Period 8: 1945–1980
Redefining Democracy in the Era of Cold War and Liberal Ascendency

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TIMELINE

1944	G.I. Bill is passed
1946	*Baby and Child Care* by Dr. Benjamin Spock is published
	Largest strike wave in United States history
1947	Publication of the "X Article" ("Sources of Soviet Conduct") by George Kennan
	Truman Doctrine (containment) is announced
	$400 million in military aid to Greece and Turkey
	House Un-American Affairs Committee begins investigations of Hollywood
	Taft-Hartley Act
1948	Beginning of the Berlin Blockade
	President Truman issues order desegregating the military
	President Truman wins election
1949	Formation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
1950	Senator Joseph McCarthy gains public spotlight on the issue of anticommunism
	NSC-68 is adopted
	Beginning of Korean War
	Passage of McCarran Internal Security Act
1951	Truman fires General Douglas MacArthur
	United States tests world's first hydrogen bomb
1952	Execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
	Army–McCarthy hearings
	Dwight D. Eisenhower wins presidential election
1954	Interstate Highway Act
	Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka
1955	Creation of Warsaw Pact
1956	Rosa Parks arrested for not giving up her seat; Montgomery Bus Boycott
	Reelection of Eisenhower
1957	Soviet launch of the *Sputnik* satellite
	Founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference
	Crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas, over school desegregation
	On the Road by Jack Kerouac is published

1960	Soviet Union shoots down U-2 spy plane
	Lunch-counter sit-in movement begins
	Founding of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee
1961	Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba
1961	The Freedom Rides begin
1962	Cuban Missile Crisis
1963	Campaign to desegregate Birmingham, Alabama
	Assassination of President John F. Kennedy
	March on Washington, DC; Martin Luther King, Jr., delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech
1964	Civil Rights Acts passed
	"Freedom Summer" voter registration drive in Mississippi; killing of Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman
	Gulf of Tonkin Resolution
1965	Voting Rights Act
	Malcolm X is assassinated
	March from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama
1966	Founding of the Black Panthers
1967	"Summer of Love"
	Rioting in Detroit, Newark, and other cities
1968	Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.
	Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy
	Violence at the Democratic Convention in Chicago
	Election of Richard Nixon
	Founding of the American Indian movement
1969	Woodstock Festival
	Stonewall Riot in New York City; birth of the gay liberation movement
	Apollo 11 lands on the moon
1970	President Nixon widens the Vietnam War into Cambodia
	Four students killed by the National Guard at Kent State protest
1971	Publication of the Pentagon Papers in the *New York Times*
1972	Arrest of burglars at the Watergate Complex
	Reelection of Richard Nixon
1973	Congressional hearings on Watergate
1974	Nixon resigns presidency; Gerald Ford assumes the presidency
	Ford grants Nixon a complete pardon
1976	Election of Jimmy Carter
1977	Supreme Court decision in *Bakke v. University of California*
1978	Panama Canal Treaty
	Camp David Accords
1979	Three Mile Island nuclear accident

INTRODUCTION

In the post–World War II period, the United States assumed a position of global leadership and experienced unprecedented prosperity. At the same time, the country grappled with domestic and international issues as it sought to define itself and struggled with living up to its stated values.

The Cold War began after World War II, when two former allies, the United States and the Soviet Union, emerged as rival superpowers. The perceived threat of communist aggression presented several challenges to the United States. The United States changed in many ways as a result of the Cold War. The country became much more engaged in the affairs of the world and assumed a leading role in the opposition to communism. In addition, the nation changed domestically. New programs were initiated during the Cold War. Some of these programs helped allay people's concerns about the threat of communism, while some initiatives might have added to people's fears.

In many ways, World War II was a watershed in American society. The postwar world was almost indistinguishable from the prewar world. A more modern, more affluent society emerged in the postwar era—one unimaginable in the depth of the Great Depression.

LIBERALISM

Note that liberalism has meant different things at different times. In the nineteenth century, liberalism implied unfettered individual rights; since the New Deal, liberalism has meant support for government programs to rectify social ills.

This period also witnessed the high tide of American liberalism, with the election of the youthful John F. Kennedy, a series of progressive decisions by the Warren Court, the implementation of President Johnson's "Great Society" programs, and the successful passage of landmark civil rights legislation.

Finally, the 1960s and 1970s saw the unraveling of the liberal agenda as the war in Vietnam sucked valuable resources from social programs and urban rioting highlighted the limits of the federal government's ability to address the problems of the African-American underclass. These years saw violence in the streets of American cities, a widening and eventual abandonment of the war in Vietnam, assassinations of major public figures, a nation-wide energy crisis, and a major political scandal that brought down a sitting president. The roots of a resurgent conservative movement can be seen toward the end of this period.

KEY CONCEPT 8.1
THE UNITED STATES AND THE COLD WAR

The United States emerged as the pre-eminent power in the post–World War II world, engaged in a cold war with the Soviet Union. It attempted to maintain a leadership position in an increasingly uncertain and unstable world. This new role for the United States had profound domestic and international consequences.

I. Containment, Economic Stability, and Collective Security

After World War II, the United States adopted a policy of containment, attempting to limit the influence of the Soviet Union and communism in the world. Toward this end, the United States sought to build a system of international security as well as a stable global economy.

After World War II, the United States pursued a foreign policy that emphasized collective security and the establishment of a multinational economic framework. The goal of this new foreign policy was to bolster non-communist states in the Cold War era.

Origins of the Cold War

Tensions existed between the United States and the Soviet Union from the time of the Russian Revolution (1917). However, historians tend to date the beginning of the Cold War from the close of World War II. The United States believed that the Soviet Union was intent upon extending its control over Europe. As the war ended, the Soviet Union left its Red Army troops in the nations of Eastern Europe. These nations became satellites of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union indicated that it would allow free elections in Poland. But even there, the Soviet Union imposed its will and installed a puppet regime. The United States was worried that the Soviet Union would try to push into Western Europe. The leader of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, insisted that he only wanted to have friendly nations on the border of the Soviet Union. After numerous attacks from western powers, from Napoleon to Hitler, the Soviet Union was wary of the West.

CONTAINMENT

A sophisticated essay might draw comparisons between Truman's policy of the containment of communism in the 1940s and 1950s and Lincoln's policy of the containment of slavery in the 1860s. The position of the Republican Party, starting in 1854, was to contain slavery within its then-present borders.

Containment and the Truman Doctrine

In order to block any further aggression by the Soviet Union, Truman issued the Truman Doctrine (1947), in which he said that the goal of the United States would be to contain communism. The containment approach to the Soviet Union had been spelled out in an article entitled "Sources of Soviet Conduct," published in *Foreign Affairs* (1947). The article was also known as "X Article" because it was published using the pseudonym "X." Later it was learned that the author was George Kennan, a diplomat who had served in the United States embassy in Moscow (1944–1946). Containment remained the cornerstone of American foreign policy for decades to come.

Military Aid to Greece and Turkey

As part of the policy of containment, the United States extended military aid to Greece and Turkey in 1947. The aid was successful. It helped the Greek monarchy put down a communist-influenced rebel movement. Further, the move quieted Republican criticism of Truman and improved Truman's standing in public opinion polls; he won reelection the following year. The United States demonstrated that it was committed to a policy of containment.

POSTWAR POLICIES

Be prepared to compare United States foreign policy following each of the two world wars. After World War I, the United States retreated into isolationism; after World War II, the United States maintained its involvement in world affairs with the containment policy.

The Marshall Plan

The United States further demonstrated its commitment to global engagement with the massive Marshall Plan. The plan, developed by Secretary of State George Marshall, allocated almost $13 billion for war-torn Europe to rebuild. A total of seventeen nations received aid between 1948 and 1951, with West Germany, France, and Britain receiving the bulk of it. The plan stabilized the capitalist economies of Western Europe and contributed to remarkable growth, as the standard of living in the countries improved. The goal was to provide a viable alternative to Soviet-style communism; ultimately, the plan was successful in creating a strong Western Europe, allied with American interests.

The Berlin Blockade and the Berlin Airlift

In 1948, the United States decided to challenge the Soviet blockade of West Berlin. West Berlin was part of West Germany (an American ally), but it was completely within the territory of East Germany (a Soviet ally). In 1948, the Soviet Union decided it would prevent any food or other supplies from entering West Berlin. The goal was for the Soviet Union to take over West Berlin and make it part of East Germany. The United States did not stand by idly when it learned of the Berlin blockade. President Truman decided to send thousands of planes, filled with supplies, into West Berlin in an action known as the Berlin Airlift. The Berlin Airlift prevented West Berlin from starving and prevented the Soviet Union from taking over the city.

The Formation of NATO (1949)

The United States demonstrated its commitment to protect Western Europe when it participated in the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. The members of NATO vowed to collectively resist any aggressive actions by the Soviet Union. This marked the first time that the United States joined a peacetime alliance.

B. CARRYING OUT THE POLICY OF CONTAINMENT

In the 1950s and 1960s, the United States pursued the policy of containment in several different ways, including direct military engagements in Korea and Vietnam, a robust nuclear weapons program, and the pursuit of a space race.

NSC-68 (1950)

A National Security Council Paper, known as NSC-68, called for a more aggressive defense policy for the United States. It recommended raising taxes and devoting more money to military spending. The document largely shaped United States foreign policy during the Cold War through the 1960s.

The Cold War in Asia

The initial conflicts of the Cold War occurred in Europe, but by the late 1940s, American policy makers became increasingly concerned about events in Asia. The United States' Cold War policies had mixed results in Asia. The United States successfully ushered Japan toward democracy and economic self-sufficiency. The United States also granted independence to the Philippines in 1946. But China proved to be a difficult problem for President Truman.

"SOFT ON COMMUNISM"

In your essays, try to make connections between foreign policy issues and domestic politics. After communism triumphed in China, Republicans accused Truman of being "soft on communism." This hurt the Democrats and helped Joseph McCarthy gain an audience.

Communism in China

China had been roiled by an ongoing civil war. The conflict abated during the Japanese occupation of World War II, but began again after the war. The United States had allied itself with the Nationalist side, led by Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek). However, it became increasingly clear that the opposition Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong, was amassing a huge following among the poor rural population of China. Mao's forces won in 1949 and the People's Republic of China was established. The news that China, the most populous nation in the world, had become communist shocked many Americans. Republicans accused Truman of "losing" China, although in reality there was not much that could have been done to prevent the eventual outcome.

