Vietnam. Many people thought that with the end of communism and the Cold War in 1991 American politics and elections would focus entirely on domestic matters. That expectation has proven to be naïve. America's emergence as the world's only superpower and its assumption of increased responsibilities in dealing with conflicts throughout the world have continued to affect American society and culture.

James C. Mott

See also **Bush, George H. W.; Bush, George W.; Civil Rights Movement; Clinton, William Jefferson; Communism and Anticommunism; Eisenhower, Dwight D.; Goldwater, Barry; Jackson, Jesse Louis; Johnson, Lyndon Baines; Kennedy, John Fitzgerald; Korea, Impact of; McCarthyism; Nixon, Richard M.; Reagan, Ronald; Truman, Harry S.**

POPULAR CULTURE AND COLD WAR

In the years following the Second World War, American popular culture mirrored the anxieties that developed between the United States and the USSR. Although allies in the war against fascism, the two nations became increasingly agitated by mutual suspicion. This state of continuous tension, known as the Cold War (1946–1991), became a subject and theme in films, fiction, television, and other genres. In many cases, popular culture served to subvert Cold War anxieties by questioning the reigning assumptions of both the government and the public.

THE PARANOID STYLE

The 1950s were a period of prosperity for American society. Many nations around the world felt the influence of American ways of life and the expressions of its culture. Yet despite American affluence, the spread of communism and the threat of global atomic war plagued Americans with a sense of constant threat both from within and without. Fiction, films, and other products of the culture reflected this fear of a possible communist invasion and atomic holocaust. The "paranoid style," which the scholar Richard Hofstadter defined as a recurrent feature of American politics culminating during the Cold War, also affected the cultural production of the era. With the end of the USSR, this paranoid style shifted its focus to the rise of international terrorism and, in the words of President George W. Bush, "the axis of evil"—a term that recalls President Reagan's branding of the Soviet Union and its satellites as "the empire of evil."

The repression of political dissent in the early 1950s, known as McCarthyism, affected popular culture. Many artists, such as the Hollywood Ten, playwright Clifford Odets, and director Jules Dassin, were suspected of being political subversives. Actor Zero Mostel and screenwriter Walter Bernstein captured their experience of the Hollywood blacklist in the film *The Front* (1976), directed by Martin Ritt, himself blacklisted during the 1950s. In *On the Waterfront* (1954), the director Elia Kazan dramatized the struggle of a dock worker trying to stand up to his corrupt union bosses. Many interpreted the film as a metaphor for the perils of "naming names," as some in the Hollywood community, like Kazan, chose to do against suspected Communists. Other anti-Communist films of the era (though none with the stature of Kazan's film) included *I Married a Communist* (1950), *I Was a Communist for the FBI* (1951), *My Son John* (1952), *Big Jim McLain* (1952), and *Invasion U.S.A.* (1952). Hollywood anti-Soviet sentiment was not limited to the 1950s, but extended well into the 1980s with films such as *Red Dawn* (1984), *Rocky IV* (1985), *Rambo: First Blood, Part II* (1985), and *Rambo III* (1988), as well as the "missing in action" series starring Chuck Norris.

THE MEDIA

Many scholars have argued that the flood of images through which the media presented the Cold War world to American audiences created an inaccurate and misleading picture. In his famous study *The Image* (1961), Daniel Boorstin claimed that, rather than enhancing the knowledge of the surrounding world, images conveyed through television, newspapers, periodicals, and advertisements rendered people passive spectators of contrived events. According to this interpretation, Cold War society became a series of "pseudo-events," where methods of presentation became more important than the actual topics and unreality trumped reality.

The federal government itself produced a series of supposedly objective "documentaries" that exposed the dangers of a communist society: *Communist Blueprint for Conquest* (1955), *Red Nightmare* (1955), *The Communist Weapon of Allure* (1956), and *Communist Target: Youth* (1962), featuring the then-attorney general Robert Kennedy. The government gave equal attention to the nuclear threat with a series of pamphlets, documentaries, and films on how to survive the bomb. Later, this type of propaganda was the subject of the 1982 documentary *The Atomic Café* directed by Jayne Loader and Kevin Rafferty, and it was satirized in a 1997 episode of the cartoon series *South Park*.

