Andrew Scheerenberger History 1700 SA Under god

"In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in peace and war.” This quote, is from President Eisenhower on June, 14, 1954, as he authorized adding the words “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance (Sterner). Eisenhower is claiming that the biggest strength of America in the past and in the future is religion, the reason being communists do not have religion.

 From 1945-1950 the relationship between America and the Soviet Union went from that of allies to Cold War enemies. After WWII ended the USSR began to annex countries it had occupied during the war. Communism began to spread rapidly into Europe and Asia, with China, the world’s most populous nation, becoming communist in 1949. Tensions continued to rise in these years with the blockade of Berlin by the USSR in 1948, the first successfully tested atomic bomb by the Soviet Union in 1949, and the satellite state of North Korea invading South Korea in 1950 (neh.gov). These events, among others during this Cold War period, made Americans believe a new world war was on the horizon, which many feared America could lose.

America believed that the reason communism was spreading was because of Soviet spies and disloyal Americans in key places (neh.gov). This perception was amplified by events such as the Rosenberg trial, Senator McCarthy’s belief that the Department of State was full of communists and Elizabeth Bentley implicating 150 Soviet spies in America. A paranoia and anti-communist fear called “The Red Scare” began to grip the nation. During this period a person did not have to be actively working against the U.S. to be considered disloyal. Simply being part of the Communist party, being perceived as un-American in any way or being sympathetic to communism was considered disloyalty (neh.gov).

The Cold War was an ideological conflict between the core beliefs and values of the west and communism (Orwell). This meant that Americans had to separate themselves from communists in every way. The ideal American at the time was flush with patriotism and was a good God fearing person who would die for the American way of life. Communist were portrayed as heartless atheists who wanted nothing more than to spread communism and destroy the west. The words “under God” were added to the Pledge of Allegiance to further separate Americans from communists and to affirm ones loyalty to American values and to God.