The Korean War (1950–1953)

The next hotspot in the Cold War was Korea. Korea had been divided at the 38th parallel after World War II, with the United States administering the southern half and the Soviet Union administering the northern half (similar to the division of Germany). In 1948, this arrangement was formalized with the creation of two nations, North Korea, a communist country, and South Korea, an American ally. In June 1950, North Korean troops, using Soviet equipment, invaded South Korea. President Truman decided to commit troops to support South Korea, and managed to secure United Nations sponsorship. United Nations forces, led by U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, pushed the North Korean troops back to the thirty-eighth parallel and then marched into North Korea. When the U.N. troops got within 40 miles of the border between North Korea and China, China sent 150,000 troops over the Yalu River to push back the U.N. forces. After intense fighting the two sides settled into positions on either side of the thirty-eighth parallel.

The Firing of General MacArthur

During the Korean War, General Douglas MacArthur made it clear that he thought the United States could successfully invade China and roll back communism there. Truman was convinced that initiating a wider war, so soon after World War II, would be disastrous. MacArthur made public pronouncements about strategy, arguing that, "There is no substitute for victory." Truman fired MacArthur for insubordination and other unauthorized activities.

Armistice in Korea

The Korean War ended as it began—with North Korea and South Korea divided at the thirty-eighth parallel. By 1953, an armistice was reached accepting a divided Korea, although a formal treaty ending the war was never signed.

President Eisenhower, the "New Look" in Foreign Policy, and "Massive Retaliation"

Faced with the competing priorities of balancing the budget on the one hand and continuing the policy of containment on the other, President Dwight Eisenhower pursued a policy

labeled the "New Look." The policy emphasized the development of strategic nuclear weapons as a deterrent to potential threats from the Soviet Union. The increased reliance on nuclear weaponry was accompanied by a shift away from maintaining costly ground forces. A strong nuclear arsenal, Defense Secretary Charles Wilson argued, would provide the United States with "bigger bang for the buck."

Central to the strategy of increasing the American arsenal of nuclear weapons was the idea of "massive retaliation." The idea was put forth by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in a 1954 speech. The idea of "massive retaliation" is that the United States would maintain a large nuclear arsenal so that it would be able to massively retaliate against aggressive moves by the Soviet Union. The threat of massive retaliation was designed to deter conventional as well as nuclear strikes by the Soviet Union. Dulles also put forth the idea of "brinksmanship"—the Soviet Union needed to be aware that the United States was willing to "go to the brink" of war with its nuclear arsenal. As the Soviet Union developed a similarly powerful nuclear force, the ensuing nuclear standoff between the Soviet Union and the United States came to be known as "mutually assured destruction."

The Launching of *Sputnik*

Starting in the late 1950s, the Cold War expanded to a race for supremacy in terms of exploration of outer space. The space race began in earnest with the 1957 launching of the Soviet unmanned satellite *Sputnik* into space. The launch caught many Americans off guard and led to several important domestic developments.

Sputnik alarmed United States government officials because they realized that the same type of rocket that launched the satellite could also be used to quickly deliver atomic weapons to any location on earth.

The Space Race

After the launch of *Sputnik*, the United States created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958 to carry out the nation's space program. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy announced the goal of landing a man on the moon before the close of the 1960s. The budget for NASA grew under Kennedy. The goal was accomplished in 1969, when the United States was the first nation to successfully land men on the moon.

UNDERSTANDING NASA

Be aware of the different, and often competing, goals of NASA. On the one hand, it was created to engage in scientific research for the benefit of humanity; on the other hand, it helped further the military goals of the United States during the Cold War.

Espionage and the U2 Incident (1960)

The United States began an extensive program of spying on the military capabilities of the Soviet Union. At first the United States denied the program, but after a U2 plane was shot down over Soviet territory in 1960, Eisenhower admitted the program existed and defended its goals. These actions all demonstrated that the United States would take a more active role in challenging the Soviet Union.

Cuban Missile Crisis

The Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in 1962 when a United States U-2 spy plane discovered that Cuba was preparing bases for Soviet nuclear missiles to be installed. President Kennedy felt that these missiles, in such close proximity to the United States, amounted to an unacceptable provocation and demanded that Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev halt the operation and dismantle the bases. Khrushchev insisted on the right of the Soviet Union to install the missiles. For about a week, the world stood on the brink of nuclear war. Finally a deal was reached in which the Soviet Union would abandon its Cuban missile program and the United States agreed to honor the sovereignty of Cuba. Quietly, the United States also agreed to remove missiles from Turkey.

The War in Vietnam

Vietnam is a small country hugging the edge of the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia. From the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries it was a colony of France. It was occupied by Japan during World War II. After the war many Vietnamese hoped to finally be free of foreign control, but France reoccupied it. A resistance movement, led by Ho Chi Minh, intensified in the 1950s. In 1954, French forces were defeated at the Vietnamese town of Dien Bien Phu, and France withdrew from the region, leaving Vietnam divided at the 17th parallel between a communist-controlled North Vietnam, led by Ho Chi Minh, and a Western-allied South Vietnam. A rebel movement, known as the Vietcong, continued to press its cause in South Vietnam. American observers came to the conclusion that without outside help the government of South Vietnam could very likely fall to communist rebels.

The "Domino Theory"

American involvement in Vietnam was influenced by a belief in the "domino theory." The domino theory asserts that when a nation adopts a communist form of government, its neighbors are likely to become communist as well. The theory presumes that communism is imposed on a country from the outside—that it does not develop as a result of internal conditions.

The United States Sends Advisors to Vietnam

United States interest in Vietnam began in the 1950s when it sent military advisors and assistance to the government of South Vietnam after Vietnam was divided in 1954. The United States feared that South Vietnam would become a communist nation, as North Vietnam had.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

The United States became heavily involved in the Vietnam War after Congress gave President Lyndon Johnson broad latitude to pursue "conventional" military actions in Southeast Asia with the Tonkin Gulf Resolution (1964). In August 1964, Johnson announced that American destroyers had been fired upon in the Gulf of Tonkin, off the coast of North Vietnam. Later, reports questioned the accuracy of the announcement, but the incident led Congress to effectively give Johnson a "blank check" to engage in military operations in Vietnam without a formal declaration of war. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution can be considered the beginning of the war in Vietnam.

The Tet Offensive

In January 1968 the Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces launched the Tet Offensive, a major attack on South Vietnamese, U.S., and allied forces. This offensive left 1,600 American troops dead, while the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong suffered more than 40,000 deaths. The offensive was defeated, but it demonstrated the ability of the Vietnamese to organize a coordinated strike and to push deep into South Vietnamese territory.

The My Lai Massacre

In 1968, a company of American troops killed nearly every inhabitant of the Vietnamese village of My Lai, despite finding no enemy forces there. The U.S. Army covered up the massacre for more than a year. In 1971, the commander of the company, Lieutenant William Calley, was tried in a U.S. military court for the massacre. The incident led many Americans to further question the morality of the war in Vietnam.

"Vietnamization" of the Vietnam War

Nixon assured the American people that he had a plan for "peace with honor" in the Vietnam War when he ran for president in 1968. However, victory proved elusive for the United States in Vietnam. Nixon widened the war to Cambodia in 1970. Starting in 1969 Nixon began the policy known as Vietnamization. This involved replacing American troops with South Vietnamese troops. However, all the measures that Nixon took would not lead to American victory. The United States pulled out of Vietnam in 1973. By 1975, South Vietnam was defeated. Vietnam was then reunited as a communist country.

C. THE COLD WAR—FROM CONFRONTATION TO DÉTENTE

At times the Cold War involved military confrontations—both direct and indirect—while at other times it involved mutual coexistence or détente.

Eisenhower and Khrushchev Pursue Coexistence

After the death of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in 1953 and the emergence of the more moderate Nikita Khrushchev, Eisenhower held out hope for a warming of relations with the Soviet Union and a reduction in the threat of nuclear war. Eisenhower met with Khrushchev at a summit in Geneva, but no substantive agreements came out of the meeting. The launching of *Sputnik* (see page 267) and the first Soviet test of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), both in 1957, pushed the two nations farther apart. However, a new round of meetings, between Khrushchev and Vice President Richard Nixon, occurred in 1959. Nixon's trip to the Soviet Union included his famous "kitchen debate" with Khrushchev. The two, while visiting an American model home display at an international exhibition in Moscow, debated the merits of communism versus capitalism. The exchange highlighted differences between the countries, but did not derail progress in nuclear talks. The following year, the two countries were on the verge of signing a nuclear test ban. Khrushchev and Eisenhower had scheduled a summit in Paris to finalize the treaty; however, just before they met, the American U-2 spy plane was shot down (see page 267), scuttling any potential agreement.

U.S.-Soviet Relations Under Kennedy

Kennedy made attempts to ease tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States. In the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, a Partial Test Ban Treaty was signed by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Britain in 1963. The ban exempted underground nuclear tests.

Détente with China and the Soviet Union

President Richard Nixon's policy of détente represented a thawing in the Cold War and an improvement of relations with the Soviet Union. In 1971, Nixon initiated an agreement with the Soviet Union whereby the Soviet Union accepted the independence of West Berlin and the United States recognized East Germany. Also the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) led to two arms control agreements in 1972. Tensions still existed but détente led to discussions between the two sides, limited arms agreements, and cultural exchanges. In 1972, Nixon visited China, making it the first time an American president visited the People's Republic of China. The visit was an important step in normalizing relations with the communist government of China.

THE LEGACY OF PRESIDENT NIXON

Although Nixon is most vividly remembered for the continued war in Vietnam and the Watergate scandal, there is not a consensus among historians in regard to Nixon's legacy. Many cite his foreign policy accomplishments alongside his scandalous downfall.

II. The United States Confronts the Complexities of the Cold War

During the Cold War, the United States focused on containing the expansion of communism. However, a series of foreign policy issues complicated the focus on containing communism. These complications included decolonization, regional conflicts, shifting alignments, and global economic and environmental transformations.

A. DECOLONIZATION, NATIONALISM, AND ALLEGIANCES IN THE COLD WAR ERA

In the post–World War II period, nationalist movements developed in many colonized countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, setting off a wave of decolonization struggles. Both of the major powers in the Cold War struggle attempted to gain the allegiance of these newly independent countries. However, many of these countries remained non-aligned.

