



# Later Modern History of Europe and the Wider World: Topic 6

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# United States political structures from Roosevelt to Reagan

1

## The American Constitution and the ‘Separation of Powers’

### The American Constitution

- To understand American politics and history you have to understand the **Constitution of the United States**.
- It was drawn up in 1787 by the ‘**Founding Fathers**’, the men who led the American revolution against British rule.
- They feared that their newly founded republic might be taken over by a tyrant (dictator). To stop that happening they wrote a Constitution that limited the government’s power with an elaborate system of ‘**checks and balances**’.
- The most important of the checks and balances is ‘**the separation of powers**’. This prevents any one part of the government getting so strong that it can over-rule the others.
- Power is separated in two ways:
  - Between the **States** and the **Federal** government
  - Within the Federal government.

Point to note

In 1776, there were **13 states**, e.g. Virginia and New York. As the US expanded into the West, new states like Texas and California were created. Today there are **50 states**.

### State government

- The Founding Fathers left a great deal of power with the States that started the revolution against Britain:
  - Each State can write its own Constitution.
  - It can elect its own **Legislature** (parliament) to make laws and its own **Governor** to enforce those laws.
  - It can raise its own taxes and control its own education, health, welfare and transport system.

## The Federal government

- To keep the States united and to deal with general issues, the Founding Fathers set up a **Federal government**.
- It controls foreign policy, trade, the armed forces, currency, banking, travel between the States, etc. It is located in **Washington, DC** (which is not in any of the States).
- If there is a conflict between State law and Federal law, Federal law wins.

## How powers are separated within the Federal government

- The Founding Fathers also divided the Federal government into three parts. Each part was given a separate task:
  - 1 The **Congress** is the **Legislature** which makes the laws.
  - 2 The **President** is the **Executive** which enforces the laws.
  - 3 The **Supreme Court** is the **Judiciary**, which decides if the actions of Congress, the President and the States are in line with the Constitution and laws of the US.

## The Congress

- The Congress has two Houses:
  - 1 **The House of Representatives**: Its members, called **Congressmen**, are elected for two years. Seats in the House of Representatives are given on a **population basis**, so a big state with a big population like California has more Congressmen than a state with a small population like Vermont.
  - 2 **The Senate**: Each state, big or small, elects **two Senators** who must seek re-election after six years.
- All Bills (proposed laws) must be accepted by both Houses and signed by the President. If he **vetoes** a Bill (i.e. refuses to sign), it will still pass if **two-thirds** of both Houses vote for it.
- The President must get the approval of the Senate before s/he can appoint members of the Cabinet, Ambassadors and Judges of the Supreme Court.

## The President

- The **President** is the most important person in the United States. S/he is elected for four years. All citizens may vote in the election. Voting is on a state-by-state basis, with the candidate who wins most votes in each state getting all the votes in that state.

- A **Vice-President** is elected at the same time. If the President dies in office, the Vice-President takes over.
- The President is elected in November and takes office in the following January. Since 1948, Presidents may only serve for two terms (i.e. eight years).
- The President is **Commander-in-Chief** of the armed forces and controls foreign policy, though the Senate must approve any treaties s/he makes.
- S/he draws up the **annual budget** (taxes and what they will be spent on) and submits it to Congress, which has to approve it.
- S/he draws up **Bills**, and submits them to Congress, which has to approve them before they become law.
- S/he is responsible for collecting taxes and enforcing laws.
- S/he is advised by a **Cabinet**, with members (called **Secretaries**) in charge of particular areas of government. The **Secretary of State** is responsible for foreign affairs, the **Secretary of Defence** is responsible for the armed forces, and so on.
- Presidents also have many unelected advisers. Often they have more power than Cabinet members.

## Amending the Constitution

- The Constitution can be **amended** (changed) when two-thirds of the Congress and two-thirds of the states agree.
- Since 1789 the Constitution has been amended 27 times. The first ten Amendments were passed in 1791. They are called the **Bill of Rights** and guarantee freedom of speech, freedom of religion and the right to own guns, among other rights.
- Later Amendments abolished slavery (14th) and gave women the right to vote (19th).

## The importance of the Supreme Court

- The Constitution was written over 200 years ago when America was a small rural country.
- It has not changed greatly since, yet it continues to work in a century when America is an urban, industrialised superpower.
- The reason for this is the Supreme Court. As the United States changed, the Supreme Court interpreted the wording of the Constitution in ways which allowed it to deal with modern problems.
- Federal and State courts are supposed to enforce the decisions of the Supreme Court.
- People who want something in the law changed take cases to the Supreme Court, hoping it will support their point of view.

## Parties

- Most Americans support one of the two major Parties, the **Republicans** and the **Democrats**:
  - Republicans usually represent business and favour low taxes and less power for the Federal government.
  - Democrats usually represent poorer people and ethnic minorities, and want the Federal government to be involved in welfare and civil rights.
- American parties are much less disciplined than Irish parties and Congressmen and Senators often vote independently of the party-line.

## The Presidency from Roosevelt to Reagan 1945–1989

### The growth of Presidential power: 1945–1990

- Since 1941, the United States has been involved in almost continuous warfare.
- Because the President is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, war has greatly increased Presidential power at the expense of Congress.
- Historians sometimes call this the ‘**Imperial Presidency**’.

### 1933–1945: Franklin D. Roosevelt (Democrat)

- Roosevelt led America during the Depression of the 1930s and most of the Second World War. In dealing with these crises, he greatly expanded the powers of the President.
- He was the only President in American history to be elected four times. After his death the Constitution was amended to make this impossible.



### Key personality

#### Harry S. Truman, Democrat (1945–1953)

- Truman was Roosevelt’s Vice-President and became President when Roosevelt died on 12 April 1945, shortly before Germany surrendered.
- Fearing many American soldiers would die if the Allies had to invade Japan, he dropped the **atom bomb** on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August. This forced a quick Japanese surrender.
- Once Hitler was beaten, relations between the US and Soviet Union declined. Truman thought that Stalin planned to expand communism and conquer Europe. To stop him, Truman:
  - Approved the investment of millions of dollars in Europe to help it recover

from the effects of the war (**Marshall Aid**)

- Adopted the policy of ‘**containment**’ to stop communist expansion
- Issued the **Truman Doctrine**, which promised American aid to any government opposing a communist takeover.
- When Stalin blockaded Berlin in 1948, Truman ordered that supplies be airlifted into the city.
- In 1949, he organised democratic European countries into the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** to resist communist expansion.
- When the communists under **Mao Zedong** took power in China 1949 Republicans accused Truman of ‘*losing China*’.
- Truman sent US troops to defend **South Korea** in 1950 when it was invaded by the communist North. But he sacked **General McArthur** when he suggested using the atom bomb against China.
- At home, the **GI Bill of Rights** gave special help to soldiers returning from the Second World War. But the Republican-controlled Congress turned down Truman’s proposal for a **Fair Deal** to provide more equal treatment for racial minorities and greater social security and housing for the poor.
- His last years as President were dominated by the panic over communist infiltration (the ‘**red scare**’) associated with **Senator Joseph McCarthy** (see p.266).

## 1953–1961: Dwight D. Eisenhower (Republican)

- Eisenhower led the Allied armies to victory in the Second World War and became a hero. In 1952, the Republicans chose him as their candidate and he won the Presidential election.
- He arranged a truce which ended the Korean War in 1953, but continued Truman’s policy of containing communists. This led him to begin America’s involvement in Vietnam (see p.270).
- Stalin’s death in 1953 eased tensions with the Soviet Union. Eisenhower held ‘**summit meetings**’ with the new Soviet leader Nikita **Khrushchev**.
- At home, he encouraged economic stability and saw the US enjoy eight years of economic growth.
- He saw the start of the civil rights movement in the American South (see p.300) and reluctantly sent troops in to enforce the law in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957.

## 1961–1963: John F. Kennedy (JFK) (Democrat)

- In 1960, Senator **John F. Kennedy** narrowly defeated Vice-President **Richard Nixon**. He was the first Roman Catholic President.
- He accused the Republicans of letting the US fall behind the Russians in technology and promised to put a man on the moon.

- In the Cold War (see p.281) he faced crises over:
  - The building of the **Berlin Wall**
  - Soviet missiles in **Cuba**.
- He increased American involvement in Vietnam.
- He reluctantly supported the civil rights movement (p.300).
- He was assassinated in Dallas in November 1963.

## 1963–1969: Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) (Democrat)

- As Vice-President, Johnson took over after Kennedy's death.
- He supported the civil rights movement (see p.300) and greatly increased help for poorer Americans (the **Great Society**).
- He hugely increased American involvement in Vietnam (see p.270). This diverted resources away from his social programmes and damaged the American economy (p.278).
- In 1968, he decided not to contest the election for President.

## 1969–1974: Richard M. Nixon (Republican)

- Nixon saw men land on the moon (see p.283) and slowly ended US involvement in Vietnam.
- He encouraged a **détente** with the Soviets by visiting Moscow.
- He also recognised the communist government in China and visited Beijing (see p.278).
- He tried to improve the economy by freezing wages and devaluing the dollar.
- His support for Israel led the Arab States to impose an **oil embargo** which damaged the economy (p.289).
- He won re-election in 1974, but during the campaign there was a break-in at the Democratic headquarters in the **Watergate** building in Washington. When he was linked to it, he was forced to resign.

## 1974–1977: Gerald Ford (Republican)

- Vice-President Gerald Ford took over.
- He officially ended the Vietnam War.
- He continued the **détente** with the Soviet Union.
- He faced economic problems with inflation and high unemployment, but failed to solve them.
- His reputation was also damaged when the communists took over in South Vietnam.



## 1977–1981: Jimmy Carter (Democrat)

- He improved the economy but his policies were damaged by a second oil crisis in 1979–1980.
- He negotiated peace between Israel and Egypt at Camp David and negotiated a disarmament treaty with the Soviet Union.
- In **Iran**, after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Americans were held hostage for over a year. Carter's failure to get them out probably cost him the election.