As Thomas Doherty suggests in his book *Cold War, Cool Medium* (2003), the media during the Cold War operated under "an elastic arrangement, sometimes constricting but ultimately expanding the boundaries of free expression and relaxing the credentials for inclusion." As Doherty described it, American television began to pre-

sent such "unruly talents" as comedian Lucille Ball, who starred in the smash hit series *I Love Lucy*, the first television show that "was brazenly multicultural, emphatically female-driven, and loopily anarchic." When Ball was summoned by the House Committee on Un-American Activities about her possible communist links, CBS, which broadcast the show, stood by her, thanks to her fans' pressure. Though the networks, fearing a backlash from advertisers, often denied support to entertainers suspected of communism, political talk shows such as *Meet the Press*, *Face the Nation*, *At Issue*, and *The Big Issue* helped create forums for discussion. In 1954 journalist Edward R. Murrow devoted two episodes of his program, *See It Now*, to the tactics of Senator Joseph McCarthy, contributing to the senator's downfall and exposing the corruption of his witch hunt.

HORROR AND SCIENCE FICTION

The vast body of literary and cinematic horror and science fiction works produced during the 1950s echoed the concerns of Cold War American society. Alien invasion is the subject of such films as *The Thing from Another World* (1951), *The War of the Worlds* (1953), and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), to name only a few. These invasion narratives were typically described as products of Cold War ideology in which alien invasion stood for Soviet aggression. Their fictional world mirrored the world of stark divisions between good and evil in which they were produced, teaching audiences to unquestionably defer to the authority of the American government in its war against communism. In the 1951 film *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, viewers received the message from an alien visitor that people of the world must learn to live together in peace or face annihilation.

SPY STORIES

The many spy scandals that erupted during the Cold War were incorporated into the popular culture. Richard Condon's novel *The Manchurian Candidate* (1958), and John Frankenheimer's 1962 film based on it, blended elements of the invasion narratives with espionage. The story, a classic example of the paranoid style, concerned U.S. soldiers who had been captured during the Korean War and reprogrammed by the Chinese to aid them in a future invasion of America.

Many other American authors used Cold War locales and concerns for their tales of suspense and adventure, often developing a character through a series of novels. Matt Helm, a U.S. government assassin, is the central character of Donald Hamilton's novels *The Ambushers* (1963) and *The Menacers* (1968). David Atlee Phillips, a former CIA agent, wrote several novels such as *The Green Wound Contract* (1963) and *The Trembling Earth Contract* (1969), featuring Secret Agent Joe Gall. Mickey Spillane, the author of hard-boiled detective fiction, introduced Secret Agent Tiger Mann in the spy novel *Day of the Guns* (1964). The most successful contemporary author working in this genre is Tom Clancy, whose fictional world is starkly divided into two groups: the good guys (America and its very few allies), and the bad guys (a large group comprising all the others, whether they have a Russian, Arab, or even Japanese accent).

A CONTRADICTORY LEGACY

Cold War America may have given birth to a culture of conformity. Nevertheless, concerns about the erosion of the traditional American values of individualism and democracy led to expressions of dissent and disavowal. In the wake of Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* (1954), in which the Salem witch trials represent the witch hunts of McCarthyism, popular culture started to reflect critically on what was seen as a period of repression, compromise, and intellectual withdrawal. Rejection of conformity and the Cold War mentality intensified in the 1960s and 1970s. The 1969 concert at Woodstock, the Vietnam War, the Stonewall gay riots in New York City, and the Civil Rights movement contributed to a vibrant counterculture. The fight against restrictive moral codes and hostile social institutions was captured by films such as Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), Mike Nichols's *The Graduate* (1967) and *Carnal Knowledge* (1971), and Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969). The prose and poetry of Ken Kesey, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Carlos Castaneda, Tom Robbins, Richard Brautigan, Kurt Vonnegut, and Robert Pirsig challenged conceptions of normalcy and questioned America's image as the land of freedom besieged by the empire of evil. Singer-songwriters such as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez dealt with racial injustice and the threat of nuclear war.