Iran and the CIA

During the Cold War, the United States engaged in a number of covert operations designed to oust regimes (often democratically elected) that were deemed insufficiently friendly to American interests. An early covert operation occurred in Iran in 1953. Earlier, in 1951, the left-leaning, reform-minded Mohammad Mosaddegh was elected prime minister of Iran. Mosaddegh nationalized oil fields and refineries, angering Western oil interests. In addition, he challenged the power of Iran's hereditary ruler, Shah Mohammed Reva Pahlavi, who was close to the Iranian elite and to Western oil interests. President Eisenhower, stressing the importance of having regimes friendly to American interests in the oil-rich Middle East, authorized the CIA, with the support British M16 agents, to instigate a coup against Mosaddegh. The Iranian army captured Mosaddegh and restored the Shah's power. Although the United States accomplished its goal of establishing a friendly regime in Iran, the events of 1953 came back to haunt the United States a generation later in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Revolution (see Period 9).

B. THE COLD WAR IN LATIN AMERICA

During the Cold War, the United States supported a variety of non-communist regimes in Latin America. These regimes had varying levels of commitment to democratic practices.

Regime Change in Guatemala

In Guatemala, the United States orchestrated the ouster of the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz (1954). Arbenz, who had been elected the president in 1951, was a reform-minded leader who began a land reform program in Guatemala. He moved to nationalize some of the vast land-holdings of the American-owned corporation, the United Fruit Company, growers of Chiquita Bananas. He intended to nationalize lands that were not under cultivation and distribute these lands to poverty-stricken peasants. He offered to buy the land from United Fruit Company at the value the company had declared the land for tax purposes, but the company refused. The CIA then organized a plan to topple the Arbenz government. It trained and armed an opposition army that toppled Arbenz and installed a military dictatorship in its place. The bitter feelings left in the wake of the coup contributed to civil war in Guatemala that lasted into the 1990s.

Hostilities with Cuba

Events in Cuba occupied much of President Kennedy's brief tenure as president, as Cuba became a hotspot in the Cold War in 1959. Cuba had been run as a military dictatorship with close ties with the United States from 1933 to 1959. In 1959, Fidel Castro led a successful guerilla movement to topple the dictatorship. By 1960, the relationship between the United States and Cuba grew hostile, while the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba grew friendly. In the final months of the Eisenhower administration, advisors planned for the United States to train, arm, and aid a group of Cuban exiles opposed to the communist government of Fidel Castro.

Kennedy adopted the plan and green-lighted its implementation in 1961. The exiles landed at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba in April 1961, but were quickly captured by Cuban forces. The Bay of Pigs incident was the first of several attempts to oust the communist regime from Cuba.

CUBA AND FLORIDA

Hostilities toward Cuba have persisted from the 1960s until today, despite the fact that the United States has normalized relations with other communist nations (China and Vietnam). One reason for the continued hostility is that both major political parties fear alienating Cuban Americans in Florida and losing that state in the presidential election.

C. THE COLD WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST

United States policy in the Middle East during the Cold War was driven by several, sometimes conflicting, priorities. Ideological, military, and economic concerns shaped American policy in the Middle East. After several oil crises, the United States attempted to create a policy in regard to its energy future.

The Energy Crisis

In 1973, the Arab oil-producing nations of OPEC—the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries—cut off exports to the United States and increased the price of oil. These moves were largely in retaliation for United States supporting Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

The Energy Crisis and the Limits of Growth

Starting with the OPEC oil embargo in 1973, fuel prices rose dramatically in the 1970s. America had to confront a stark reality—there were limits to the amount of fossil fuels, particularly petroleum, available in the world, and much of it came from the volatile Middle East. Until the 1970s, Americans assumed that petroleum was a cheap, inexhaustible commodity. The 1970s saw a dramatic spike in petroleum prices and long lines at gas pumps.

Toward a National Energy Policy

While many policy makers were trying to find alternative sources of power to Middle East petroleum, some were looking for ways the United States could reduce its consumption of energy. Americans are by far the largest consumers of energy, consuming nearly twice the amount as the average resident of the United Kingdom or France. Starting as early as the 1950s, the United States increased reliance on nuclear power. Nuclear power, however, did not achieve the level of energy generation that planners had hoped for. Amid concerns about cost overruns and the safety of nuclear energy, only about half of the planned 253 generators were ever built. Currently, nearly 20 percent of electricity is generated by nuclear power in the United States. A National Maximum Speed Law was enacted in 1974 (since repealed). President Jimmy Carter, through the newly created Department of Energy (1977), encouraged conservation measures, such as turning down thermostats and turning off lights when not in use. He also encouraged investment in renewable sources of energy, such as solar power. Americans, however, were remarkably resistant to adopting conservation measures.

III. Debates over Carrying Out the Cold War

There were major debates and disagreements in the United States about appropriate activities in terms of pursuing international and domestic goals during the Cold War. Americans continued to debate the proper balance between liberty and order. In addition, some Americans questioned the growing power of the federal government.

A. CONTAINMENT AND THE DOMESTIC RED SCARE

Though there was consensus between the major parties in regard to the policy of containment, Americans debated the increasingly aggressive methods of the federal and state governments in terms of identifying and applying sanctions to suspected communists in the United States.

The Strike Wave of 1946 and the Taft-Hartley Act (1947)

Immediately following World War II, the United States experienced the largest strike wave in its history, as five million workers walked off their jobs. Unions, which had refrained from striking during the war, feared that the gains they had made during the war would be taken away. The strike wave was largely successful, boosting wages for factory workers and allowing them to partake in the consumer culture of the era.

The Taft-Hartley Act (1947) was a law passed over President Truman's veto designed to monitor and restrict the activities of organized labor. The law was

AN ASSAULT ON ORGANIZED LABOR

Organized labor saw the Taft-Hartley Act as an unreasonable attack on the union movement. It labeled it a "slave labor" law and the "Tuff-Heartless" Act.

passed by a conservative Republican-dominated Congress that had been elected in 1946. The law imposed restrictions on unions that made it more difficult to strike. It allowed states to pass "right to work" laws, banning union shops (a union shop is a workplace in which all the workers are required to join the union after a majority had voted to do so). The law also required union leaders to pledge that they were not members of the Communist Party.

Federal Employee Loyalty and Security Program (1947)

This program barred communists and fascists from serving in federal government positions. This loyalty program was created by President Truman with Executive Order 9835. It also allowed for investigations into the political affiliations of current employees.

Employees had to promise to uphold the Constitution and promise that they were not members of the Communist Party or other "subversive" organizations.

The McCarran Internal Security Act (1950)

This restrictive act mandated that communist groups in the United States register with the government. It also allowed for the arrest of suspected security risks during national emergencies. Truman saw this act as a grave threat to civil liberties and vetoed it. However, Congress passed it over his veto.

Senator Joseph McCarthy

The most prominent elected figure in the anticommunist movement of the 1950s was Senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican from Wisconsin. McCarthy rose to national prominence in 1950 when he announced that he had a list of 205 "known communists" who were working in the State Department. He later reduced that figure to 57, but he encouraged a mindset where people began to suspect those around them of being communists. This and similar claims, mostly baseless, created a name for McCarthy and set the stage for a host of measures to halt this perceived threat. The anticommunist movement of the 1950s is often referred to as McCarthyism because Senator McCarthy was so closely identified with it.

The Attack on Hollywood

Senate and House anticommunists put a great deal of effort in investigating the movie and television industry, fearing that communists would subtly get their message out through the media. In 1947, a group of prominent directors and writers, subsequently known as the "Hollywood 10," was summoned to testify in Washington. They refused, citing their First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and assembly. These ten and others who refused to cooperate were "blacklisted" in the 1950s, unable to find work in Hollywood.

The Threat of Nuclear War

Although the fear of communist plots might have been overstated, the threat of nuclear war was a constant presence in American life during the Cold War. Both nations invested large sums of money into nuclear weapons programs. Americans were never sure whether a conventional conflict, such as the Korean War, would turn into a nuclear war. Many Americans built bomb shelters in their basement or backyard. Local authorities established civil defense programs to build bomb shelters in public buildings and prepare the public for a nuclear emergency.

"Duck and Cover"

The government took a series of actions in regard to the threat of nuclear war. One action taken by the government was air raid drills in public schools. When an alarm sounded, students would either be ushered to a fallout shelter in the basement of the school or would be ordered to "duck and cover" under their desks.

The Rosenberg Case

When the United States learned that the Soviet Union had built and tested a nuclear bomb, many Americans were convinced that communists in the United States, loyal to the Soviet Union, had provided the Soviets with essential information about the bomb. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were an American couple who were accused of passing secrets of the nuclear bomb to the Soviet Union. The Rosenbergs, who were members of the Communist Party, insisted on their innocence but were sent to the electric chair in 1953. Evidence has emerged since the end of the Cold War that suggests that Julius had been involved in some sort of espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union.

The Smith Act and the Communist Party

Government prosecutors used the World War II–era Smith Act to arrest leading members of the Communist Party in several states on the grounds that they "conspired" to "organize" and "advocate" the overthrow of the government by force. Between 1949 and 1957, more than 140 communists were arrested including the leader of the party, Eugene Dennis.

The Fall of McCarthyism

Eventually, critics began to assert that some of the harshest anticommunist measures violated people's constitutional right to freedom of speech. Criticism became more common after the conclusion of hostilities in the Korean War (1953). Finally Senator McCarthy himself went too far, accusing members of the military establishment of being members of the Communist Party. The Senate voted to censure him in 1954, ending the worst excesses of what many people referred to as a witch-hunt. In the case of *Yates v. United States* (1957), the Supreme Court overturned the convictions of members of the Communist Party under the Smith Act.

B. DEBATES OVER THE VIETNAM WAR

Americans generally supported the containment policy as it was deployed in the Korean War. However, the Vietnam War generated a sizable antiwar movement. The movement used a variety of tactics as the war escalated.

A LACK OF CONSENSUS

Note the evolution of popular sentiment in regard to Vietnam and the factors that contributed to antiwar sentiment among many Americans.

Erosion of Support for the Vietnam War

As the Vietnam War dragged on through the latter half of the 1960s, many Americans began to see the war as unwinnable—a quagmire from which the United States could not extricate itself. Americans began to grow impatient with the war effort and many began to question the wisdom and the morality of the war. There were several factors that led to this questioning of the Vietnam War.

