McCarthy Humanities Link Assignment for Social Studies

To help understand the dynamics of *The Crucible* and of the McCarthy era, Social Studies and English will each be presenting an assignment which is part of the Humanities Link at ASP

**Background:** Arthur Miller published his play *The Crucible* in 1953. He had been severely disappointed in his friend Elia Kazan who testified in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Kazan gave the names of several playwrights, such as Clifford Odetts and Lillian Hellman, who had communist affiliations, to the Committee. Given the phenomenon that we now call McCarthyism was in full swing, Miller decided to write a play about this situation: "What I sought was a metaphor, an image that would spring out of the heart, all-inclusive, full of light, a sonorous instrument whose reverberations would penetrate to the centre of this miasma." Miller himself was later blacklisted for refusing to give names when he was called in front of HUAC.

Miller read the actual transcripts of the Salem witchcraft trials: Here’s what Miller says: "At first I rejected the idea of a play on the subject.... But gradually, over weeks, a living connection between myself and Salem, and between Salem and Washington, was made in my mind - for whatever else they might be, I saw that the hearings in Washington were profoundly and even avowedly ritualistic. After all, in almost every case the Committee knew in advance what they wanted the witness to give them: the names of his comrades in the Party. The FBI had long since infiltrated the Party, and informers had long ago identified the participants in various meetings. The main point of the hearings, precisely as in seventeenth-century Salem, was that the accused make public confession, damn his confederates as well as his Devil master, and guarantee his sterling new allegiance by breaking disgusting old vows - whereupon he was let loose to rejoin the society of extremely decent people."

**Social Studies Assignment:**

Choose a real person from the Red Scare era. Making yourself that person, you will be expressing that person’s feelings and point of view in the medium of your choosing.

You need to reference specific historical events, people, quotes and policies to show your opinion as if you were the real person involved in them. (For example: what would a Muslim student write today about Trump’s policies? What specific Trump quotes would she use, specific actions or events, what laws would she mention?)

You will need at least 4 citations from your sources.

**You can write or make one of the following in the voice of the person you choose:**
- Diary
- Letter to the Editor
- Editorial
- Video Newscast
- Video Interview
- Monologue in the style of E.R. Murrow

For written material, think about two-three pages; for video equivalent length in oral form.

Remember: all media require four citations and a Works Cited page typed up and handed in.