The Cold War's legacy for American popular culture is twofold. On the one hand, popular culture was based on a simple model of good versus evil that supported social consensus and conformity at the height of the Cold War. On the other hand, popular culture produced a reaction in the form of a counterculture that flaunted social conventions and conformity. That counterculture also ridiculed the mentality of "cold warriors," as in Stanley Kubrick's 1964 movie *Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. How popular culture will reflect and shape America's involvement in the War on Terror remains to be seen.

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Luca Prono

See also: **Al-Qaida and Taliban; Berlin as Symbol; Cold War Novels and Movies; Drugs and Vietnam; Fiction and Memoirs, Vietnam; Films, Vietnam; Music, Vietnam Era; Olympics and Cold War; Television, 1946–Present; Terrorism, Fears of; World War II, Images of.**

POW, MIA

Prisoners of war (POWs) have played a major role in the conduct and outcome of America's wars. As far back as the Civil War, even as captured servicemen were removed from the field of battle, their status and treatment continued to influence the course of the conflict and the terms of the peace settlement. In both Korea, and Vietnam especially, in an age of increased media publicity, tales of POW brutality and suffering, as well as heroic resistance, greatly affected attitudes and morale on the home front. The large numbers of U.S. missing-in-action (MIA) in Korea and Vietnam, many of them pilots lost during shootdown incidents who were thought possibly to have been captured but remained unaccounted for after the war, continue into the twenty-first century to arouse strong emotions.

KOREAN WAR

During the Korean War (1950–1953), approximately 7,100 U.S. servicemen were taken prisoner. Of that number, 2,700 died in captivity; the remainder who were known to still be incarcerated were released following the July 1953 armistice. Most of the American captives in Korea were young infantrymen lacking the survival training and discipline of the Vietnam era POWs, a majority of whom were officers and pilots and hence were generally older, more experienced, and more skilled. Those held in Korea were not only exposed to horrible physical conditions (frigid winters, severe malnutrition, primitive or nonexistent medical care, torture and other abuses, including long marches in knee-deep snow), but were subjected to intense psychological pressures and indoctrination to weaken their resistance and allegiance.

The so-called "brainwashing" of captured American soldiers in Korea would be much exaggerated after the war in sensational journalistic accounts and movies such as *The Manchurian Candidate*, which depicted returnees from the prison camps reduced to robots programmed to spout communist propaganda or react on cue to their former captors' instructions. In fact, although the enemy often achieved compliance through coercion, instances of outright collaboration were isolated and limited. Still, North Korean and Chinese Communist mistreatment of U.S. POWs in Korea flagrantly violated the protections guaranteed prisoners under the 1949 Geneva Convention on prisoners of war and contributed to a rising tide of anticommunist sentiment in the United States in the 1950s.

VIETNAM WAR

During the Vietnam War, American prisoners suffered under similar conditions and abuse, if less systematic indoctrination. Communist captors routinely applied torture to extract information and punish disobedience. Over the course of a decade, between 1961 and 1973, more than 700 U.S. servicemen, along with several dozen civilians, were seized by Communist forces in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and Laos. Over 100 of the group, many of them seriously injured upon capture, perished from mistreatment, neglect, or the harsh environment.

Prisoners of the Viet Cong guerrillas in South Vietnam slept in bamboo cages, were required to move long distances through jungles infested with leeches and snakes, and faced years of lonely confinement while ravaged by starvation, dysentery, and malaria. In North Vietnam, U.S. POWs lived in dungeon-like prisons; the most prominent was an old French fortress in downtown Hanoi that the American pilots dubbed the "Hanoi Hilton." At another compound the POWs named "Alcatraz," the North Vietnamese jailed the toughest U.S. officers and resistance leaders. In these crowded camps in the North, the prisoners developed elaborate systems of communication and organization that sustained them through hunger, disease, and a strict regimen that punished resistance with vicious reprisals.