

# **The Cold War At Home**

## Life in America after World War II

- Some experts worried that the postwar drop in industrial needs would hurt the economy.
- The nearly 12 million men and women who had been serving in the armed forces were returning to civilian life and would need jobs.
  - Often jobs were not available.
  - Women workers, so vital during the war, were pressured to leave their jobs.

## Life in America after World War II

### The GI Bill

- The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 was better known as the **GI Bill**.
- The bill helped veterans transition to civilian life.
  - Provided money for vets to attend college or receive advanced job training
  - Helped arrange for home, farm, or business loans
  - Provided help in finding work as well as a year's worth of unemployment benefits

### Increased Demand

- Demand for consumer goods rose sharply.
- Returning vets built houses, which increased the demand for furniture and appliances.
- A baby boom began as Americans began having families.

## Life in America after World War II

### Labor Unions

- During the war, the government prevented labor disputes.
- After the war, unions began to seek the increases in wages that were limited during the war.
- The number of strikes rose sharply.
- In 1947, Congress passed the **Taft-Hartley Act**, which greatly reduced the power of labor unions.

### Racial Minorities

- Truman issued **Executive Order 9981**, which ended segregation in the U.S. armed forces.
- Hispanic veterans joined together in the American GI Forum.
  - They worked to gain full access for Hispanic veterans to benefits earned by their service during the war.

# Postwar American Politics

## 1946 Congressional Elections

- Many Democrats compared Truman unfavorably to Roosevelt.
- Republicans began to attack Truman before the 1946 congressional elections.
- Inflation was a big issue.
- Republicans gained a majority in Congress, which made it difficult for Truman to put his programs into place.

## 1948 Presidential Election

- Truman's popularity was low and critics didn't think he could win the election.
- Southern Democrats didn't like Truman's support of civil rights.
- Truman set off on a whirlwind campaign across the country.
- Truman won the election.
- Truman put forward his **Fair Deal** program. The program included healthcare for all Americans and help for struggling farmers.

## Building a Better World

- People had a strong desire to understand and prevent the causes of war after World Wars I and II.
- One result was the establishment of the **United Nations (UN)**.
  - 50 nations met in June 1945 to create the UN Charter.
  - The Charter committed its members to respect fundamental human rights, respect treaties and agreements, and to promote the progress and freedom of all people.
  - Member nations agreed to live in peace.
  - The Charter called for the use of international organizations to promote economic and social advancement.

# Trying to Build a Better World

## Human Rights

- The UN established the Commission on Human Rights.
- In December 1948, the commission presented the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.
- It declared that all human beings are born free and equal.
- It called for an end to slavery, torture, and inhumane punishment.
- It demanded a variety of civil rights, including the right to assembly and the right to access the courts.
- It stated that elementary education should be free and available to all.

## Trade and Economic Development

- At a conference in New Hampshire, leaders agreed to create the **World Bank** and the **International Monetary Fund**.
- The **World Bank** provided loans and grants to countries for the purpose of reducing poverty.
- The **International Monetary Fund** promoted orderly financial relationships between countries.
- It was designed to prevent economic crises and to encourage trade and economic growth.
- Another international organization, the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade** set rules and regulations for international trade.

## Communism in the United States

- The **House Un-American Activities Committee** investigated the full range of radical groups in the United States, including Fascists and Communists.
- Truman created a plan to investigate all federal employees. Those found to be disloyal to the United States were barred from federal employment.
- The **Smith Act** made it a crime to call for the overthrow of the U.S. government or belong to an organization that did so.
- The **McCarran Act** limited the rights of Communist organizations.
- Several spy cases in the late 1940s fueled fears of communism.

## Fighting Communism at Home

### Investigating Communism

- The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) explored the possible Communist influence in the American film industry.
- The **Hollywood Ten** refused to answer HUAC questions about their beliefs or those of their colleagues.
- Many others in Hollywood did testify, for if they didn't their names were placed on a blacklist.

### Truman and Loyalty

- Truman investigated all federal employees to ensure the loyalty of government officials.
- The investigations turned up little evidence of disloyalty.
- This investigation made clear that Truman was serious about fighting communism.

# Fighting Communism at Home

## The Smith Act

- Truman charged several leaders of the Communist Party in the United States under this act.
- The act made it a crime to call for the overthrow of the U.S. government.
- The leaders were convicted and their convictions were upheld in *Dennis v. United States*.

## The McCarran Act

- This act required Communist organizations to register with the government.
- It established a special board to investigate Communist involvement.
- Made it illegal to plan a totalitarian dictatorship
- Prevented Communists from entering the United States

## Spy Cases

- Alger Hiss— worked for the State Department and was accused of being a spy for the Soviets but was convicted for perjury. He spent 5 years in jail.
- Ethel and Julius Rosenberg— convicted of passing atomic secrets to the Soviets and executed in 1953

## Joseph McCarthy and the Second Red Scare

- Joseph McCarthy was a senator who claimed that there were 205 known Communists working for the U.S. Department of State.
- A political cartoonist dubbed McCarthy's tactic of spreading fear and making baseless charges **McCarthyism**.
- McCarthy's claims were rarely backed up with any evidence, but this didn't stop him from gaining a reputation as being the nation's top Communist fighter.
- McCarthyism spread beyond the Senate into other branches of government, into universities, into labor unions, and into private businesses.

## McCarthy's Fall

McCarthy continued his campaign from the Senate but became increasingly wild in his accusations.

In 1952 he began to go after fellow Republicans.

In 1954 he attacked the U.S. Army, claiming that it was protecting Communists.

The public came to view McCarthy's tactics as unfair.

The fear of communism remained, but Senator McCarthy and McCarthyism faded away.