## 1981–1989: Ronald Reagan (Republican)

- Once a film star, then Governor of California, Reagan became President at the age of 69.
- His economic policies involved large tax cuts for the rich and increased military spending (see p.289).
- Inflation fell from the mid-1980s and employment increased.
- He ended the détente with the Soviet Union, calling it an 'evil empire' and proposed building a 'star wars' missile system to protect the US from attack.
- When a reformer, **Mikhail Gorbachev**, came to power in the Soviet Union, Reagan negotiated with him, thus contributing to the ending of communist rule in Europe in 1989 (see p.279).
- In spite of many scandals he remained personally popular with the American people and was succeeded by his Vice-President, **George Bush**.

### Exam questions

- 1 How did the US presidency develop from Roosevelt to Reagan? *(HL 2011)*
- 2 What were the successes and failures in the political career of Ronald Reagan? *(HL 2006)*
- 3 How well did President Harry Truman or President Lyndon Johnson handle the challenges they faced? *(HL 2012)*
- 4 What were the successes and failures in the presidency of Lyndon Johnson? *(HL 2010)*



## 2 American foreign policy 1945–1989

### 1945–1949: The start of the Cold War

#### Introduction

- In the decades after the Second World War, two powerful countries dominated the world – the **United States** and the **Soviet Union (USSR)**. They were known as the **superpowers**.
- Rivalry with the Soviet Union was central to American foreign policy from 1945 to 1989. It is called the **Cold War** because the superpowers never actually fought one another directly.
- However, they engaged in **indirect conflicts**, sometimes called ‘*proxy wars*’ in **Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan** and other places.
- In the US, the deep fear of communism led to an anti-communist hysteria (**McCarthyism**) in the 1950s.
- The Cold War also featured an **arms race** that included the development of nuclear weapons, inter-continental ballistic missiles and the **space race**.
- The arms race and the space race produced a range of new technologies such as computers and the internet.

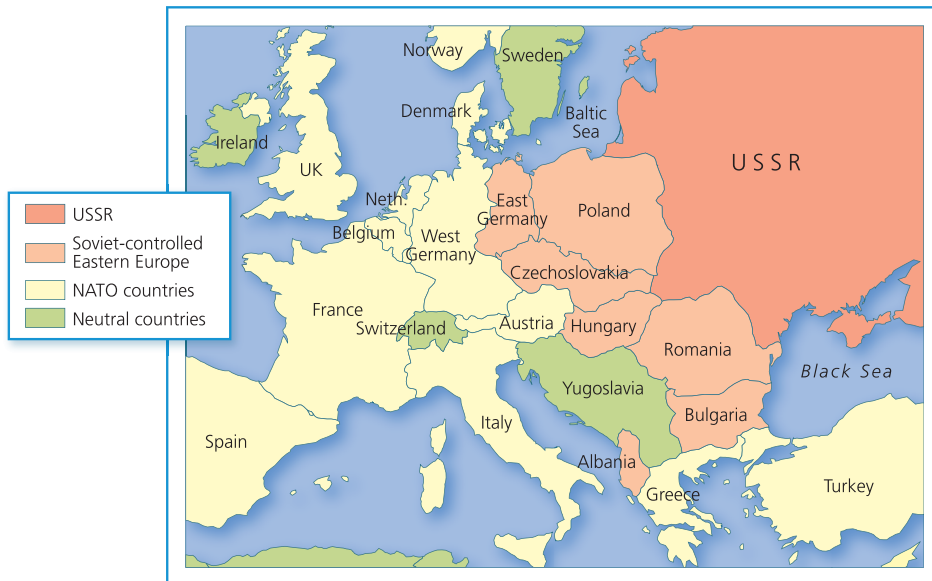
#### Ideological differences between the superpowers

- Distrust between the USSR and the US went back to the 1917 Russian revolution and was based on the **ideological differences** between them:
  - Lenin, and after him Stalin, set up a **Marxist/communist dictatorship** in which all property, land and business belonged to the state.
  - The US was a **democracy** that supported **unrestrained capitalism**, with most property, land and business belonging to individuals or private corporations.

#### 1945–1948: The Cold War begins

- Despite the differences between them, the two countries joined together to defeat Hitler in the Second World War.
- But once peace came, the differences returned. They mainly concerned the fate of Europe once Hitler was beaten.

- The US hoped that all countries in Europe would become capitalist democracies, but:
  - Between 1946 and 1948, Stalin imposed **communist dictatorships** on the countries in Eastern Europe that his army controlled.
  - In **France** and **Italy**, communist parties did well in elections.
  - In **Greece**, a civil war broke out between communists and royalists.



*Europe in the Cold War*

## Containment, the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Aid

- Truman and his advisers thought these developments showed that Stalin planned to take over Europe.
- To stop him, they adopted a policy called '**containment**'. That meant **containing** (i.e. keeping) Soviet power **within the area it controlled in 1945** – not letting it expand any further.
- They issued the **Truman Doctrine**. It promised American aid to any government fighting a communist takeover.
- They then sent military help to the Greek government.
- To stop the Soviets taking over the rest of Europe they decided to:
  - Keep US troops in Europe
  - Give billions of dollars in **Marshall Aid** to European governments to rebuild their economies. They hoped this would undermine support for communism.

## Europe divided

- Western European governments accepted Marshall Aid and developed their economies along capitalist lines.

- Stalin would not let the Eastern European countries he controlled accept Marshall Aid. He forced them to become communist.
- This divided Europe into the **pro-American capitalist West** and the **Soviet-controlled communist East**.
- The dividing line between them, known as the **iron curtain**, ran through Germany. This created a number of crises during the Cold War.

**Point to note**

In 1946 Churchill called the line dividing Stalin's Europe from the rest 'the iron curtain'.

## 1948–1949: Germany after the Second World War



Germany after 1945

- As the war ended in 1945, the allied leaders met in **Yalta** and **Potsdam**.
- They agreed to **divide Germany** and its capital **Berlin** into four zones, each run by one of the Allies, the USSR, the US, Britain and France.
- In 1948, the three western Allies joined their zones together, accepted Marshall Aid and began to develop a democratic German government.
- In 1949, this became **the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany)**.
- Stalin refused to let his zone accept Marshall Aid and imposed a communist dictatorship on it. It became the **German Democratic Republic (East Germany)**.

## 1948–1949: The Berlin Blockade

- Berlin was deep inside the **Soviet zone**. In 1945, it too was divided into four zones. Two million people lived in the zones which the western Allies controlled (**West Berlin**).
- To get to West Berlin, the western Allies had to use road, rail and air transport which crossed Soviet-controlled territory.
- In 1948, as tension rose between the two sides, Stalin closed **all land routes** from West Germany to West Berlin. He did not think the western allies could supply Berlin by air alone.
- Truman decided to challenge Stalin's blockade. For 11 months, US aircraft carried food, fuel and other supplies to the people of West Berlin (the **Berlin Airlift**).
- In 1949, Stalin gave in and allowed land transport to resume.

## 1949: The key year in the Cold War

- As well as the Berlin blockade, a number of other developments made 1949 the crucial year in the Cold War.
- **China becomes communist**
  - In the Second World War the Chinese joined the Allies against Japan, which occupied large parts of China.
  - When the war ended, Chinese nationalists led by **Chiang Kai-shek** fought a civil war with the Chinese communists, led by **Mao Zedong**.
  - In 1949, the communists won. China became a communist state, the **People's Republic of China**.
  - Chiang's Chinese nationalists withdrew to the island of **Taiwan** and claimed they were the real government of China.
  - The Americans recognised this claim. For many years they refused to let communist China take China's place on the United Nations Security Council.
- **Military Alliances: NATO**
  - The Berlin Blockade, Stalin's treatment of Eastern Europe and communist victory in China encouraged the US, Canada and ten democratic countries in Europe to form the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**.
  - It was an American-led military alliance that aimed to stop Soviet expansion in Europe.
- **The Soviet Union's atom bomb**
  - From 1945 to 1949, the US was the only country with an **atom bomb**. This gave it an advantage over the USSR. But in 1949, Soviet scientists exploded the USSR's **own A-bomb**. This equalised the relationship between them.
  - This began an **arms race** between the two superpowers (see p.281).

# McCarthyism and the Cold War inside America

## Anti-communist ‘witch-hunts’ in America

- The start of the Cold War and communist expansion in Europe and Asia led to a ‘**red scare**’ in America.
- People saw communist conspiracies everywhere. A **Loyalty Program** was set up to root out government workers suspected of communist sympathies.
- In 1947, the House of Representatives set up the **House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)**. It searched out ‘*communist sympathisers*’ especially in the film industry.
- Artists and writers were called before it and asked about their involvement in left-wing activities.
- The only way to escape censure was to denounce others. Some did; others did not and were **blacklisted**, making it hard for them to find work.
- The panic increased in 1949 with the communist victory in China and the Soviet A-Bomb. Many believed that there were communist spies in the US government and several people were tried in sensational spy trials.
- Republicans accused the Democrats of being ‘*soft on communism*’ and blamed Truman for ‘*losing China*’.
- This anti-communist hysteria reached its peak between 1950 and 1953, under the leadership of **Senator Joseph McCarthy**. Because of this it is sometimes referred to as **McCarthyism**.

Point to note

**Witch-hunt:**  
called after a panic  
in 17th century America  
when hysterical accusations  
of witchcraft led to many  
innocent people being  
punished.



## Key personality

### Joseph McCarthy (1908–1957)

- Born in Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy was first a Democrat, but joined the Republicans after he failed to be chosen as a Democratic candidate. In the war he had a desk job, but he won a Senate seat by lying about his war record.
- In 1950, fearing he would not be re-elected, he launched an anti-communist witch-hunt using information leaked to him by journalists and his friend **J. Edgar Hoover**, head of the FBI.
- He claimed that 57 people in the State Department (Foreign Ministry) were members of the Communist Party and were passing information to the Soviets. The Truman government, he said, knew this and did nothing.

