party to serve their purposes?

DISNEY: Well, it proved itself so with time, and I definitely feel it was a communist group trying to take over my artists and they did take them over.

CHAIRMAN: Do you say they did take them over?

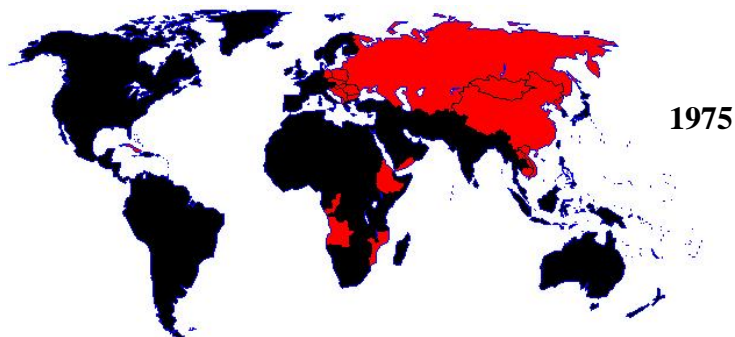
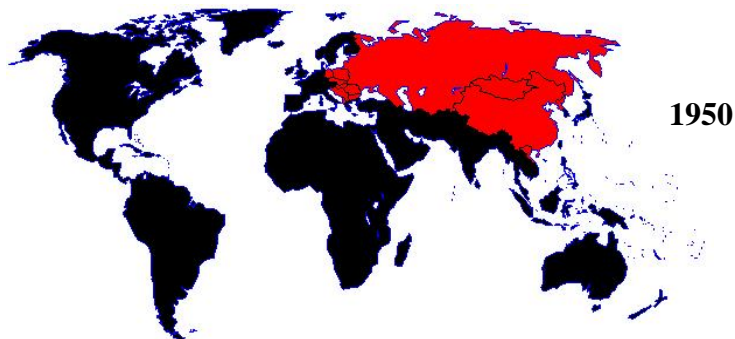
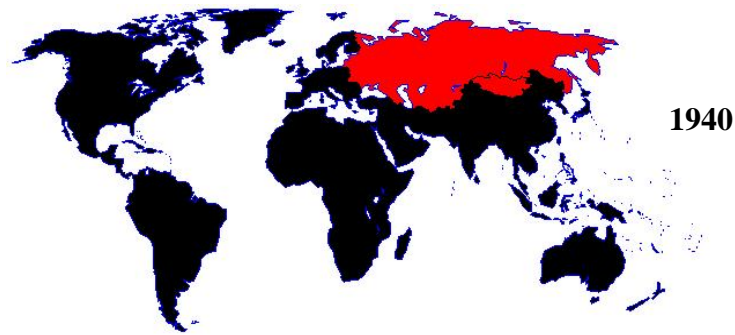
DISNEY: They did take them over.

1. According to the testimony above, how had communists affected Walt Disney’s studios?
2. Was any evidence presented to support the accusations in this statement?

Document 10

Spread of Communism Maps

Communism on the World Stage (www.rationalrevolution.net)



1. From looking at these maps, does it appear that communism is spreading over time?
2. If you looked at the first three maps (1920, 1940 and 1950), what assumptions can you make about the spread of communism?
3. What can't you tell about communism from these maps?
4. Are all communist countries the same?

Document 11

Rosenberg Trial Spectators

Unknown photograph image from Spartan Spectator

1. Describe the feelings and attitudes in the U.S. at this time in history that accounts for the signs in this photograph.
2. What could be a potential use of this picture in 1954?
3. Why did the photographer take this picture?



Document 12

Transcript of Senate Resolution 301: Censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy (1954)

Sec 2. The Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. McCarthy, ... in stating to the press on November 4, 1954, that the special Senate session ... was a "lynch-party"; in repeatedly describing this special Senate session as a "lynch bee" ... in characterizing the [Select Committee] as the "unwitting handmaiden," "involuntary agent" and "attorneys-in-fact" of the Communist Party ... [McCarthy] acted contrary to senatorial ethics and tended to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute, to obstruct the constitutional processes of the Senate, and to impair its dignity; and such conduct is hereby condemned.

1. According to the document, how did Senator McCarthy characterize the activities of the Select Committee?
2. Why did the Senate decide to censure McCarthy?