The Draft

Starting in 1964, the Selective Service System began drafting young men to serve in the armed forces. In 1965, the monthly totals of draftees doubled. The draft made the Vietnam War much more of an immediate concern for millions of young men and contributed to the number of young people participating in the antiwar movement.

A "Living Room War"

The Vietnam War was the first American war to occur in an age when the vast majority of Americans owned television sets (90 percent by 1960). Americans were able to see uncensored images of warfare in their living rooms for the first time. Many were shocked at what they saw. A report by Morley Safer in 1965 showed Marines evacuating Vietnamese civilians from their homes and then setting their village on fire.

More disturbing images followed and contributed to public opinion questioning the wisdom and justness of the war.

THE MEDIA AND WAR

During the Vietnam War, Americans saw uncensored images of the horrors of war. This contributed to antiwar sentiment among many Americans. Later, during the Iraq War (2003–2013), the government kept tight reins on media coverage. If reporters wanted access to the military, they had to agree to be embedded with a unit. The military would then have great control over what was reported. President George W. Bush had taken a lesson from the Vietnam War.

A Working-class War

In many ways, the war in Vietnam was a working-class war. Eighty percent of the troops in Vietnam were working class and poor. Middle-class youths often managed to get college deferments or had connections to get a stateside (in the United States) position in the National Guard. In 1967, Martin Luther King, Jr., gave a speech entitled "Beyond Vietnam," condemning the war and its impact on American society.

OLD LEFT VERSUS NEW LEFT

The "old left" of the 1930s focused on workers and workplace issues. The "new left" of the 1960s focused on "participatory democracy" and cultural and social, as well as economic and political, issues. The new left developed on college campuses rather than in factories.

The Unraveling of the Vietnam War

By 1968, the war in Vietnam seemed increasingly unwinnable. The Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces launched the Tet Offensive in January (see page 269), shocking the American public. Further, extensive, uncensored media coverage of the war left many Americans questioning its morality and propriety. By 1969, the horrific violence of the 1968 My Lai Massacre (see page 269) became known to the American public, further eroding faith in the war effort. Opponents of the war became increasingly vocal as the decade wore on.

The Antiwar Movement

The antiwar movement can be traced back to the early 1960s as small peace groups questioned the purpose of the armed advisors that were sent to Vietnam. An important antiwar group on college campuses was Students for a Democratic Society, founded in 1960 (see

more below). By the late 1960s, several important antiwar groups had emerged out of the growing protest movement. The National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam was formed in 1967 to organize large national protests against the war.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

Another significant antiwar group was the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Born in 1967, the organization harnessed the frustrations of returning veterans of the conflict. Many frontline soldiers grew to question the tactics, and even the purpose, of the war. There were several incidents of "fragging" in Vietnam—soldiers attacking and even killing commanding officers.

The Shootings at Kent State and Jackson State

The antiwar movement was stunned when four students were killed at Kent State University in Ohio in May 1970 during a demonstration against President Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia. National Guardsmen opened fire on the demonstrators, killing four and wounding ten. A week later, two African-American students were shot and killed by state police at Jackson State University in Mississippi. By the beginning of the school year in September 1970, college campuses were considerably quieter.

Publication of the *Pentagon Papers*

Many of the suspicions of the antiwar movement were borne out with the publication of the *Pentagon Papers*, a secret study of the Vietnam War written by the Pentagon. The study revealed official deception and secrecy. It was leaked to the press by Daniel Ellsberg, a Pentagon official critical of the direction the Vietnam War was taking. The Nixon administration tried to block the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* from publishing the papers. Initially, the Nixon administration obtained an injunction against publication, but the Supreme Court, in the case of *New York Times v. United States* (1971), overruled the injunction and upheld the right of the newspapers to publish the information.

THE GOVERNMENT AND A FREE PRESS

The publication of the *Pentagon Papers* helped to clarify free speech issues in regard to the government's ability to squelch embarrassing information. The Supreme Court upheld the rights of the press.

C. THE "MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX," THE ARMS RACE, AND THE POWER OF THE EXECUTIVE

A series of debates occurred during the Cold War about the power of the president to carry out foreign and military policies. In addition, many Americans became increasingly concerned about the power of the "military-industrial complex." Finally, debates occurred around the expansion of America's nuclear arsenal.

The "Military-Industrial Complex"

The term "military-industrial complex" was popularized after it was used in President Eisenhower's "Farewell Address." The term implies a close-knit relationship between government officials, leaders of the military, and corporate interests, especially those involved in the

production of goods and services used by the military. The implication is that important decisions about policy—including decisions about military interventions—are made, in part, to advance the interests of the military-industrial complex.

Challenging America's Nuclear Policy

Starting in the 1950s and 1960s, many Americans began challenging the country's military priorities. In the 1960s, many Americans began to protest against military actions in Vietnam (see below). Even before that, there were those who grew critical of America's nuclear weapons policy. It became evident that the United States had developed enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world several times over. The policy of "massive retaliation" implied, to many people, a dangerous readiness to use nuclear weapons. With both the United States and Soviet Union possessing such powerful nuclear arsenals, policy makers accepted the policy of mutually assured destruction, or MAD. For some policy makers, MAD created a powerful deterrent to the use of nuclear weapons; to critics, it seemed to represent a dangerous precipice on which the world was perched. The 1964 dark comedy, *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb,* directed by Stanley Kubrick, depicted MAD policy gone terribly wrong. Critics of nuclear proliferation formed the Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy in 1957 to challenge the ongoing nuclear tests being conducted by the Eisenhower administration. In 1961, the newly formed Women's Strike for Peace organized more than 50,000 women in sixty cities to march for peace.

KEY CONCEPT 8.2
THE HIGH TIDE OF LIBERALISM

Liberalism—an approach to politics that embraced anticommunism abroad and an activist federal government at home—reached its highpoint in the mid-1960s. Liberalism generated a wide variety of political and cultural responses in the United States.

I. The Civil Rights Movement

An influential civil rights movement emerged in the years following World War II. Civil rights activists sought to press America to fulfill the promises of the Reconstruction-era. The movement achieved some marked political and legal successes in regard to ending segregation. However, progress toward achieving full racial equality in the United States proved to be a more daunting task.

A. STRATEGIES AND TACTICS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

After World War II, civil rights activists used a variety of strategies and tactics, including legal challenges, civil disobedience, non-violent protests, and direct action, to press for an end to racial discrimination.

The Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s

One of the most significant reform movements in American history blossomed in the 1950s—the civil rights movement. The movement challenged the legal basis of the segregation of African Americans in the United States, but it also challenged the pervasive racism of American society. This racism justified the existence of slavery and the persistence of Jim Crow

segregation. The movement forced America to examine its most cherished institutions and also to reevaluate its patterns of thought.

World War II and the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement

World War II was a transformative experience for many African-American men and women. Many returning soldiers felt a sense of empowerment and engagement that they had not previously felt. These veterans had taken part in the NAACP's "Double V" campaign during the war—victory against fascism abroad and victory against racism at home. The injustices of American life seemed especially reprehensible to men who had just risked their lives serving their country. In addition, the migration of many African-American men and women from the familiar patterns of rural southern life to the new challenges of urban, industrial America whetted their appetite for change and justice. This was the generation that would become the leaders of the civil rights movement in the decades after the war.

Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955–1956)

Rosa Parks was a civil rights activist who refused to give up her seat to a white person on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus in 1955. She was arrested for this action. Her arrest led to the Montgomery bus boycott, which lasted about a year (1955–1956). The boycott led to the bus company ending its policy of making African Americans give up their seats to whites.

Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nonviolent Civil Disobedience

The Montgomery bus boycott was led by a young reverend, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., from Atlanta, Georgia. King's leadership during the boycott made him a well-known figure. He soon became the central figure in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. King advocated the tactic of civil disobedience to directly challenge unjust practices.

The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s

The civil rights movement continued into the 1960s. As the 1960s began, a younger generation of activists began to play a prominent role in the movement. Over time, rifts developed between the older, church-based leadership of the movement and a younger cadre of activists.

The Lunch-counter Sit-ins (1960)

In 1960, students in Tennessee and North Carolina began a campaign of sit-ins at lunch counters to protest segregation. The sit-ins occurred as some members of the movement grew frustrated with simply protesting and pushed the movement to take direct action to challenge and defy racist practices. The lunch counter sit-ins began in 1960 in Greensboro, North Carolina, when four African-American students challenged the "whites only" policy of Woolworth's lunch counter and sat at the counter. The lunch counter sit-ins spread to other cities, including Nashville, Tennessee. They put the practice of segregation on the front pages of newspapers and eventually pressured companies to end the practice.

The Freedom Rides (1961)

The Freedom Rides occurred in 1961. The previous year, the Supreme Court had ruled that state laws separating the races on interstate transportation facilities were unconstitutional.

Still, states maintained Jim Crow segregation codes that separated African American from white passengers. In 1961, the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) organized a series of bus rides through the South, with African-American passengers riding alongside white passengers, to challenge these local codes. The Freedom Rides met a great deal of resistance in the South. In Alabama, a mob slashed the tires of one bus and then firebombed it. President Kennedy finally sent federal marshals to Alabama to protect the Freedom Riders and to enforce federal law.

"Bull" Connor and the Birmingham Campaign (1963)

Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference decided to launch a major campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, to protest racial segregation in the spring of 1963. The campaign proved to be a turning point in the push for federal legislation. The public safety commissioner of Birmingham, Eugene "Bull" Connor, would not tolerate public demonstrations. He used fire hoses, police dogs, and brutal force to put down the campaign. The campaign included a children's march, sometimes called the "children's crusade," in May 1963. Connor used violent tactics to break up the children's march. Images of police brutality brought the Birmingham campaign to the attention of the nation and helped to bring public sympathy to the side of the civil rights movement. During the Birmingham campaign, King was arrested and wrote his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail," a response to a call by white clergy members to allow the legal system to address the issue of racial injustice. King insisted that the black community had waited long enough for change to happen. The Birmingham campaign paved the way for the passage of the Civil Rights Act, a year later.

The March on Washington (1963)

In 1963, the civil rights movement held one of the biggest demonstrations in American history in Washington, DC. More than 200,000 people gathered to march, sing, and hear speeches, including Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I Have a Dream Speech." Some of the tensions that divided the civil rights movement in the years to come were evident at the March on Washington. The leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, John Lewis, was told by some of the older organizers of the event to tone down his fiery rhetoric. The original draft of his speech, which urged the movement to march "through the heart of Dixie the way Sherman did . . . and burn Jim Crow to the ground," anticipated the Black Power movement of the coming years.