- None of this was accurate, but when Democrats protested he said this proved they were communist sympathisers. Some of those who opposed him lost their seats in the 1950 elections. That made others cautious about challenging him.
- As chairman of the **Senate Committee on Government Operations** he was able to call civil servants before him, questioning them about past left-wing sympathies. He made it clear that the only way to show they were loyal to the US was to name others who might have been involved with them in the past.
- At first many Americans believed McCarthy. His campaign, which was aimed mainly at Democrats, helped the Republican **Dwight D. Eisenhower** win the 1952 election.
- Eisenhower disapproved of McCarthy, but dared not oppose him publicly.
- In 1953, a TV documentary damaged McCarthy's credibility. Then he attacked the US army, and his investigations were televised. This exposed and discredited his bullying tactics. In 1954, the Senate censured him and ended his brief reign of terror. He died, of alcoholism it is thought, in 1957.
- About 10,000 Americans were imprisoned or lost their jobs as a result of the McCarthy's witch-hunts.
- McCarthyism damaged America's image as a free country and gave a propaganda victory to the Soviet Union.

## 1949–1961: Korea and the Cold War in the 1950s

### The Cold War spreads to Asia

- In Asia, the Second World War ended when the Americans dropped the atom bomb on two Japanese cities in 1945. The Japanese surrendered and the US army occupied the country.
- But after China became communist, the Americans organised a democratic government in Japan, helped them rebuild their economy and made a treaty allowing American bases to stay there.
- The Americans also formed alliances with other anti-communist governments in Asia, promising to defend them against a communist attack.

### 1950–1953: The Korean War

- Before the Second World War, **Korea** was a Japanese colony. When the Japanese surrendered, the Soviets occupied the north of Korea, as far south as the **38th parallel**, and the Americans occupied the south.
- This partition was meant to be temporary but as the Cold War developed it became permanent. In **North Korea**, Stalin backed a communist dictator **Kim il Sung** while the Americans supported a capitalist dictator in **South Korea**.
- In 1950, Kim invaded South Korea, aiming to unite the country under his control.

- With the support of the **United Nations**, Truman sent an American-led army to defend South Korea and uphold the policy of containment.
- UN forces, led by **General McArthur**, defeated the North Koreans at the **Battle of Inchon** but McArthur then invaded North Korea, against Truman's wishes.
- This brought the Chinese into the war and forced the UN forces back to the 38th parallel. When McArthur publicly suggested invading China, Truman sacked him.
- In 1953, Stalin died and the new US President, **Eisenhower**, agreed to a truce, with both sides back where they started at the 38th parallel.

Point to note

In 1950, the Soviets had boycotted the UN because the US blocked the admission of communist China, so Truman was able to get his resolution about Korea passed.

## The results of the Korean War

- About 2.5 million people died, including over 30,000 American soldiers.
- Concern about the war helped Eisenhower become President.
- US spending on arms increased greatly.
- The Americans became more involved in Asia, setting up another anti-communist alliance, the **South-East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO)**.
- They also developed the '**domino theory**' which led to their involvement in Vietnam (see p.270).

## Eisenhower and Khrushchev

- After Stalin's death, the new Soviet leader **Nikita Khrushchev** said he wanted '**peaceful co-existence**' with the west.
- That eased the tensions between the Americans and the Soviets.
- Khrushchev visited America and met Eisenhower. This began the '**summit conferences**', by which the leaders of the two superpowers kept in touch throughout the Cold War.

## Superpower tensions in the 1950s

But rivalry between the two sides remained and could sometimes erupt into a crisis.

- **Khrushchev**
  - He continued the arms race. At first it seemed the Soviets had gained the upper hand when they launched the first man-made earth satellite (**sputnik**) in 1957 and sent the first man into space (**Yuri Gagarin**) in 1961.
  - He also supported independence movements in Asia and Africa, hoping the newly independent countries would adopt communism.



- His biggest coup was to get **Fidel Castro** to agree to set up Soviet missiles in **Cuba**.
- **Eisenhower**
  - He supported anti-communist regimes around the world, even when they were unsavoury dictatorships.
  - But when people rebelled against Soviet tyranny in **East Germany** in 1953 and **Hungary** in 1956 he did nothing to help them because they were already under Soviet control.
  - To counter Soviet success in space, he set up the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** in 1958 and increased military spending.
  - He used high-flying **U-2 planes** to spy on the USSR. When one was shot down in 1960, on the eve of a summit conference, it damaged relations between the superpowers.

## Kennedy's foreign policy, 1961–1963

### John F. Kennedy's foreign policy

- In 1960, Democrat John F. Kennedy won the Presidential election. He was assassinated in 1963.
- Three important foreign events happened while he was President:
  - The building of the Berlin Wall
  - The 'Bay of Pigs' and the Cuban Missile Crisis
  - America's growing involvement in Vietnam.

### 1961: The Berlin Wall

- In the 1950s, West Germany prospered, while East Germany did not. Many East Germans went to Berlin to escape to the West.
- To stop them, the East German government, with Khrushchev's backing, **built a wall** on the border between East and West Berlin.
- Kennedy went to Berlin soon after. He spoke to the people of the city (*'Ich bin ein Berliner'*), but did nothing about the Wall which remained as a visible symbol of the division of Europe throughout the Cold War.

### 1963: The Cuban Missile Crisis

- Cuba is a Caribbean island 90 miles south of Florida. Up to 1959, it was ruled by an unpleasant dictator, General Batista, and its economy was dominated by American businesses.

- In 1959, **Fidel Castro** overthrew Batista and took over the American companies. The American government then imposed a trade embargo on Cuba and Castro turned for help to the Soviet Union.
- When Kennedy became President, he approved a CIA plan to invade Cuba and overthrow Castro. The invasion force landed at the **Bay of Pigs**, but was easily defeated.
- After this, Castro agreed to Khrushchev's plan to build missile launching sites in Cuba. Missiles from there could reach American cities which, until then, had been safe from Soviet attack.
- American spy planes photographed the sites. After some hesitation, Kennedy imposed a naval blockade on Cuba to stop Soviet ships arriving with missiles.
- War threatened, but Khrushchev backed down. In return for the removal of missiles from Cuba, Kennedy secretly removed US missiles in Turkey.

Point to note

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency, i.e. America's spies.

## The results of the Cuban Missile Crisis

- Realising how near they had come to war, a 'hot-line' was installed between the Kremlin and the White House to let the leaders communicate with each other.
- In 1964, Khrushchev was replaced as Soviet leader by **Leonid Brezhnev**. He was in favour of **détente** (i.e. reducing the tension between the two sides).
- Disarmament talks began, leading to international treaties which limited the **testing** and **proliferation** (spread) of nuclear weapons (see p.281).

## How America became involved in Vietnam

### Vietnam before 1945

- Vietnam was an ancient kingdom in southeast Asia. After resisting the Chinese for centuries, it was taken over by the French in the 19th century, along with the neighbouring kingdoms of **Cambodia** and **Laos**.
- In the Second World War, the Japanese invaded. Resistance to them was organised by the **Vietminh**, whose leader was **Ho Chi Minh**.
- Ho Chi Minh was a nationalist who had spent many years in exile in the United States and Europe. He was influenced by the ideas of **Karl Marx** and **Lenin**.
- After Japan was defeated, Ho Chi Minh hoped that the US would back Vietnamese independence. Instead, Truman backed the return of the French because he needed their support in Europe.

## War between the Vietminh and the French

- In 1946, the Vietminh began a War of Independence.
- By 1950, their army, led by the brilliant **General Giap**, had 250,000 men. They got arms from the USSR and from China after the communists took power there in 1949.
- Eisenhower supported the French against the Vietminh. By 1954, the US was paying 80% of the cost of the French army.
- They did this because:
  - They believed Ho Chi Minh was a communist allied to Stalin and Mao Zedong. If he won, communist power would expand in southeast Asia, thus breaching their policy of containment.
  - They had developed the ‘**domino theory**’. It said that if one country in Asia fell to the communists, others were bound to fall too (like a row of dominoes).
  - Republicans accused Truman of ‘losing China’ and won the 1952 Presidential election as a result. No later President dared to ‘lose’ Vietnam.



## 1954: Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Accords

- Giap used guerrilla tactics to wear down the French, and in 1954 he defeated a big French army at **Dien Bien Phu**.
- This forced the French to make the **Geneva Accords** which divided Vietnam along the 17th parallel into:
  - **North Vietnam**, with Hanoi as its capital, under a communist regime headed by **Ho Chi Minh**
  - **South Vietnam**, with Saigon as its capital, under a capitalist regime led by **Ngo Dinh Diem**
  - France also recognised the independence of **Cambodia** and **Laos**.
- The Geneva Accords said there would be elections to unify Vietnam, but Diem refused to hold them, fearing he would lose. The Americans backed this decision.

## The war resumes

- From 1954 to 1959, Ho Chi Minh consolidated his grip on North Vietnam. He imposed collectivisation on the peasants (farmers) and brutally suppressed resistance.
- In 1957, Ho Chi Minh and Giap began their campaign to reunite Vietnam. They used South Vietnamese communists (**Vietcong**) and the North Vietnamese Army (**NVA**) to wage a guerrilla war against the South Vietnamese government.
- Soldiers and supplies went to South Vietnam through Laos and Cambodia along the route known as the **Ho Chi Minh trail**.



*The Ho Chi Minh trail from North to South Vietnam passed through Laos and Cambodia*

## Direct American involvement begins

- Eisenhower backed Diem's government in South Vietnam, even though it was corrupt and unpopular.
- From 1955 to 1961, he spent billions of dollars and sent almost 1,000 'advisers', about half of them military, to support the South Vietnamese.

## Kennedy and Vietnam

- The next President, **John F. Kennedy**, advised by his Secretary of State, **Dean Rusk**, and his Secretary for Defence, **Robert McNamara**, increased US support for Diem's government.
- They did this because:
  - Communists had several successes (Bay of Pigs, Berlin Wall) and they could not let them win in Vietnam too.
  - They believed in the domino theory.

- They knew little about Vietnam and did not understand that many South Vietnamese wanted unity and hated Diem.
- Kennedy sent large numbers of tanks and aircraft to strengthen the South Vietnamese army (ARVN) and increased the number of US ‘advisers’ to 16,000.
- But US weapons, designed for war in Europe, did not suit a guerrilla war in the mountainous and jungle-covered Vietnamese countryside.

