

The Atomic Cafe

The Atomic Cafe is a documentary that was made in 1982. The movie consists entirely of archival footage drawn from a variety of sources (newsreels, army training films, government civil defense films, popular programs, interviews and the like) from the 1940s -1960s. The goal of the video's producers was to highlight the absurdity, irony and horror of living in the early Cold War under the twin threats of nuclear annihilation and communism. While all of the footage from the film is from the period of the early Cold War, the film makers have edited and arranged it to meet the needs of the film. Be aware that material from several different sources is often sewn together to look as if it were one piece.

There is no narration to this movie. All of the voices and music you hear are from actual recordings made in the early Cold War period.

As you watch the video, complete the notes chart on the back. Then, write a 100-150 word paragraph with the topic sentence: "Living under the threat of nuclear weapons shaped how Americans lived, thought and behaved". Your paragraph can be written below.

Answer the following questions below:

- 1) How does this movie demonstrate the Cold War Mindset?
- 2) What do you think the filmmakers were trying to achieve by making this film? Keep in mind that the video was made in the 1980s when together, the US and USSR possessed over 70,000 nuclear weapons.
- 3) Were American actions during the Cold War consistent with the American ideals (beliefs we hold)? Explain your answer.

Evidence that the <u>fear of communism</u> affected how people thought and behaved	Evidence that the <u>fear of nuclear weapons</u> affected the way people thought and behaved	Evidence that the <u>United States was willing to endanger people to achieve its goals in the Cold War</u>	Evidence that this period led the government and individuals to do and think things that were absurd (wildly illogical, unreasonable, foolish)