The Selma to Montgomery March (1965)

With passage of the Civil Rights Act, the movement focused on voting rights. A major march, from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama, was scheduled for March 1965. As the marchers crossed a bridge over the Alabama River, county and state police blocked their path and, after ordering them to turn back, attacked them with clubs and tear gas. The incident, known as "Bloody Sunday," was broadcast on national television and aroused indignation among many Americans. The march was finally held later in the month. "Bloody Sunday" and the Selma to Montgomery march raised awareness of the issue of voting rights.

B. GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISM

The three branches of the federal government made several important policy shifts in regard to race from the 1940s through the 1960s. These shifts included the desegregation of the

armed forces, the issuance of the decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These measures, prompted in large part by civil rights activism, were intended to promote greater racial justice.

Truman and Civil Rights

President Truman, the Democratic president from Missouri who took office when President Franklin Roosevelt died in 1945, was an early supporter of civil rights. He created the Committee on Civil Rights in 1946 and he pushed Congress to enact the committee's recommendations in 1948. In 1948 Truman issued an executive order to ban segregation in the military, but he failed to implement it until the Korean War (when the military needed additional personnel). Truman was motivated to take these steps both out of personal conviction and in response to actions by civil rights activists. Truman felt that he could not go too far because he would lose the support of southern Democrats.

A Favorable Supreme Court

Early civil rights activists pressed their cause in a number of ways, but a very promising one was to bring the issue of segregation in front of the Supreme Court. The movement realized that the Supreme Court in 1954 was far more liberal than the Supreme Court of 1896, which had issued the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. In 1953, the Supreme Court got a new, more liberal chief justice, Earl Warren, appointed by President Dwight Eisenhower. The NAACP and its lead lawyer Thurgood Marshall thought the time was right.

The Case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954)

The case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* was actually several cases looked at simultaneously by the Court. The Brown in the case was the Reverend Oliver Brown, whose eight-year-old daughter had to go to an African-American school more than a mile from her house rather than attend a white school nearby. The Court heard a variety of types of evidence in the case, including studies on the psychological impact of segregation on young people. The Court ruled unanimously that segregation in public schools was unfair and had to end. The Brown decision set in motion a major upheaval in American society. It gave great encouragement to the civil rights movement, which believed that the federal government was in favor of civil rights.

Kennedy, Johnson, and the Politics of Civil Rights

The Democratic Party for years had walked a thin line in regard to civil rights for African Americans. On the one hand, many Democratic leaders since the Franklin Roosevelt administration believed that extending civil rights to African Americans was the correct and just thing to do, but on the other hand, the party did not want to alienate its southern wing. As the civil rights movement put the issue on the national agenda and as violence by white southerners put the issue on the nightly news, Democratic leaders had to react. In June 1963, the same month that civil rights leader Medgar Evers was murdered in front

THE GRASSROOTS AND THE GOVERNMENT

The civil rights movement vividly illustrates the complex relationship between the grassroots movement and government policy. The movement pushed the government to take action; support from the government emboldened the movement.

of his house in Jackson, Mississippi, President Kennedy made a national address in which he called civil rights a "moral issue" and pledged to support civil rights legislation. After Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, President Lyndon Johnson took up the cause of civil rights legislation with vigor, pressuring reluctant Democratic legislators to support it.

Civil Rights Act (1964)

The Civil Rights Act was passed by Congress and signed by President Johnson in the summer of 1964. The act was intended to end discrimination based on race and sex. The Civil Rights Act guaranteed equal access for all Americans to public accommodations, public education, and voting. Another section banned discrimination in employment based on race or sex.

The Voting Rights Act (1965)

The Voting Rights Act, passed in August 1965, authorized the federal government to oversee voter registration in counties with low African-American registration. The act also outlawed literacy tests and poll taxes—means of preventing African Americans from voting. By 1968, the number of southern African-American voters jumped from 1 million to more than 3 million. In many ways, the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act were the culmination of the civil rights movement.

C. CHALLENGES FOR THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

A series of challenges confronted the civil rights movement as the 1960s progressed. White resistance to desegregation grew more intense and slowed the progress of the movement. In addition, a series of debates occurred within the movement in the mid-1960s over philosophy and tactics.

"Massive Resistance"—in Little Rock Crisis and Beyond

The civil rights movement generated a violent backlash from many southern whites. These people vowed to engage in "massive resistance" against efforts toward integration. An example of the backlash was evident in the reaction of white southerners to segregation in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957 and 1958. The conflict in Little Rock began when local authorities had decided to allow nine African-American students to enroll in Central High School at the beginning of the school year in 1957. Governor Orville Faubus refused to cooperate with the plan, leading to mob action and violence outside of the high school. Faubus initially mobilized the National Guard to block the African-American students from entering the school; later he removed all state authorities, leaving local police to deal with a combustible situation. The violence and the national news coverage of the flaunting of federal authority convinced Eisenhower to send federal troops. Although Eisenhower took decisive action in Little Rock, his administration was otherwise very reluctant to take action in regard to civil rights for African Americans.

STATE AND FEDERAL POWER

The crisis in Little Rock brought to the fore the issue of the relationship of federal power to state power. This was a central issue in the Civil War. When President Eisenhower sent troops to Little Rock, Governor Faubus used language that was purposely evocative of the Reconstruction period. The reaction of Faubus brings to mind William Faulkner's quotation: "The past is not dead. In fact, it's not even past."

From "Freedom Now!" to "Black Power!"

As the civil rights movement achieved success in ending legal segregation (*de jure* segregation) and removing barriers to voting, pervasive problems continued to plague the African-American community. Patterns of segregation enforced by custom, rather than law (*de facto* segregation) persisted. Also, the bitter realities of poverty, substandard housing, and lack of decent jobs continued to plague large sections of the African-American community. A younger generation of activists continued to push the movement in a more militant direction and to demand power, not just rights. A central rallying cry of the movement, "Freedom now!," was, after 1964, often replaced by the call for "Black power!"

The Assassination of King (1968)

Martin Luther King, Jr., was killed by an assassin on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. The assassination of King was both a source of national mourning and an indicator of the end of the civil rights movement. The movement had accomplished much, but was unable to provide a solution for many of the problems facing the African-American community. As the 1960s wound down, rioting engulfed many African-American neighborhoods, highlighting the continued frustrations of the black community.

II. The Civil Rights Movement Inspires Other Movements to Challenge Inequalities

The visibility and successes of the civil rights movement inspired other movements for social change. These movements, focused on gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, addressed a host of inequalities and issues of identity.

A. MOVEMENTS FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GAY LIBERATION

Activists began to challenge ingrained assumptions around gender. Movements developed in the 1960s to push for greater social and economic equality for women and for gays and lesbians.

The Women's Liberation Movement

In the 1960s, a women's liberation movement developed, challenging inequities in the job market, representations of women in the media, violence against women, and an ingrained set of social values. Many women looked at the circumstances of their own lives and saw connections to the larger society, giving rise to the motto, "the personal is political." Many women were inspired by Betty Friedan's 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*, which challenged the traditional options in life offered to middle-class women. Friedan later was one of several women to found the National Organization for Women (1966), the leading liberal organization supporting women's rights. The movement gave birth to the nationally circulated magazine, *Ms.*, founded by Gloria Steinem, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, and others. Many women in the movement had come out of New Left activist organizations (see below), empowered to fight for a better world, but frustrated at the treatment women received in these organizations.

Protest at the Miss America Pageant

Many Americans heard about the women's liberation movement for the first time from news reports of a protest at the 1968 Miss America pageant. The pageant exemplified, to the pro-

testers, society's attitude toward women. Women were forced to wear skimpy outfits and give vacuous answers to questions, in order to win male approval.

Title IX (1972)

An important success of the women's liberation movement was passage of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. Title IX banned sex discrimination in all aspects of education, such as faculty hiring and admissions. It has had a major impact on funding for female sports activities at the high school and college level.

The Gay Liberation Movement

The gay liberation movement was born in 1969 when patrons at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York's Greenwich Village, resisted a raid by the police and fought back. The event brought a series of grievances into the open. Gay men and women had suffered discrimination in many walks of life, including in government civil service jobs. Many gays attempted to avoid such discrimination by concealing their sexual identity and remaining "in the closet."

B. LATINOS, AMERICAN INDIANS, AND ASIAN AMERICANS PRESS FOR JUSTICE

In the wake of the civil rights movement, different ethnic groups, including Latinos, American Indians, and Asian Americans, pushed for a redress of past injustices as well as economic and social equality.

The American Indian Movement

The example set by the civil rights movement also inspired a movement to fight for justice for American Indians. The American Indian movement was founded in 1968. The following year, the movement made headlines when several dozen activists seized control of Alcatraz Island, in the San Francisco Bay, claiming that the former prison belonged to the first inhabitants of the area—American Indians. The movement won greater autonomy over tribal lands and affairs.

Cesar Chavez and the United Farms Workers

Cesar Chavez and Delores Huerta founded the United Farm Workers in 1962 to protect the interests of migrant farmers, including many Mexican Americans. The UFW organized a nationwide boycott of grapes to pressure farm owners to pay their workers a decent wage. The boycott did result in a wage increase in 1970.

C. AFFLUENCE AND POVERTY

The post–World War II period was marked by a growing middle class and the perception of overall affluence. However, writers and activists raised awareness of the persistence of poverty among large sectors of the population. These efforts resulted in efforts to address the issue of poverty in America.

Abundance in Postwar America

Perhaps the most remarkable development of the postwar years was the unprecedented growth of the economy and the rising living standard for millions of Americans. The gross

domestic product of the country—the total value of goods and services produced in the United States in a year—rose dramatically between 1945 and 1960, from $200 billion to $500 billion. Such growth is unprecedented in American society. In this period we see a dramatic rise in the middle class, as millions of Americans from working-class backgrounds were able to achieve many of the markers of middle-class life—home and car ownership, a college education, and a comfortable income.

The Other America

Large pockets of poverty persisted despite the growth of the postwar economy. Many Americans, including President John F. Kennedy, were made aware of the existence of pervasive poverty alongside the affluence of American society by Michael Harrington's book *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1962). Harrington, a writer and Socialist activist, noted that 40 to 50 million Americans lived in poverty, many in decaying urban slums and many in isolated rural towns. He noted that many of the technological developments associated with economic growth, such as mechanization of agriculture and automation of factory work, resulted in job displacement and bitter poverty. Harrington's work shaped the domestic agendas of President Kennedy and President Lyndon Johnson.