## The fall of Diem

- By 1963, Kennedy knew that Diem was a problem:
  - Diem had rounded up peasants and put them in ‘strategic hamlets’, i.e. villages fortified against a Vietcong attack. The peasants hated being moved from their lands, so this only increased support for the Vietcong.
  - He was a Catholic and favoured the small Catholic minority over the Buddhist majority.
  - He appointed Catholics to command the South Vietnamese army (ARVN), regardless of their ability. This made it less able to stand up to the Vietcong.
  - In 1963, his soldiers fired on a Buddhist march, killing seven. In protest, a 73-year-old-Buddhist priest burned himself to death.
- Kennedy became convinced that Diem had to go. In November 1963, the ARVN, with American approval, overthrew and killed him.
- From then on, South Vietnam was ruled by a succession of military dictators.

## Case Study

### Case Study: Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam War

#### President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963–1969)

- Shortly after Diem’s death, Kennedy was assassinated and his Vice- President, **Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ)** became President.
- Johnson promised to continue with Kennedy’s policies, including in Vietnam. He did this because:
  - The emotion created by Kennedy’s assassination made it difficult to question anything he had done.
  - Knowing little about foreign affairs, he kept Rusk and McNamara as his advisers. They encouraged him to believe in the domino theory.
  - Johnson was strongly anti-communist. He did not want to see them extend their power and as a patriotic American he did not want to admit the US might be defeated.

- He feared he and the Democratic Party would lose the 1964 election if he ‘lost’ Vietnam.
- For these reasons Johnson escalated American involvement in Vietnam well beyond anything considered before.

## August 1964: The Gulf of Tonkin

- Early in 1964, Ho Chi Minh sent more North Vietnamese soldiers south to support the Vietcong. The Soviets and Chinese also increased their supplies of arms. By March, the communists controlled about half of South Vietnam.
- The South Vietnamese asked the Americans for more help.
- By then, the US Presidential election campaign was under way, with Republicans accusing Johnson of being ‘*soft on communism*’.
- Rusk and McNamara advised Johnson to increase the number of US troops and begin bombing North Vietnam, but he needed an excuse to convince Congress to back him. He got it in the ‘**Gulf of Tonkin**’ incident.
- The Americans claimed that on 2 August, North Vietnamese gunboats made unprovoked attacks on two American ships in the Gulf of Tonkin. It is still not clear whether this really happened or whether the Americans manufactured the incident.
- On 7 August, the Senate passed **Gulf of Tonkin Resolution**. It allowed Johnson to ‘take any necessary steps’ to defend the US and its Allies. Most Americans approved of this decision (according to opinion polls).

## The 1964 Presidential election

- Johnson then launched limited bombing missions against North Vietnam. This made him look tough, which was important for the election campaign.
- However, he also reassured opponents of war by promising: ‘*We are not going to send American boys away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves.*’
- Many voters feared his opponent, **Barry Goldwater**, would increase American involvement, so Johnson was re-elected by a large majority.
- He believed this gave him a mandate to continue with the war and to increase American involvement.

## Winter 1964–1965: What to do about Vietnam?

- After the election, Johnson had to decide what to do about Vietnam. His advisers were divided:
  - A minority were ‘**doves**’. They questioned the domino theory, wondered if Vietnam really was important for America, and even supported the idea of withdrawal.

- A majority, including most senior generals, were ‘**hawks**’. They wanted to increase American involvement, perhaps use nuclear weapons, or even attack China because of its support for North Vietnam.
- Over the winter of 1964–1965 the Vietcong attacked American installations in South Vietnam. This showed that the South Vietnamese were not able to resist alone.
- Opinion polls showed that 70% of Americans supported the bombing of North Vietnam and opposed withdrawal.
- These developments explain why Johnson escalated the war in 1965, though not as much as some ‘hawks’ wanted.

## 1965: The war escalates

- In February 1965, Johnson ordered the bombing of North Vietnam to increase. The aim was to:
  - Undermine the will of the northerners to go on fighting
  - Destroy North Vietnamese industry
  - Stop the flow of arms and soldiers along the Ho Chi Minh trail.
- Called ‘**Operation Rolling Thunder**’, it was supposed to end after eight weeks, but went on for three years.
- In March, **General Westmoreland**, the US commander in South Vietnam, asked for more ground troops; by April, Johnson had sent over 20,000.
- The numbers continued to rise through the rest of 1965, reaching 500,000 by 1966.
- In all, about 2.7 million American soldiers served in Vietnam.

## How the war was fought

- The Vietcong used **guerrilla tactics**. They staged ambushes, booby-trapped houses and villages, dressed as peasants to launch surprise attacks and used the jungle for cover.
- Westmoreland sent his soldiers on ‘*search and destroy*’ missions to root out the Vietcong. They measured their success in ‘*body counts*’. Every body was counted as a Vietcong.
- But as they could not tell which Vietnamese were Vietcong and which were not, they killed many innocent civilians.
- The US air force bombed towns and villages. They dropped cluster bombs that scattered hundreds of smaller bombs and **napalm** which burned into the skin.
- The Vietnamese dug tunnels as escape routes and bomb shelters, retreating into them when the bombers came.
- To make it easier to see its enemies, the air force sprayed herbicides (weed killers), mostly **Agent Orange**, over six million acres of trees and crops.

- This killed many Vietnamese people. The herbicides also affected pregnant women, leading to birth defects.
- Americans de-personalised the Vietnamese, calling them ‘gooks’. That made it easier to ignore the suffering they were causing the Vietnamese people.

## The collapse of American morale

- Many soldiers serving in Vietnam were **conscripts** (i.e. they were forced to fight). In theory, all young men could be drafted to serve in the army, but in practice well-off boys could easily ‘*dodge the draft*’ by going to university.
- As a result, most soldiers came from poor white or black families. They felt the draft was unfair.
- This lowered the morale of American troops. Over a third took drugs, many deserted and some killed unpopular officers.
- To survive, many soldiers tried to avoid any contact with the enemy. Others behaved savagely towards the Vietnamese. The most notorious case was the **My Lai Massacre** in 1968, when troops killed 347 men, women and children in one village.

## Opposition to the war in America

- As the war dragged on and the number of deaths rose, many Americans began to wonder if they should be in Vietnam.
- Newspaper reports and TV images showing how American actions affected the Vietnamese strengthened these doubts.
- Opposition to the war first developed among students, many of whom faced the possibility of conscription. From the mid-1960s, there were marches and demonstrations protesting at the war.
- The number of ‘doves’ in the Democratic Party grew, with Congressmen and Senators coming out against the war.
- Respected black leaders, like Martin Luther King and Muhammad Ali, began to oppose it, claiming that black men were fighting a white man’s war.

## The 1968 Tet Offensive and its result

- Up to 1968, Americans could still believe they were winning, but the **Tet Offensive** shattered this view.
- The North Vietnamese chose the Tet holiday for a surprise attack. They entered the US embassy in Saigon and briefly captured the ancient city of Huế.
- They hoped the South Vietnamese would support them, but they did not. The South Vietnamese army fought well and after a few weeks they had regained control.



- Tet was a military victory for the US, but a political defeat. Images of North Vietnamese in their embassy profoundly shocked Americans. Support for the war fell further.
- Because of this Johnson decided not to contest the 1968 election, which was won by the Republican candidate **Richard Nixon**.

## Assessing Johnson's role in the Vietnam War

- Johnson's involvement in the Vietnam War overshadowed his achievements in other areas like civil rights and social welfare.
- The war diverted resources from these projects and made them less effective.
- He refused to raise taxes to pay for the war and this created inflation, which undermined the US economy in the 1970s.
- His inability to either win or leave destroyed his career and forced him to retire early.



## America leaves Vietnam

### Nixon and the Vietnam War

- President Nixon wanted to get out of Vietnam. He proposed '**Vietnamisation**', i.e. letting the South Vietnamese do most of the fighting. He also extended the bombing into Cambodia to destroy the Ho Chi Minh trail.
- Between 1969 and 1972, he gradually reduced the number of troops from over 500,000 to under 70,000.
- This undermined the anti-war movement, but protests continued. The most notable was at **Kent State University** in May 1970, when National Guardsmen killed four students.
- The leaking of the **Pentagon Papers**, which showed that Johnson had lied about the progress of the war, also increased support for a pull-out.

### 1973: The war ends

- Nixon hoped to talk to the North Vietnamese, and when they refused he launched **Operation Linebacker** to bomb North Vietnamese cities. As a result, the North agreed to peace negotiations.
- In January 1973, an agreement was reached with the North Vietnamese:
  - They agreed to a ceasefire and to return all US prisoners.
  - The US agreed to leave within 60 days.

- The Americans left Vietnam in **March 1973**.
- War continued between North and South Vietnam. In 1975, the North invaded and the South collapsed. Saigon fell on 30 April and was renamed **Ho Chi Minh city**.

## The results of the Vietnam War

- It was America's longest war in which 58,000 US soldiers died, as well as about 2.3 million Vietnamese.
- The war cost the Americans about \$110 billion and damaged the American economy in the 1970s.
- In 1975, Vietnam was reunited under communist rule and communists gained control of neighbouring Laos and Cambodia.
- The war divided Americans more deeply than at any time since the civil war in the 1860s. Americans began to distrust their governments and support for the Democratic Party fell.

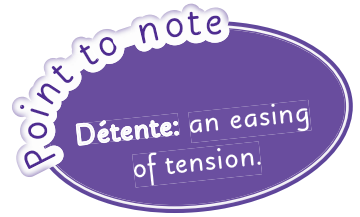
## 1973–1989: Nixon, Reagan and the last years of the Cold War

### Détente 1962–1979

- The Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 showed the superpowers that they could destroy each other and the world. This led to a period of **détente**.
- Détente also happened because:
  - The Americans were caught up in Vietnam.
  - The Soviet leader **Leonid Brezhnev** was in dispute with China and wanted to reduce tension with the US.
  - Nixon's Secretary of State **Henry Kissinger** argued that the Soviets were not a threat and that the US could weaken them by taking advantage of their quarrel with China.
  - Nixon accepted China's membership of the United Nations and made a State visit to China.
- Détente led to a number of agreements which reduced the threat of a nuclear war:
  - The **Test Ban Treaty** (1963) ended above-ground testing.
  - The **Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty** (1968) limited the spread of nuclear weapons.
  - **Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)** began in 1969 leading to agreement to restrict the numbers of missiles each side had.
  - A second round of talks (**SALT II**) led to the **Helsinki Final Act** in 1975. Thirty-five countries accepted the boundaries of Europe set after the Second World

War, and agreed to monitor how governments respected the civil rights of their people.

