**Chapter 26, Section 3: The Cold War and American Society**

**I. A New Red Scare** *(pages 790–792)*

**A.** During the 1950s, rumors and accusations of Communists in the United States led to fears that Communists were attempting to take over the world. The Red Scare began in September 1945, and escalated into a general fear of Communist **subversion**—an effort to secretly weaken a society and overthrow its government.

**B.** In early 1947, Truman established the **loyalty review program** to screen all federal employees for their loyalty. The program’s aim was to calm Americans. Instead, it led to the fear that Communists were infiltrating the government.

**C.** FBI Director **J. Edgar Hoover** went to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) to urge them to hold public hearings on Communist subversion. Under Hoover’s leadership, the FBI sent agents to investigate suspected groups and to wiretap thousands of telephones.

**D.** In 1948 *Time* magazine editor **Whittaker Chambers** testified before HUAC that several government officials were also former Communists or spies. The most prominent among these was lawyer and diplomat **Alger Hiss.** Hiss had served in Roosevelt’s administration, attended the Yalta conference, and helped with the organization of the UN. Hiss denied the charges, but he was convicted of committing **perjury,** or lying under oath.

**E.** The search for spies intensified when the Soviet Union produced an atomic bomb. Klaus Fuchs, a British scientist, admitted giving information to the Soviet Union. This led to the arrest of **Julius and Ethel Rosenberg,** a New York couple who were members of the Communist Party and were charged with heading a Soviet spy ring. Although many believed the Rosenbergs were not guilty, the couple was executed in June 1953.

**F.** In 1946 American cryptographers cracked the Soviet spy code, allowing them to read messages between Moscow and the United States. This did not become public knowledge until 1995 when the government revealed **Project Venona’s** existence. It provided strong evidence against the Rosenbergs.

**G.** The federal government set the example for many state and local governments, universities, businesses, unions, and churches to start finding Communists.

**Discussion Question**

Why did the hunt for Communist spies increase with the Soviet Union’s production of the atomic bomb? *(Many believed that the Soviet Union could not have produced the atomic* *bomb without help. The belief was that American Communists must have sold secrets of the* *atomic bomb to the Soviets.)*

**II. “A Conspiracy So Immense”** *(pages 793–795)*

**A.** In 1949, with the Soviet Union testing an atomic bomb and China falling to communism, Americans felt they were losing the Cold War. Americans continued to believe that Communists were inside the government. Senator **Joseph R. McCarthy,** in a political speech, stated that he had a list of 205 Communists in the state department.

**B.** McCarthy won the Senate race after accusing his opponent of being a Communist. He accused Democratic Party leaders of corruption and of protecting Communists. Others made similar charges, causing Americans to begin to believe them.

**C.** Congress passed the Internal Security Act or **McCarran Act** in 1950. The act made it illegal to “combine, conspire, or agree with any other person to perform any act which would substantially contribute to . . . the establishment of a totalitarian government.”

**D.** Senator Joseph R. McCarthy became the chairman of the Senate subcommittee on investigations. His investigation turned into a witch hunt as he searched for disloyalty based on poor evidence and fear. He ruined reputations without proper evidence. This tactic became known as **McCarthyism.**

**E.** In 1954 Americans watched televised **Army-McCarthy hearings** and saw how McCarthy attacked witnesses, and his popularity faded. Finally, an army lawyer named Joseph Welch stood up to McCarthy. Later that year, the Senate passed a vote of **censure,** or formal disapproval, against McCarthy.

**Discussion Question**

Why were people afraid to challenge McCarthy and his McCarthyism? *(People were afraid to challenge McCarthy because they feared McCarthy would accuse them of being Communists.)*

**III. Life During the Early Cold War** *(pages 795–796)*

**A.** Communism and the threat of the atomic bomb dominated life for Americans and their leaders in the 1950s.

**B.** The threat of an atomic attack against the United States forced Americans to prepare for a surprise attack. Although Americans tried to protect themselves, experts realized that for every person killed instantly by a nuclear blast, four more would later die from **fallout,** the radiation left over after the blast. Some families built **fallout shelters** in their backyards and stocked them with canned food.

**C.** The 1950s was a time of great contrasts. Images of the Cold War appeared in films and popular fiction. Along with these fears of communism and spies, the country enjoyed postwar prosperity and optimism.

**Discussion Question**

How did Americans prepare for an atomic attack? *(American schools had bomb shelters and held bomb drills. Some families built fallout shelters in their backyards and filled them with canned food.)*