III. Liberalism, the Federal Government, and the Supreme Court

Liberal ideals shaped federal policies and several key Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s and 1970s. This liberal agenda came under attack from groups and individuals on the left who insisted that the steps being taken were insufficient to create a truly just and equitable world. The gains of liberalism would come under attack from a resurgent conservative movement that showed signs of life in the 1960s and 1970s, but did not come into fruition until the last decades of the twentieth century.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Note the continuities between the New Deal of the 1930s and the Great Society of the 1960s. Both expanded the role of the federal government in the lives of ordinary Americans. Both met with only limited success.

A. THE GREAT SOCIETY

President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs represented the highpoint of the liberal agenda. Johnson spearheaded a series of programs that sought to end racial discrimination, alleviate poverty, and address other social issues.

President Lyndon Johnson's Agenda

Lyndon Johnson took office upon the assassination of President Kennedy. Johnson, a Texas Democrat, proved to be a remarkably effective president, passing a host of domestic programs that rivaled the New Deal in scope. However, his administration took a tragic turn, as Johnson's hopes for a "Great Society" were damaged by a costly and unpopular war in Vietnam.

The "Great Society"

A major goal of President Johnson's Great Society program was to end poverty in the United States. Great Society programs include the development of Medicare and Medicaid, welfare programs, and public housing. Johnson created the Office of Economic Opportunity, which oversaw many of the Great Society initiatives. These programs have had limited success.

The cycle of poverty proved to be too difficult to break in a short period of time. Further, the war in Vietnam became increasingly costly, diverting billions of dollars that could have been used for antipoverty programs. Part of the Great Society included reforming the restrictive immigration policies that had been put in effect in the 1920s. The Immigration Act of 1965 continued to limit the number of immigrants in the United States, but it eliminated the quota system, based on "national origins" (see more on immigration reform below).

B. FEDERAL POWER AND THE SUPREME COURT

A series of important Supreme Court decisions from the 1950s to the 1970s expanded democracy and individual freedoms. These decisions, coupled with the expansion of federal power during the era of the Great Society, unintentionally fueled a conservative movement that sought to defend traditional notions of morality and limit the role of the state.

The Warren Court

Earl Warren was the chief justice of the Supreme Court from 1953 to 1969. The Court under his leadership moved in a decidedly liberal direction. The first case Warren dealt with as chief justice was the landmark Brown case. Through the 1960s, the Warren court continued to protect the rights of minorities, reinforced the separation of church and state, established an individual's right to privacy, and protected the rights of people accused of crimes. Liberals have generally welcomed Warren Court decisions, while conservatives have accused him of practicing judicial activism.

CHIEF JUSTICES

The AP exam does not require you to know all the chief justices of the Supreme Court, but you should be familiar with John Marshall (1801–1835) and Earl Warren (1953–1969). Both courts maintained a consistent ideological approach that is evident in the respective decisions of each.

Expanding the Rights of the Accused

Two important decisions expanded the rights of people accused of crimes. In *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963), the Supreme Court ruled that the states must provide court appointed attorneys to impoverished defendants. Previously this stipulation only applied to federal court procedures. In *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966) the Court ruled that arrested people must be read basic rights, now known as *Miranda rights*, including the right to remain silent and the right to have a lawyer.

The Right to Privacy

Although the right to privacy is not specifically mentioned in the Constitution, the Warren Court asserted that the right is implicit in it. In *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) the Court ruled that laws forbidding the use of birth control devices were unconstitutional. The right to privacy would become important in the case of *Roe v. Wade* (1973), which insisted that states allow abortions during the first two trimesters of pregnancy.

Free Speech

In *Tinker v. Des Moines* (1969), the Supreme Court ruled that a school board prohibition against students wearing black armbands in protest of the war in Vietnam was unconstitutional. The Court ruled that students in school had the right to free speech, including symbolic speech, as long as their actions did not interfere with the educational process.

In *Brandenberg v. Ohio* (1969), the Court ruled that the government cannot restrict inflammatory speech unless that speech is likely to directly incite imminent unlawful action. The case revolved around an incendiary interview with a Ku Klux Klan leader. Local authorities arrested him under a criminal syndicalism statute. The decision set the precedent of protecting anti-government and provocative speech.

Freedom of the Press

In *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964), the Supreme Court overturned a lower court libel award of $500,000 to L.B. Sullivan, a city commissioner in Montgomery, Alabama. Sullivan had sued the *New York Times* for running an ad calling attention to the violence being committed in the South against civil-rights demonstrators. Sullivan contended that the ad libeled him, even if it did not mention him by name. White southern officials frequently used plaintiff-friendly libel laws to curb reporting of civil rights issues. The Court found such laws were detrimental to a free press. The Court set a higher standard for libel—insisting that public officials must show that a publication exhibited "actual malice" in order to prove libel. Specifically, a public official filing suit must show that a publication knew a statement was false and/or recklessly disregarded the truth. The *Sullivan* decision has been the Court's most forceful defense of press freedom.

Reapportionment and "One-person, One-vote"

In *Baker v. Carr* (1966), the Supreme Court ruled that states must periodically redraw legislative districts so that districts have roughly equal numbers of people. Previously, Tennessee had not redrawn its legislative districts for more than sixty years. Urban areas such as Memphis had grown much faster than rural districts. Without reapportionment, urban areas would be underrepresented, violating the principle of "one-person, one-vote."

Prayer in Public Schools and the Separation of Church and State

In *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), the Supreme Court ruled that the Regents' Prayer, a state-mandated prayer that was recited by public school children in New York State, was unconstitutional because it violated the doctrine of separation of church and state.

CHURCH AND STATE IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Disagreements over the relationship between church and state have occurred throughout American history from Roger Williams and the founding of Rhode Island in the 1630s to recent controversies about the teaching of evolution in public schools.

C. THE NEW LEFT AND THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT

Individuals and groups on the left criticized the liberal agenda of the 1960s for doing too little to significantly challenge the economic and racial inequalities at home and for pursuing an immoral foreign policy.

Students for a Democratic Society and the Rise of the New Left

The most significant organization in the antiwar movement of the 1960s was Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), with chapters at major college campuses across the country.

The name was coined in 1960, with SDS developing out of an earlier organization. SDS held its first national convention at Port Huron, Michigan. At this convention the organization adopted a guiding manifesto, known as the Port Huron Statement, which became an important document in the development of the New Left. The document, written by Tom Hayden, stressed participatory democracy and direct action. The label "New Left" applies to activist organizations of the 1960s that broke with the worker-oriented, top-down movement that developed in the 1930s. SDS continued to grow throughout the 1960s, but disbanded in 1969 after intense factional infighting.

Malcolm X

By the mid-1960s, many African-American activists were attempting to push civil rights activism in a more militant, confrontational direction. Malcolm X was a central figure in the more militant turn the civil rights movement took. Between 1952 and 1964 he was a member and then a leader of the Nation of Islam, an African-American group that shares certain practices with mainstream Islam, but differs from mainstream Islam in several important respects. The organization advocated that African Americans organize among themselves, separate from whites. After making a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964 and seeing Muslims of different races interacting as equals, Malcolm X revised his views about black separatism. He was killed by assassins from the Nation of Islam in 1965, but his words continued to inspire the movement through the remainder of the 1960s.

The Black Panthers

The Black Panthers Party was formed in 1966. The Panthers took up the call for a "Black Power" movement, embracing self-defense and militant rhetoric. Initially, the Back Panthers focused on community organizing; however, their activities grew increasingly confrontational.

KEY CONCEPT 8.3
POSTWAR SOCIETY

The United States experienced a series of demographic, economic, and technological changes in the decades following World War II. These changes profoundly impacted American society, politics, and the environment.

I. The Promise and Perils of Postwar Society

Many Americans were optimistic about the rapid economic and social changes that were occurring in society in the period after World War II. At the same time, some Americans challenged many of the assumptions of postwar society.

A. THE GROWTH OF SUBURBIA AND THE MIDDLE CLASS

The postwar period witnessed the growth of the middle class and demographic shifts toward the suburbs and toward the "sun belt." A variety of factors stimulated these trends, including strong economic growth, federal spending, a "baby boom," the expansion of higher education, and new technological developments.

The G.I. Bill

The federal government helped returning veterans adjust to the peacetime economy with the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (1944), more commonly known as the G.I. Bill. The act provided low-interest loans for veterans to purchase homes and to attend college.

The Growth of Suburbia

An important postwar trend was the growth of suburbs. Suburbs were not a new phenomenon in the postwar period—indeed, the earliest residential suburbs were built around commuter railroad stations in the late nineteenth century. But a series of factors contributed to the unprecedented growth of these communities. New suburban communities were built just outside of major American cities to meet the housing crunch created by all the returning World War II soldiers. Huge numbers of these soldiers quickly married, had children, and looked for affordable housing. Race also played a factor in the development of suburbia. Many white people did not want to live in the urban neighborhoods that had become integrated after many southern, rural African Americans had moved north to work in war industries.

Levittown and Suburban Development

Developers facilitated the move to the suburbs. An innovative developer was William Levitt, who took large tracts of land outside of major cities (often farm land) and built huge developments of nearly identical, modest houses. He applied the techniques of mass production to these houses, building them rapidly and cheaply. Levittown, on Long Island, New York, became synonymous with these mass produced communities. These developments were not without their critics. Songwriter Malvina Reynolds skewered the monotony of life in these developments in the song "Little Boxes" (1962).

The Baby Boom

For several years before 1946, birth rates in the United States had remained relatively low. Couples tended to have fewer children during the lean years of the Great Depression; further, the dislocation and physical separation caused by World War II kept the birthrate low. However, when the war ended, returning veterans quickly got down to the business of starting families. The spike in birthrates from 1946 through the early 1960s produced a baby boom that would have lasting repercussions in American society. The baby boom required states to spend more money on public education in the 1950s and 1960s, and expanded college enrollment in the 1960s and 1970s.

Childrearing in the 1950s

The parents of the baby-boom generation were enthusiastic readers of child-rearing guides. The most influential was Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care* (1946). Spock urged parents to treat their children as individuals, to let them develop at their own pace, and to focus less on discipline and more on affection. When baby boomers joined the counterculture in the 1960s, conservative critics cited Spock's book as part of the problem.