- In 1975, the two superpowers co-operated in a joint space programme, the **Apollo–Soyuz Project**.
- In 1979, the **SALT II Agreement** further limited the numbers of nuclear weapons.



## The end of détente

- Détente ended in 1979 when:
  - President Carter’s concern about human rights in the Soviet Union angered the Russians.
  - Republicans attacked SALT II as weakening America. To appease them, Carter approved a new missile system and increased military spending.
  - The Russians invaded Afghanistan.
  - Carter then imposed trade sanctions on the USSR, stopped the ratification (i.e. implementing) of SALT II and announced a US boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980.

## Ronald Reagan and the end of détente

- Reagan, a former film star, saw the Cold War as a conflict between good and evil and was not interested in diplomacy.
- He abandoned SALT II and constantly criticised the Soviet record on human rights.
- He helped Islamic militants who were fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan and supported various right-wing dictators in South America.
- He increased military spending by 50%, and in 1983 announced the **Strategic Defence Initiative** (nicknamed ‘Star Wars’) to build a countermissile system.
- The Soviets saw this as a return to the arms race, but realised they could not match US spending. They thought Reagan was a warmonger and they seriously feared a US attack.

## Mikhail Gorbachev and the end of the Cold War

- In 1985, a younger man, **Mikhail Gorbachev**, became the leader of the Soviet Union. He wanted economic and political reform, but to do so he needed to improve relations with the US.
- Meetings between Reagan and Gorbachev led to the **Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty** in 1987. Both sides eliminated many missiles.
- Gorbachev’s reforms in the USSR encouraged people in the communist countries of Eastern Europe to demand democracy.

- In 1989, Gorbachev made it clear that the Soviets would not send in tanks to support the communist governments there.
- Starting in Hungary, one communist government after another collapsed. In November 1989, the East Germans opened the **Berlin Wall**, thus symbolically ending the Cold War.
- In 1991 the Soviet Union itself collapsed.

## Exam questions

- 1 What were the significant developments in US foreign policy between 1973 and 1989? *(HL 2007)*
- 2 Which had the greater impact on the United States: involvement in Korea or involvement in Vietnam? Argue your case by referring to both. *(HL 2006)*
- 3 How did McCarthyism and/or the anti-war movement affect US foreign policy? *(HL 2007)*
- 4 What part did one or more of the following play in US foreign policy?
  - Korea
  - Cuba
  - SALT
  - 'Star Wars' *(HL 2012)*
- 5 What was the importance for US foreign policy of one or more of the following?
  - Berlin
  - Korea
  - Cuba. *(HL 2010)*
- 6 Why did the US lose the Vietnam War? *(HL 2011)*
- 7 Which president was more successful in his handling of US foreign policy, Harry Truman or Lyndon Johnson? Argue your case, referring to both. *(HL 2013)*



# Advances in technology and **3** the moon landing

## The arms race and the Cold War

- During the Second World War the United States spent vast sums of money on developing new weapons. Their main achievement was the **atom bomb**, which they used against Japan in 1945.
- During the Cold War, the two superpowers also competed to produce more deadly weapons and the means to deliver them. This is called the **arms race**.
- This arms race also led to the invention and development of new technologies, such as computers and the internet, which were of value to civilian society.

## The Military-Industrial Complex

- The arms race poured huge sums of money into large American firms like Boeing and IBM to develop new weapons systems.
- This link between the army and business is often called the **Military-Industrial Complex**. Some American political leaders fear that it had a bad effect on American democracy.

## Developing bigger bombs

- In 1949, the Soviet Union exploded its own atom bomb. This encouraged the US to produce a **hydrogen bomb** in 1952. It was over 1,000 times more powerful than the first A-bomb.
- In the early 1960s, a **neutron bomb** was developed. It was designed to kill people, while leaving the buildings standing.
- Tests of these bombs were carried on in the open, leading to contamination by radiation. This ended with the **Test Ban Treaty** in 1963.

## Developing delivery systems

- **Planes:** After the Second World War the **jet engine** appeared. The US first used jet planes in Korea. Supersonic planes appeared in the 1950s. In the 1980s, **stealth** technology produced planes which could avoid detection by enemy radar.

- The US also produced huge **aircraft carriers**, nuclear powered from the 1980s, which could carry American air-power to any part of the world.
- **Missiles**: The **Minuteman**, developed in 1962, could be fired at short notice from underground bunkers and carry nuclear war-heads into the Soviet Union. Later, missiles like the **Peacekeeper**, were developed – it had the ability to break into several war-heads, each carrying a bomb to a separate target.
- **Nuclear-powered submarines** were developed in the 1960s. Able to cruise for long periods under the sea, they were armed with **Polaris**, and later **Trident**, missiles carrying nuclear bombs. Americans believed that the Soviets would be **deterred** from attacking by the knowledge that the submarines could retaliate, even if the US was destroyed.

## Spying on the enemy

- The US wanted to watch what the Soviet Union was doing. At first, they used high-flying planes like the U-2 which could fly at 70,000 feet.
- Later, they developed spy-satellites which orbited the earth, taking photographs and listening in on radio communications. These then developed into **Global Positioning Systems (GPS)**, which allowed soldiers to identify targets on the battlefield.

## The theory of deterrence

- By the 1970s, each side had enough weapons to destroy the other (and the earth) many times over.
- Some historians think that may have **deterred** (stopped) the superpowers from going to war because they feared ‘**mutually assured destruction**’ (**MAD**) (i.e. everyone would be destroyed).

## Developments in information technology

### Early computers

- Weapons systems and space exploration depended on **powerful computers**.
- The first computers were built in England to help break secret German codes. The American military took them over and produced the first general computer in 1946. Weighing 19 tonnes, it was used in nuclear research.
- The first commercial computer, the **Universal Automatic Computer (UNIVAC)** appeared in 1951. Using punch cards to input information, it cost over \$1 million, occupied a lot of space and its memory could only hold 1,000 words.
- The invention of the **transistor** changed computing. Computers from the 1960s, most of them made by IBM, were cheaper and easier to program, but they still occupied a separate room. Most were used by banks and universities.

## Personal computers

- To do more complex calculations several transistors were combined on a piece of silicon. These **integrated circuits** or **microchips** allowed computers to become smaller and faster.
- In the 1970s, the development of the **micro-processor** led to the personal computer with a small screen. Operators no longer needed cards but could type information in directly.
- **Apple** developed the first personal computer in 1976. They were affordable and easy to use. The **Apple Macintosh** (1984) was the first to use a mouse and a drop-down menu.
- Through the 1980s, computers got smaller, more powerful and cheaper. The number of home computers rocketed. The **Microsoft** company came to dominate the market.
- The spread of personal computers led to computer games, such as **Nintendo** and **Game Boy**.

## The internet

- The US military worried about what would happen if a Soviet bomb blew up their central control. To avoid that they created a network of computers (**ARPANET**) loosely linked together (i.e. sharing information), which could survive an attack. This formed the basis of the modern **internet**.
- At first, this just linked universities, but around 1990 it took off with ordinary people buying computers and linking up.
- Developments in **fibre optics** in the 1990s allowed vast quantities of information to be carried along a phone line to a computer with a modem.

## Case Study

### Case Study: The space race and the moon landing

#### 1945–1961: Competing rocket technologies

- The most spectacular aspect of the arms race was the moon landing. It grew out of the competition between the superpowers to develop bigger and better rockets to carry their weapons into the enemy's territory.
- During the Second World War, the Nazis developed the **V1** and **V2** rockets. In 1945, the Soviets and Americans competed to capture German rocket scientists. The US got **Wernher von Braun**, head of the German research team.
- The US did little about rocket technology until the Russians launched the first **Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)**, and the first man-made earth satellite, **sputnik**, in 1957.

- This created panic in America: could the Soviets launch a rocket attack from space? Was there a 'missile gap'? Spending on missile technology grew rapidly.
- Late in 1957, the Americans launched their first ICBM, the **Atlas rocket**. In 1958, they sent up their first earth satellite and Eisenhower established the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** to encourage space exploration.
- But the Soviets were still ahead. In 1960, their **Luna II** rocket hit the moon and in 1961 their astronaut **Yuri Gagarin** became the first man in space.
- These developments spurred President Kennedy to promise in 1961 that the US would put a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s.

## The first steps

- To land men on the moon, NASA first had to find out if they could survive in space and be safely returned to earth.
- The **Mercury Programme** (1959–1963) flew six manned test flights. As part of the programme, **John Glen** became the first American to orbit the earth in 1962.
- In the **Gemini Project** (1963–1966), ten space flights tested and improved ways of controlling craft in space and linking one space craft to another (**docking**).
- The 1965, **Gemini 4** saw the first American 'space walk' when an astronaut left the craft and returned safely.
- In 1967, **Gemini 7** spent two weeks in space showing that men could survive a long period of weightlessness and **Gemini 8** successfully docked two space craft.

## The Apollo Programme (1961–1972)

- The **Apollo Programme** was to carry out the moon landing
- It used the **Saturn V**, the most powerful rocket ever built. It was designed by Wernher von Braun. Holding one million gallons of fuel, it was divided into three stages. After blast off, stages dropped away one by one to save weight.
- The Saturn rocket carried:
  - A **Command Module (Columbia)**, where the astronauts lived. Designed to orbit the moon and return to earth, it was enclosed in special tiles which could withstand high temperatures on re-entry to the earth's atmosphere.
  - A **Lunar Module** (nicknamed the **Eagle**) which was to break away from the Command Module and land on the moon. It had two stages. The **lower** contained exploration equipment and rockets to slow down the descent onto the moon. It was to be left behind on the moon. The **upper** would carry the astronauts back to the Command Module.
- To test each step, there were ten Apollo missions before the moon landing. NASA used the lessons learned from each mission to improve the design of its rockets and modules.



- In December 1968, **Apollo 8** carried three men into orbit around the moon and returned them safely to earth.
- In 1969, **Apollo 10** took another three to within nine miles of the moon's surface and returned safely.
- By July 1969, everything was in place for the final attempt.

## 16–19 July: The journey to the moon

- At 9.32am on 16 July, **Apollo 11** lifted off from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. It carried three men, **Neil Armstrong**, **Buzz Aldrin** and **Michael Collins** – who had been chosen from 20 trained astronauts, to go to the moon.
- After orbiting the earth, thruster rockets sent the Command Module, **Columbia**, towards the moon at 25,000 mph.
- The journey took three days. Conditions in Columbia were cramped. The men had to adapt to weightlessness. They had to squeeze food into their mouths and tie themselves into their bunks to sleep.
- On 19 July, Columbia went into orbit 69 miles above the surface of the moon. It circled the moon every two hours.

## 20 July: Landing on the moon

- Collins remained in Columbia, while Armstrong and Aldrin transferred to the Lunar Module.
- It separated from Columbia and headed for the moon's surface, at all times being under the control of computers at Mission Control in Florida.
- As they approached the surface, they saw the chosen landing site was covered with rocks. Armstrong took the controls and guided the Module to a flat area in the **Sea of Tranquility**.
- Cheering broke out in Mission Control when they heard him report: '*The Eagle has landed*'.
- The astronauts checked the equipment and then put on their space suits. Armstrong went first, setting off a TV camera to record the moment. He said: '*That's one small step for man – one giant leap for mankind*'.
- The moment was watched by an estimated 600 million people back on earth.
- The two men planted the American flag, collected about 60 pounds of moon rock, took many pictures and set up a number of scientific experiments.

## The journey home

- After that, Armstrong and Aldrin returned to the Lunar Module. They left unnecessary equipment behind and blasted off for the waiting Columbia. After docking with it, they abandoned the Lunar Module too.

- Columbia reached earth again on 24 July. Parachutes slowed its descent into the Pacific.
- Navy divers helped the astronauts out and they transferred to an aircraft carrier where President Nixon greeted them.
- The return was watched by millions of television viewers around the world. But reports of this American success were not broadcast in the USSR or China.

## Later Apollo flights and the end of the space race

- There were five more moon landings between 1969 and 1972.
- **Apollo 13** almost turned into a disaster when an oxygen tank exploded. As the world watched with bated breath, the astronauts got home safely, crammed into the Lunar Module.
- The 1972 Apollo mission was the last. Interest in manned space exploration had declined since the first moon landing.
- It had cost \$27 billion to put men on the moon and many Americans did not see why they should go on with this hugely expensive operation once they had achieved their aim.
- The US economy declined in the 1970s, so less money was available and the détente with the Soviet Union reduced the need to compete with it.
- The US turned to other, less expensive, forms of space exploration, sending unmanned probes to nearby planets, like Mars and Venus, to take photographs and make scientific observations.
- It also tried with limited success to develop a reusable 'space shuttle'.

## Why did the US win the space race?

- By putting men on the moon the US won the space race, but although this was a huge propaganda victory, it made little difference to the Cold War.
- The Americans won because all Presidents after Kennedy were prepared to pour money into the project.
- The Soviet Union was not willing to devote such large resources to getting to the moon and concentrated instead on developing a space station which orbited the earth.

## Exam questions

- 1 What was the importance of one or more of the following?
  - McCarthyism
  - The Moon Landing in 1969
  - Developments in information technology. *(HL 2006)*
- 2 What was the impact of the Moon Landing on US domestic and foreign policy? *(HL 2010)*



# American economy and society 1945–1989

## 4

### American economy 1945–1989: affluence and recession

#### The age of affluence: 1945–1968

- In the 1930s, America had suffered from the Great Depression when unemployment and poverty were widespread.
- The Depression ended when the government invested heavily in armaments during the Second World War.
- From then until the early 1970s, the US was a wealthy society in which jobs were plentiful and wages good.
- For the first time in history a majority of people could afford a decent house, lots of luxury goods and holidays. For that reason, this period is often referred to as the **age of affluence**.

#### Why the US economy did well after the Second World War

- When the Second World War ended in 1945, the US was the world's wealthiest economy. It had escaped war damage, and the rest of the world wanted to buy what it produced.
- America was rich in natural resources such as coal and oil which provided cheap fuel for its factories.
- After 1945, the government continued to invest in the economy.
  - The 1944 **GI Bill** gave grants to returning soldiers to buy houses, start businesses or continue their education.
  - The number of people working for the government increased rapidly.
  - The **Cold War** and the arms race with the Soviet Union, together with the **Korean** and **Vietnam wars** kept government spending on arms high.
  - In 1956, the **Federal-Aid Highway Act** gave Federal grants to build a network of motorways across the US.
  - The Federal and some State governments spent more on education and welfare than before. The biggest increase came in the 1960s with President Johnson's **Great Society** programme.

- This investment caused an economic boom which lasted for 25 years.

## The consumer society

- The emergence of ‘**the consumer society**’ also helped to keep the economy booming.
- During the war, Americans had earned good wages, but there were few consumer goods to buy. Their savings grew and when the war ended they rushed to buy the furniture, cars, washing machines and refrigerators they could not get before.
- After the war unemployment remained low, averaging about 4% between 1945 and 1968. Plentiful jobs pushed the average income up from \$3,000 to \$8,000.
- For the first time in history a majority of people had money to spend on luxuries, such as TVs or holidays, as well as on necessities, like food and housing.
- This created a demand for a big range of consumer goods and services. New industries sprang up to meet the demand.
- Consumer credit expanded to enable people to buy more goods without having to save for them in advance.

## The creation of giant corporations

- Before the war many Americans were self-employed or worked for small companies but after 1945 more of them worked for the government or for large corporations.
- In the 1950s and 1960s, US companies began to grow bigger through **mergers** (two or more companies joining together) and **acquisitions** (one company taking over another). For example, Ford and General Motors swallowed up smaller car manufacturers, and Boeing took over smaller aircraft companies.

## Multinational corporations and globalisation

- Mergers and acquisitions spread outside the US as American corporations took over foreign companies. This created giant **multinational corporations**, like IBM or Exxon which had factories and offices in many countries.
- Some US companies also set up overseas branches to take advantage of low wages or lower taxes in other countries.
- Until the 1990s, most overseas investment was in Canada and Western Europe because other areas were either under communist control or politically unstable.
- The American government supported overseas expansion. Believing America would benefit from freer trade, it backed plans to remove tariffs (import taxes) around the world through the **General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT)** and the **World Bank**.

- These developments led to **globalisation**, i.e. the closer integration of the world's economies. This process got a huge boost from the fall of communism in 1991.

## The end of affluence: the economy after 1968

- From the end of the 1960s, the American economy experienced many difficulties.
- International competition increased particularly from Germany and Japan. American's share of world trade fell from 25% in 1947 to 10% by 1975.
- Americans bought more foreign goods like cars. This created a **trade deficit** and hit jobs.
- By the 1970s, the US had to import much of the oil it used from the Arab States. Following wars between the Arabs and Israel, the **Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** forced up the price of oil in 1973 and 1979. This damaged the economy further.
- The cost of the Vietnam War and Johnson's **Great Society** welfare programme created a **budget deficit**. To avoid raising taxes, the government borrowed to fill the gap. That caused **inflation**.
- By 1980, America suffered from economic stagnation and high inflation (often called **stagflation**).

### Points to note

**Trade deficit:** a country importing more than it exports.

**Budget deficit:** a government spending more than it gets in taxes.

**Inflation:** prices rising.

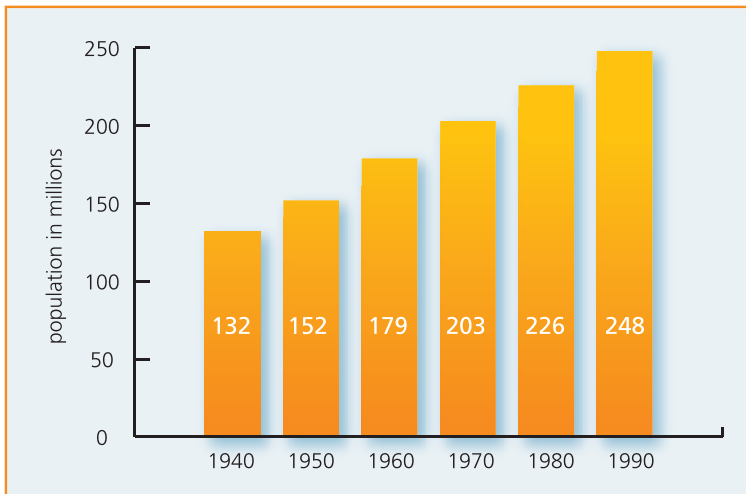
## Ronald Reagan and 'Reagonomics'

- Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, in the middle of America's worst economic depression since the 1930s. Unemployment was 10% and inflation was 13%.
- Reagan cut welfare programmes and personal taxes, arguing this would encourage people to work harder.
- He also greatly increased government spending on arms, announcing plans for a defence system against Soviet missiles, known by its critics as 'Star Wars'.
- The economy recovered slowly and in 1986 began to grow again.
- In the Reagan years, new jobs were created, many of them in the new areas of electronics and computing.
- Other jobs emerged in the services sector. Many of them were poorly paid and the government removed many of the protections which poorly paid employees had enjoyed.
- The number of very wealthy people grew rapidly while the amount they paid in taxes fell. The gap between rich and poor Americans increased significantly.

# Changes in American society 1945–1989

## Demographic change: The expanding population

- The population of America grew steadily after the war.
- This growth was partly due to a big increase in the number of births (the ‘**baby boom**’) between 1945 and 1960.
- The children born at that time, known as the ‘baby boomers’, were better fed, better educated and demanded more of their society than their parents (see p.317).
- From the 1960s contraception became easily available and the number of births declined.
- Immigration was not a huge contributor to population growth until the 1970s, when the number of people admitted to the country grew rapidly.
- Before the Second World War most Americans lived in the north where the industries were located. But from the 1960s, many companies set up in California and the southern ‘sun belt’ states. The population grew faster in these areas than elsewhere.