The Interstate Highway Act

Federal and local highway initiatives also made suburbia attractive. One could now drive into cities from the suburbs quickly and easily. With the National Interstate Highway and Defense

Act (1956), the federal government initiated a massive highway-building project that resulted in the interstate highway system. The act was also promoted as a defense measure, allowing for the rapid movement of military equipment and personnel. Americans could now feasibly leave cities and enjoy a small piece of land to call their own.

"White Flight" and the Decline of Older Cities

Not everyone shared equally in the abundance of the 1950s. As middle-class families left urban centers to move to the suburbs, they took with them their ability to pay local taxes. Cities saw their tax bases shrink dramatically. With funds scarce, cities had to cut back on basic services like policing and education. Crime became an unavoidable urban reality and city schools deteriorated. This decline in city services put more pressure on middle-class people to make the move to the suburbs. By the 1960s, entire sections of cities had become slums.

Urban Renewal

To address the decline of older cities, the federal government initiated a set of initiatives known as the urban renewal program. A central piece of the program was the Housing Act of 1949, which represented a dramatic expansion of federal money and power in the area of urban housing. Title I of the act provided federal financing for slum clearance programs, encouraging city administration to declare areas blighted and then to demolish vast swaths of inner cities. The program displaced thousands of urban residents. In Boston, almost a third of the old city was demolished. Frequently, nothing was built to replace the demolished neighborhoods. Low-income urban housing projects, built with funds from the federal government, often proved to be soulless structures that bred crime and unsanitary conditions. Title I was often used to clear land to build highways rather than additional housing. Urban renewal programs often left cities in worse shape than before the programs were initiated.

B. CONFORMITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

American culture moved in distinctly different directions in the postwar period. On the one hand, an increasingly homogenous mass culture developed; on the other hand, many artists, intellectuals, and rebellious youth challenged the press toward conformity that marked postwar culture.

Conformity in a Conservative Decade

Several commentators noted the societal pressures toward conformity in the 1950s. Part of this push toward conformity can be attributed to the domestic Cold War and the dictates of McCarthyism. Many Americans felt intimidated from appearing non-conformist in the 1950s. Sociologists David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney, in their book *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), noted that Americans were more eager to mold their ideas to societal standards than they were to think independently. William H. Whyte's book, *The Organization Man* (1956), described the stultifying atmosphere of the modern corporation in which employees were pressured to think like the group. The novel, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), by Sloan Wilson, depicted a man trapped in the materialistic business world of the 1950s. J. D. Salinger's best-selling novel, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), railed at the "phonies" who had achieved success in mainstream 1950s society.

Television

Television became an extremely popular medium in the 1950s. By the end of the decade nearly 90 percent of American homes owned a television set. After an initial burst of creativity in the late 1940s and early 1950s, television programming settled into safe, predictable genres. The most emblematic genre of the 1950s was the suburban situation comedy (sitcom), complete with a stay-at-home mother, such as *Leave It to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*. Westerns, such as *Bonanza* and *Gunsmoke*, daytime dramas (labeled "soap operas" because of sponsorship by soap manufacturers) such as *The Guiding Light* and *Search for Tomorrow*, dominated the airwaves. Many of these genres were carryovers from radio. The *Ed Sullivan Show*, a variety show, was extremely popular, airing from 1948 to 1971.

Rock and Roll Music

Rock and roll music became extremely popular among young people in the 1950s. Rock and roll developed primarily in the African-American community. It was dubbed "race music" and was deemed dangerous by mainstream white commentators. Elvis Presley, a white singer from Memphis, Tennessee, became a huge cultural force in America. He followed in the footsteps of numerous African-American performers, some famous (Chuck Berry) and some largely forgotten ("Big Mama" Thornton). Rock 'n' roll music was part of a distinct youth culture ushering in a generational divide in American society.

COUNTERCULTURES

Do not confuse the timeframe for countercultural movements. The Beats were in the 1950s; hippies were in the 1960s; and punks were in the 1970s.

Beat Generation Literature

The beat literary movement represented a subversive undercurrent in the 1950s. The beats represented a rejection of mainstream social values—the suburban lifestyle, the consumer society, patriotism. The most important text of the beat movement is *On the Road*, by Jack Kerouac (1957). Initially written on a scroll—a stream of consciousness screed—the book depicts a life of spontaneity and freedom. Also important is Allen Ginsberg's book of poems, *Howl* (1956), which ripped apart the foundations of Cold War, materialistic American society.

Abstract Expressionism

An important artistic movement of the 1950s came to be called "abstract expressionism." Centered in New York City, the movement elevated the process of painting—emphasizing spontaneity, emotion, and intensity over studied, realistic reproductions of the visible world. The most well known practitioner of abstract expressionism is Jackson Pollock, who poured and dripped paint on his canvasses.

C. THE CONSERVATIVE RESPONSE TO RAPID SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

Conservatives perceived that society was under threat by many of the transformations that occurred in the postwar period. They challenged many of the trends they saw in the postwar period—urban unrest, a perceived increase in juvenile delinquency, and new ideas about family structures.

The Origins of the Conservative Movement

The modern conservative movement came of age and became a powerful force with the victory of Ronald Reagan in the presidential election of 1980 (see more on the modern conservative movement in Period 9). However, the origins of this movement can be seen in the 1960s. Many Americans were dismayed by the street protests against the Vietnam War and the permissive attitudes of the counterculture. They also reacted negatively to the changing nature of the American family and the rise in divorce rates. In addition, many white southerners grew hostile toward the tactics and the gains of the civil rights movement.

As early as the 1960s, we begin to see divisions within the conservative movement that have persisted within the movement down to the present. On the one hand, we see the growth of an angry, paranoid conservatism, evident in the "massive resistance" movement in the South, the John Birch Society, and the 1968 candidacy of George Wallace for president. On the other hand we see the growth of a more mainstream conservatism, evident in the influential magazine, *National Review*, edited by William F. Buckley and the candidacy of Barry Goldwater for president in 1964.

Barry Goldwater and the Origins of the New Right

President Johnson won reelection handily in 1964, capturing 61 percent of the popular vote. Although Johnson's opponent, Republican Senator Barry Goldwater, lost, he generated a great deal of grassroots enthusiasm. In many ways, Goldwater's campaign represented the beginning of the ascendency of a conservative movement that would become a force to reckon with later in the twentieth century (see Period 9).

II. Concern About Natural Resources in an Age of Economic Growth and Migration

The American economy expanded dramatically in the postwar period. Migrations of people, both within the United States and into the United States, occurred as more people sought to gain access to the growing prosperity of the United States. At the same time, critics began to question the growing exploitation of the country's natural resources.

A. MOVEMENTS OF PEOPLE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Large-scale migrations occurred in postwar America. Migrations from abroad increased dramatically after the passage of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965.

Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (also known as the Hart-Celler Act) changed American immigration policy that had been in place since the 1920s. It abolished the national quota system and replaced it with overall limits on immigration into the United States. There was, for the first time, a limitation placed on Western Hemisphere immigration (of 120,000 per year); the limit for immigration from the Eastern Hemisphere was set at 170,000. There were exemptions set for those who had family members already in the United States, allowing for "chain immigration," outside of the limits established by the act. Preference was also given to immigrants with particular skills that were needed in the United States. The act opened the door to increased immigration into the United States, and has altered the demographic composition of the United States (see more on the impact of the act in Period 9).

B. THE GROWTH OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Writers and activists began to call attention to the abuse of the natural environment in the 1960s. These writers and activists spearheaded an environmental movement that was able to successfully push for measures intended to address these problems.

The Environmental Movement

Another important movement for change in the 1960s and 1970s was the environmental movement. The movement became a national phenomenon and led to some important changes in laws and consciousness. Environmental issues were brought to the public's attention by Rachel Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring*, which vividly described how modern society was poisoning the earth. She described the impact of the agricultural chemical DDT on the environment. Many participants in the environmental movement were veterans of the New Left and of the movement to end the Vietnam War. Many of these New Left activists had developed a critique of corporate power and influence. Finally, the environmental movement was connected to the counterculture of the 1960s. The so-called hippies of the 1960s encouraged people to rid themselves of material possessions and live a more simple life. The movement gained national exposure when the first Earth Day occurred in April 1970. That same year, the Nixon Administration created the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and approved the Clean Air Act to set standards for air quality.

III. A Nation Divided

A variety of political, moral, economic, cultural, and demographic issues led to bitter debates in America in the 1960s and 1970s and divided many Americans.

A. CHALLENGES TO THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY STRUCTURE

A variety of factors led to a questioning and rethinking of the traditional family structure in America. Although popular culture continued to portray idealized nuclear families, the increase in the number of working women and new social attitudes eroded the reality of this image.

The Sexual Revolution

The 1960s also witnessed the development of more tolerant attitudes toward sexual behavior. In 1960, the birth control "pill" was introduced to the market, allowing women more control over reproduction and over their sexual lives. Many states impeded the distribution of information and products related to birth control. The Supreme Court invalidated such laws in the case of *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), in which the Court ruled that laws forbidding the use of birth control devices were unconstitutional because they violated the privacy rights of individuals.

Roe v. Wade (1973)

One of the major issues of the women's rights movement was a woman's right to control reproduction, including the choice of whether to have an abortion. One of the major successes of the women's liberation movement was the Supreme Court decision in the case of *Roe v. Wade* (1973). The Court declared that states shall not prohibit women from having an abortion during the first two trimesters of pregnancy. Previously the decision had been

left to the states, and many states forbade abortions. The Supreme Court reasoned that the Constitution guaranteed people the right to privacy. Abortion, they argued, was a decision that should be left to the woman with the advice of her physician. This decision echoed the reasoning of an earlier decision, *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), in affirming an individual's right to privacy. The issue of abortion has proved to be one of the most contentious issues in America in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The "Quiet Revolution"

From the 1970s to the present, the percentage of women engaged in the workforce has grown. There are several reasons for this. The women's liberation movement challenged traditional gender expectations—many women felt less pressure to marry at a young age, have children, and work at home. Also, the availability of the birth control pill and of abortions allowed women to have greater control over their reproductive lives. Many women made the decision to focus on a career first, putting off decisions about whether to have children or not into the future. Historians note a "quiet revolution" of women entering the work place from the late 1970s until the present. The percentage of households in which women are the sole or the primary breadwinner rose from 15 percent in 1970 to over 40 percent by 2011.