## Changing patterns of work

- The work done by Americans changed greatly between 1945 and 1990.
- In 1945, more than half of American men worked in **heavy industry**, such as mining, steel milling, car making, etc.
- Referred to as ‘**blue-collar workers**’, most were unskilled or semi-skilled, with a limited education.
- From the 1960s, the number of blue-collar workers declined because **automation** and competition from overseas reduced the demand for unskilled or semi-skilled workers. This forced their wages down, and made their jobs less attractive.

- At the same time the number of jobs in the ‘service industries’, such as banks, shops, teaching and medicine grew. Workers in these industries had to be skilled and educated.
- Often called ‘**white-collar workers**’ because they went to work in a suit, not in overalls, they had a higher status than blue-collar workers, even though they were not always better paid.
- During the 1950s and 1960s, white-collar workers replaced blue-collar workers as the biggest group in American society. This was due to:
  - The spread of higher education encouraged by the GI Bill and the growing demand for skilled labour
  - The decline in the number of low-skilled jobs in farming and heavy industry.
- Farmers did not share the prosperity of the post-war years. Between 1945 and 1960 the price of food fell, cutting their incomes by 25%. Many small farmers sold up and went to work in towns where they could earn more.
- By 1980, 75% of Americans lived in urban areas and much of America’s farm land was owned by large corporations that farmed it using machines rather than people.

## The growth of suburbs

- In the 1930s, many blue-collar workers dreamed of moving out of rented flats in the crowded city centres and buying a house in a pleasant suburb.
- The post-war prosperity made this dream a reality for millions. From the 1950s, **suburbs** expanded around most US cities.
- Usually suburbs were pleasant places with shops, schools and churches.
- But women who stayed at home to rear their children often found life in the suburbs lonely and boring.



## Key personality

### The Organization Man

- In 1956, in a book called *The Organization Man*, William H Whyte described the life of a typical suburban white-collar worker.
- Usually a former soldier, he was the first member of his family to have gone to college, thanks to the GI Bill.
- He worked at the middle levels of a government department or a multinational corporation and his main aim was to move up a few steps on the corporate ladder.
- Totally loyal to his organisation, he worked long hours, moved wherever they sent him and behaved in the way they thought he should behave.
- In return, he expected to have job security and a pension.

- At home, he lived in one of the new suburbs where his neighbours were just like him. Each morning, neatly dressed in shirt and tie, they drove or caught the train to the office.
- Their wives all stayed at home to mind the children, cook, wash and welcome the weary breadwinner home in the evening.
- Apart from unpaid work for the church or school, they did not work outside the home.
- Whyte criticised the Organization Man, claiming that he was losing the old American values of independence, hard work and risk-taking.
- Suburbs also made cars essential, so that people could get to work. This led to congestion and traffic jams.
- Many industries, especially new clean industries like electronics, moved out to the suburbs from the late 1950s.

## Troubled affluence: Urban poverty, crime and drugs

### The decay of the city centres

- Not all Americans gained from the post-war economic boom. By 1960, almost one American in five still lived in poverty. While some were farmers, most of the poor lived in the inner cities.
- The centres of American cities decayed as the suburbs grew. By 1960, only people too old, too poor or too unskilled to escape still lived there.
- Many were housed in government '*projects*', huge soulless tower blocks built to house the poor who had previously lived in slums.
- Since most people in the inner cities were in poorly paid jobs or on welfare they did not pay much in taxes. This left city governments with less money to spend on schools, hospitals and sanitation.
- Poor-quality schools made it harder for young people to get the education they needed to escape the **poverty trap**.

### Inner-city ghettos

- About 25% of the population of the biggest cities were black people who moved from the South hoping to find work.
- Racial discrimination and their own lack of education and skills meant that these hopes were often disappointed.
- Black women could get low-paid jobs as waitresses or cleaners, but black men found it harder to get work, especially as, from the 1950s, many industries began to move out of the cities.



- These conditions led to the formation of ‘**black ghettos**’ – whole areas of a city where most inhabitants were black.

## Crime and drugs

- Crime flourished in the inner cities. Young men joined gangs and having no work, could make money in criminal activities, such as robbing banks, etc.
- Crime was accompanied by violence. Police were armed and criminals could get guns easily because the US Constitution guaranteed the right to carry arms
- In the 1960s, criminal gangs began dealing in drugs which were smuggled into the US.
- Drugs added to the violence as addicts robbed to feed their habit, and drug gangs fought to control their territories.
- By the 1970s, crime in US cities was far higher than anywhere else in the world.
- ‘Law and order’ became a political slogan, especially for Republicans. Harsher sentences were imposed and more prisons built. The death penalty, which had almost disappeared, was revived in many states.

## Johnson’s Great Society and the ‘war on poverty’

- In the 1960s, poverty became a political issue. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson declared a ‘war on poverty’ with his **Great Society** programme.
- Johnson got Congress to pass the **Economic Opportunity Act** which provided a fund of \$1 billion to fight poverty. It set up the **Office of Economic Opportunity** which organised:
  - **Head Start** to provide pre-school education, meals and health checks for poor inner-city children
  - A **Jobs Corp** to provide skills training for young school leavers
  - A training programme for unemployed adults
  - A system of cheap loans to small businesses.
- In 1965, Johnson set aside billions of dollars to provide rent and food subsidies and health care for the poor and elderly (**Medicaid** and **Medicare**).

## The end of the Great Society programme

- These programmes reduced the numbers living in poverty, but middle-class taxpayers resented the cost.
- Critics said millions were wasted on bureaucracy and that the poor resented the ‘do-gooders’ who interfered in their lives.
- These criticisms were reinforced when race riots broke out in many cities in the late 1960s and 1970s. The first major riot was in the **Watts** district of Los Angeles in 1965.

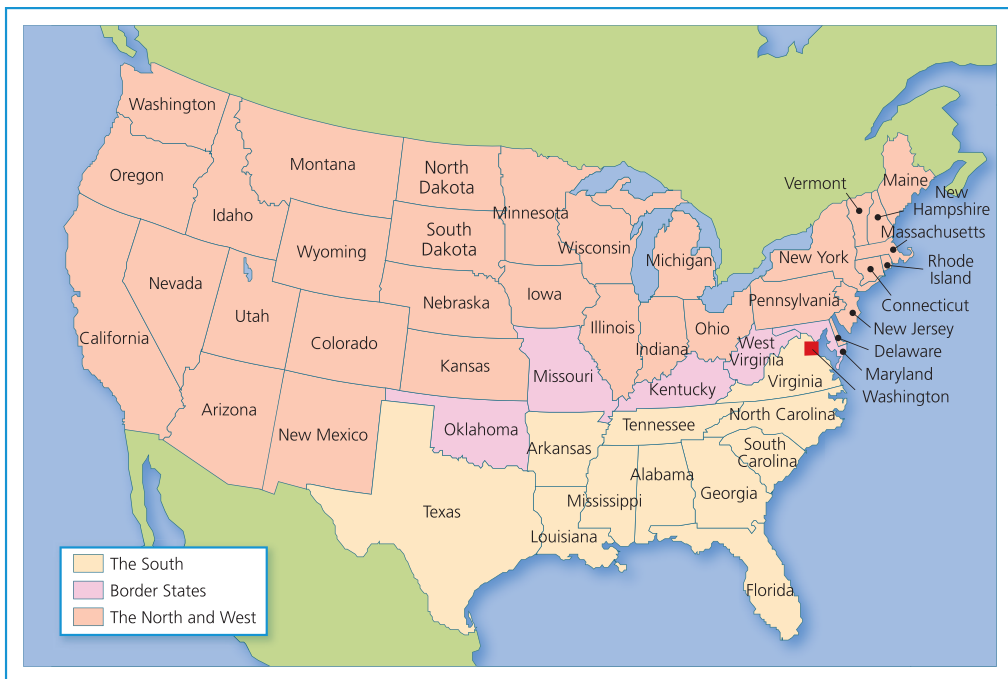
- By 1970, the rising cost of the Vietnam War and the decline in the American economy reduced spending on poverty.
- President Nixon kept Johnson's programmes in place, but from 1980 President Reagan cut Federal spending on the poor. He hoped private charities would step in instead. They did not and the poverty of the inner cities remained as bad as ever.

## Exam questions

- 1 Why did the United States experience an economic boom between 1945 and 1968 and what was its impact on society? *(HL 2010)*
- 2 To what extent did the US economy experience both success and decline during the period 1945 to 1989? *(HL 2012)*
- 3 What was the impact on the US economy of one or more of the following?
  - The multinational corporation
  - The military-industrial complex
  - The international competition from Japan and Europe. *(HL 2013)*

# The demand for civil rights

5



*America and civil rights: North and South*

## Black life after slavery: The promise betrayed

### A brief promise of freedom

- From 1619, Africans were brought to America and sold as slaves. Most of them lived in the Southern United States where slavery was legal.
- In 1861, a civil war broke out between the Southern and Northern states. One of the issues between them was slavery.
- The North won, and as a result the **13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution** ended slavery, promised equal protection of the law to both black and white people and granted black men the right to vote.
- Congress also passed **civil rights laws** which recognised African Americans as citizens, prohibited racial violence and ended discrimination in transport and public places.

## The promise betrayed

- But this promise of equal treatment was soon broken. In law black people remained full citizens with the right to vote, but the Federal government left it to the states to enforce this right.
- In the former slave states of the South, the white majority quickly found ways to stop black men (and later women) from voting:
  - Voters had to pay a **poll tax** in cash. It was collected at a time when poor farmers (white as well as black) had not yet sold their crops and so had no cash.
  - Voters had to pass **literacy tests** (i.e. show they were able to read). But white officials set the tests. They made the tests impossibly hard for black people and very easy for white people.
  - Terrorist gangs, like the **Ku Klux Klan**, intimidated black people who tried to put their names on the voters' register.
- As a result, by 1900, only 3% of black men were registered to vote across the South.