B. THE COUNTERCULTURE OF THE 1960s

A vibrant counterculture developed among young people in the 1960s. It rejected many of the mainstream values that characterized their parents' generation. As the baby-boom generation came of age in the 1960s, it grew increasingly weary of the cultural products of the previous generation. Mainstream culture seemed inauthentic, shallow, and corporate-controlled. This counterculture initiated a sexual revolution in American society and greater informality in everyday life.

THE COUNTERCULTURE AND PUBLIC OPINION

Nixon's victory in 1968 reveals that even at its height, the antiwar movement and the counterculture did not reach large segments of the electorate. This becomes even more evident in the sweeping reelection of Nixon in 1972.

Bob Dylan and the Folk Revival

Despite his protests to the contrary, Bob Dylan was able to verbalize many of the fears and hopes of the younger generation in the 1960s. Even his musical choices—simple, acoustic instrumentation—seemed a welcome break from the bland, overproduced products of the record industry. He cultivated a vocal approach that paid homage to the untrained, indigenous music of rural America, rather than to the smooth crooners of his parents' generation.

The British Invasion

In the 1960s, a series of British bands, most notably the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, transformed American culture. These bands took inspiration from the rich tradition of African-American music—from rhythm and blues to rock and roll—and infused it with a youthful energy. The Beatles inspired a manic following in the United States, known as "Beatlemania." If one event symbolized the beginning of the British invasion it was the first appearance by the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show in February 1964. The Beatles also generated a backlash in the United States. Conservative Americans were troubled by their long hair, veiled allu-

sions to drug use, interest in Eastern religions, and challenges to traditional notions of propriety. A comment by one of the Beatles, that the band had become more popular than Jesus Christ, added to the backlash.

The Hippie Movement and Haight-Ashbury

The "hippie" movement became visible in the late 1960s in neighborhoods such as San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury and New York's Lower East Side. In many ways, this counterculture represented a complete rejection of the materialistic conformity that many young people grew up with in the 1950s. A variety of activities came to be associated with the hippie movement—urban and rural communal living, a "do-it-yourself" approach to the varied tasks of life, mystic spiritual experiences, drug use, experimental music, and avant-garde art. Taking inspiration from sit-ins of the civil rights movement, the counterculture organized be-ins—gatherings of young people in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park or New York's Central Park.

Woodstock and Altamont

The counterculture reached its peak and showed its limits in two important events, months apart from each other, in 1969. The Woodstock Festival, in August, attracted half a million people to a farm in upstate New York and seemed to provide a glimpse of a utopian future for many participants. In December, promoters tried to duplicate the success of Woodstock with a giant music festival at the Altamont Speedway in California. However, the Altamont event was marred by incidents of violence; one concertgoer, armed and apparently crazed, was stopped and stabbed to death by a member of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club security detail as the Rolling Stones performed.

C. CLASHING POLITICAL VALUES

The postwar period was marked by a number of political and social clashes between conservatives and liberals about the power of the presidency and the federal government, and about movements that sought to expand individual rights.

Watergate, the Undoing of President Nixon, and the Limits of Presidential Power

A major effect of the Watergate scandal was that it reduced people's trust in government. The scandal began in June 1972, when five men were caught breaking in to the headquarters of the Democratic Party at the Watergate Hotel in Washington, DC. Persistent reporting by Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward of the *Washington Post* drew connections between the burglars and Nixon's reelection committee and ultimately the White House. When it became known that Nixon taped conversations in the White House Oval Office, investigators demanded that the tapes be turned over. Nixon argued that executive privilege allowed him to keep the tapes. In *United States v. Nixon*, the Supreme Court ordered Nixon to turn over the tapes. Also in 1974, the House Judiciary Committee voted in favor of articles of impeachment against President Nixon. Before the question of impeachment could be addressed by the entire House of Representatives, Nixon resigned. Since the 1970s, the percentage of people voting has declined and opinion polls have shown an erosion of trust in the government.

Clashes over Equal Rights

The culture clashes that would come to epitomize the last decades of the twentieth century could be seen in the push to add an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution in 1972. The Equal Rights Amendment would have prohibited the abridgement of "equality of rights under the law . . . on account of sex" either by the federal government or by the state governments. The movement galvanized the women's liberation movement. It also led to a conservative backlash against the proposal. Conservatives argued that passage of the amendment would destroy the American family. The movement against the proposal was led by Phyllis Schlafly. She organized a strong coalition, urging "positive women" to embrace femininity. The amendment was approved by both the House and the Senate in 1972 but failed to get the required thirty-eight states to ratify it, even after the deadline for ratification had been moved forward to 1982. It therefore did not become part of the Constitution.

Clashing Views of Affirmative Action

The movement for affirmative action was part of the civil rights movement. Activists hoped to not only end segregation, but to take affirmative action to rectify past discrimination by taking race into consideration in hiring, college admissions, and other areas. In 1961, President Kennedy issued an executive order mandating that projects using federal funds take "affirmative action" to make sure that employers did not discriminate based on race. In 1965, President Johnson went further, mandating that federal contractors and subcontractors make efforts to hire "protected class, underutilized" candidates. Many public universities began taking race into consideration when looking at applicants. Some schools set aside a certain number of seats for underrepresented groups.

Affirmative action policies generated a great deal of resentment among some white applicants for university admission and for jobs, who felt that they were being punished for wrongs done by others. The issue came to a head when an applicant to the U.C.-Davis Medical School named Allan Bakke, a white student, was denied admission. The University of California, Davis Medical School had set aside 16 percent of the seats in each entering class for minority applicants. Bakke, arguing that he was discriminated against, sued and took the case to the Supreme Court. In *Bakke v. University of California* (1978), the Court decided that specific quotas for underrepresented minorities violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. However, Justice Lewis Powell's decision asserted that race could be one of the many factors that universities may look at in the admissions process, since diversity in higher education was a "compelling interest."

SUBJECT TO DEBATE

Many of our understandings of the Cold War were developed by American historians during the height of the Cold War. As might be expected, these historians saw American actions in a positive light and Soviet actions in a negative light. "Our" side stood for democracy, freedom, and progress; "their" side stood for repression, aggression, and coercion. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, historians have reevaluated this standard narrative. Some historians have put renewed emphasis on covert operations by the United States during the Cold War, such as the 1954 CIA-backed coup in Iraq that toppled Mohammed Mosaddegh and installed the Shah. These covert operations complicate the story. In addition, historians have also looked at Soviet moves in a slightly different light. Stalin's occupation of Eastern Europe following

World War II is still seen as an unfortunate move, but some historians have begun to put Stalin's actions in a larger historical context. After all, perhaps the moves are less reprehensible when looked at in the context of the history of attacks on Russia that had come through Eastern Europe.

On the other side of the political spectrum, historians of the Cold War period have revisited debates about the nature of the American communist movement in the 1940s and 1950s. For many years, historians looked at Communist Party members as victims of an irrational witch-hunt. More recently, since the fall of the Soviet Union, a group of historians, led by Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes, have scoured old Soviet archives and found some damning evidence against the Communist Party. Klehr and Haynes have found, for instance, transcriptions that seem to implicate Julius Rosenberg in spying for the Soviet Union.[1] Their findings have forced a reevaluation of the assumption that members of the Communist Party were innocent victims.

When writing history, beware of clichés. Mainstream media and popular memory often reduce a complex time period to a phrase or an image. When many of us hear, "the nineteen twenties," the first thing that pops into our head might be "the jazz age." We think of *The Great Gatsby*, martinis, flappers, and speakeasies. But this image has become a cliché, obscuring the complex tensions of the 1920s. Yes, people went to speakeasies, but they also joined Ku Klux Klan rallies. The more we read about the 1920s, the harder it becomes to reduce it to a catchphrase.

The same is true of the 1950s. For many Americans, the image of the 1950s can be reduced to the word "conformity." We look condescendingly at the naïve suburbanites of the decade, blithely watching bland television programs. However, as students of history, we should be weary of such easy clichés. As in the 1920s, there were complex social factors at work. There were many trends in the 1950s that flew in the face of conformity—the most obvious one being the civil rights movement. The 1950s also saw the birth of the beat movement, the popularity of rock 'n' roll, and the beginnings of the folk revival.

On a related note, be careful about identifying the decade too closely with one individual—Joseph McCarthy. Yes, he was a powerful figure. However, his power was brief; by 1954, he was largely discredited. Also, even at his height, he was not the entire anticommunist movement. By focusing on McCarthy we forget that there was a liberal anticommunist movement, one that was critical of the excesses of McCarthy. Historians are moving away from using the term "McCarthyism" to describe the entire anticommunist movement.

There has been much historical discussion about the origins of the civil rights movement. One key division in the discussion is between those who stress grassroots activism and those who focus on the actions of the government. Historians who take a more "top-down" approach elevate the importance of powerful institutions—the courts, the police, elected officials—in shaping events. This is the more traditional approach. Revisionist historians, many of whom come out of a "New Left" tradition, focus on the agency of ordinary people in shaping historical change. Of late, historians have looked at the interaction between the grassroots level and the halls of power. We see this at play with the Birmingham campaign in 1963. The campaign, which ignited a violent reaction from police (broadcast on the evening news), prompted the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to take action and to push for the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This act might not have been passed were it not for the events in Birmingham.

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1 John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

The legacy of the war in Vietnam has been hotly debated. Historians have argued about whether the conflict in Vietnam was essentially a civil war or an international Cold War struggle. Should the focus be on the rebellion by the indigenous Vietcong and its peasant supporters against an oppressive regime? Or should the focus be on North Vietnam and China fomenting chaos in South Vietnam? If we accept the first scenario, then American intervention seems misguided and bound for failure. If we accept the second scenario, then American intervention seems entirely reasonable. A related question is whether the war was winnable. To some, the United States was fighting a hopeless war—additional years of extensive bombing would simply steel the resolve of the populace to resist the American occupation. To others, victory was both possible and within sight; President Nixon abandoned the fight at just the wrong moment. Domestic political considerations and the Watergate scandal caused Nixon to make a hasty exit from Southeast Asia.

Historians have also debated the overall legacy of the Nixon presidency. In the popular imagination, the Watergate scandal looms large. However, historians point out, the scandal should not overshadow some of Nixon's real accomplishments, including promoting détente with China and the Soviet Union. Historians have also praised Nixon for avoiding the divisive social and religious issues that characterized subsequent Republican administrations. Other historians insist that Nixon's legacy is irreparably tarnished by the bombing of civilians in Southeast Asia.