## The failure of the Supreme Court

- The function of the **US Supreme Court** is to see that the Constitution is observed, but for many years it did little to protect black people:
  - In 1883, it said that discrimination in private housing and transport was legal.
  - In 1893, it decreed that local government could provide 'separate but equal' facilities for black people and white people.
- These decisions opened the way for **racial segregation** and the reduction in the quality of services given to racial minorities.

## The Jim Crow Laws

- From the 1890s to the 1960s, states passed over 400 laws (known as **Jim Crow laws**) that legalised segregation and discrimination based on race.
- They divided schools, cinemas, parks, beaches, trains, etc., into 'whites only' and 'coloreds only' areas. Inevitably, the 'coloreds only' part was far from equal in quality and standard to the 'whites only' one.
- In some places, black people were forbidden to work in the same room as white people. This limited the jobs they could get.
- Laws also banned marriage between Europeans and people of other races (this was called **miscegenation**).
- The Southern states passed 80% of the Jim Crow laws, but some Northern and Western states had similar laws, often aimed at Chinese people or Native Americans.

- By 1949, only 15 states, all in the North, did not discriminate in some way against racial minorities.

Points to note

Racial discrimination: favouring one race above another.

Racial segregation: keeping the races apart.

## Life under Jim Crow

- Every day, black people suffered small humiliations as a result of the Jim Crow laws.
- The ‘*separate but equal*’ rule meant that:
  - Black people could order food in a restaurant, but had to collect it at the back door and eat it outside.
  - In cinemas they could only sit on the balcony; in buses, they had to sit at the back.
  - They were not allowed to use many public facilities, like toilets, libraries, parks or beaches.
  - ‘White’ ambulances would not pick up injured black people, nor would ‘white’ hospitals receive them.
- Black men knew they must never look directly at or touch a white woman, even by accident. **Lynching** – killing someone without a trial, often by hanging – was the common punishment for breaking this rule.

## Terrorising black people

- White people used intimidation and terrorism to control black people. Anyone who tried to assert their rights could be evicted from their farms, sacked from their jobs or even lynched by white mobs.
- Between 1882 and 1968, almost 5,000 lynchings were reported in the press, but many more went unreported.
- Lynch-mobs subjected their black victims to sadistic tortures that included burning, dismemberment or being dragged behind cars.
- Some Southern newspapers reported lynchings with approval and the participants, including children, often posed for photographs in front of their victim’s body.
- The all-white state police seldom intervened, but if they did, all-white juries would always find white people innocent.

## Racial stereotyping

- White people claimed discrimination was justified because black people were **mentally, culturally** and **morally inferior** to white people.
- This view was reinforced by **constant stereotyping** in the press, on radio, in theatre, films and advertising.

- Black people appeared in the media either as evil or as lazy and stupid:
  - The first full-length American movie, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), showed black men as dangerous rapists and the Ku Klux Klan as heroes.
  - Films showing slavery, like the very popular *Gone with the Wind* (1939), suggested that slaves were happy with their lot and felt lost and bewildered when freed.

## Poverty and lack of education

- In reality, poverty and lack of education made it difficult for Southern black people to show what they could do.
- Up to the 1920s, most were poor ‘**share-croppers**’. They farmed land belonging to white men and paid for it with a share (up to 66%) of the crops they grew.
- Primary schools for black children lacked basic facilities, like books or blackboards and black teachers were paid half as much as white teachers.
- Until the 1940s, there were hardly any high schools for black students and they were not admitted to state-run universities.
- From the 1920s, many black people moved into Southern cities or went North to look for work, but discrimination and poor education limited them.
- Black women worked mainly as cooks or maids. Black men only got jobs white men did not want. Black people were paid less than white people for doing the same work.

## African Americans develop their own culture

- Most African Americans turned away from white society. They set up their own churches, businesses and clubs.
- They founded their own colleges which produced the lawyers, teachers and doctors who led the campaign for civil rights.
- They developed black music such as **jazz** and **rhythm and blues**, and black artists like **Billie Holiday** and **Paul Robeson**, won the interest and respect of the wider white community outside the South.

## The role of the black churches

- Black churches, mostly Baptist and Methodist, played an important part in black life.
- Most churches were self-governing, so in them black people could take on leadership roles and earn public respect in ways not available in the wider community.
- Ministers were often spokesmen for their communities.
- Southern Ministers usually did not attack discrimination directly because it was too dangerous to do so. But in the North, Ministers could be much more outspoken in condemning racial discrimination.

## The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

- Some African Americans campaigned against discrimination, though at first they got little support from the white community, the Federal government or the courts.
- In 1909, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** was set up. It was a multi-racial organisation which hoped to resist Jim Crow laws by:
  - Publicising lynching and other injustices
  - Getting black people to register to vote, starting in the North
  - Urging the Federal government to outlaw discrimination
  - Taking states and cities to court on issues like school conditions, all-white juries and voting rights.
- These campaigns began to pay off in the 1930s and 1940s.

## Gradual improvement

- During the Second World War, **President Roosevelt** yielded to black pressure and forbade racial discrimination in war industries.
- As a result, over two million black people got well-paid jobs in arms factories, mainly in the North. Another million black people joined the American forces though they remained segregated.
- At the end of the war, many black servicemen took advantage of the **GI Bill** which gave government funds to soldiers who wanted to go to college. This significantly raised the educational level of the black community.
- To win the support of black voters in the North, **Harry Truman** ended segregation in the armed forces, prohibited job discrimination by the Federal government and gave government backing to NAACP court cases.
- By 1950, the NAACP had won important legal victories. The Supreme Court said that literacy tests, poll taxes and other tricks to stop black people voting were illegal. It also outlawed segregation in juries, in housing and in transport between the States.

## Why change came

- Northern States accepted these rulings. By 1950, legal segregation had largely disappeared there, though economic discrimination remained.
- But in border and Southern states, a large majority of whites supported segregation and voted for **segregationist politicians**. They would not change the Jim Crow laws unless the Federal government forced them to do so.
- By 1950, a number of developments made it likely that this would happen:

- There were now educated black leaders who were able to make the case for equality.
- Due to the work of the NAACP more black people could vote so politicians became interested in helping them.
- Nazi racist policies in the Second World War led to a revulsion against racism everywhere.
- Discrimination against black people was bad for America's image as 'leader of the free world' during the Cold War.
- TV images of lynchings made a bigger impact on Northern voters than newspaper or radio reports.



## The civil rights campaign begins

### The start of the civil rights campaign

- In the mid-1950s, a campaign began to win full civil rights for black people.
- Three events marked the start of this campaign:
  - The Supreme Court's judgement in the **Brown Case**
  - The lynching of **Emmett Till**
  - The **Montgomery Bus Boycott**.

### May 1954: The Brown Judgement

- The NAACP won court cases that forced school districts to observe the '*separate but equal*' rule. They must pay black teachers the same as white teachers and raise standards in black-only schools.
- In 1952, they backed a case that attacked the '*separate but equal*' rule itself.
- **Linda Brown** was an 8-year-old from Kansas. She lived beside a white school, but had to walk and take a bus to get to her black school. Her father took a case to end segregation.
- In court, lawyers for the NAACP claimed that segregated schools made black children feel inferior and made it difficult for them to learn.
- The Supreme Court accepted this argument. It ruled that school segregation must end with '*all deliberate speed*'.
- The **Brown Judgement** caused outrage in the South, where whites feared that mixed schools would lead to their greatest fear – mixed marriages.



## August 1955: The lynching of Emmett Till

- Racial tension rose in Mississippi after the *Brown Judgement*. The Ku Klux Klan revived and several black men were murdered for trying to get black people to register as voters.
- In August 1955, Emmett Till, a 14-year-old black boy from Chicago, went to visit relatives in Mississippi. After he whistled at a white woman, her husband and a friend brutally murdered him.
- Surprisingly, they were arrested and put on trial, but the all-white jury quickly found them not guilty.
- Because Emmett Till was so young and came from Chicago, the case attracted media attention throughout America. The verdict brought home to other Americans what life was like for black citizens in the Deep South.

### Case Study

## Case Study: The Montgomery bus boycott

### Montgomery, Alabama

- Montgomery in Alabama was a typical Southern city. Jim Crow laws kept the races rigidly separate in school and work.
- City council services, like fire brigades and rubbish collection, were worse in black neighbourhoods than in white.
- Segregated schools gave black pupils a second-rate education which limited the job opportunities open to them. On average black people earned half of what white people earned.
- As in most Southern cities, public transport was segregated. All bus drivers were white, though 75% of passengers were poor black workers who could not afford cars.
- Black passengers paid the driver at the front door of the bus, then had to go to the **back door** to get on. They could only sit at the back, but if the front became too crowded, they had to give up their seats to white passengers.

### Resistance in Montgomery

- Some **black activists** wanted black people to protest at their treatment. They included **E. D. Nixon**, local head of the NAACP, and several ministers, including **Ralph Abernathy** and **Martin Luther King**.
- The *Brown Judgement* encouraged resistance. On the buses protests at bullying by white drivers became more common. The drivers retaliated by carrying guns and calling in the police to arrested any protester.
- The NAACP was hoping to find a case around which they could rally the black community. **Rosa Parks** provided it for them.

## Rosa Parks

- Rosa Parks was a quiet, 42-year-old black woman and an active member of the NAACP. Though educated, she could only find a poorly paid sewing job.
- On **Thursday 1 December 1955**, weary after work, she boarded a bus and sat with three other black people in the first of the 'black' seats behind the 'white' section.
- After a few stops, the 'white' section filled up and a white man was left standing. The driver ordered the four black people to give up their seats. Three moved, but Parks refused. The police came and arrested her.

## 5 December 1955: The boycott begins

- Parks was just the kind of respectable, unthreatening person the NAACP needed to symbolise black oppression. Nixon got her to agree to a one-day boycott of buses on Monday, the day of her trial.
- Martin Luther King wrote later that he would have considered a 60% boycott a success. In fact, it was over 90%.
- That night the organisers formed the **Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA)**, with King as president. At a mass meeting they proposed continuing the boycott until:
  - Seats were given on a first come, first served basis
  - Bus drivers agreed to treat black people with courtesy
  - The bus company hired black drivers.
- King spoke movingly at the meeting: *'We are here tonight to say to those who have mistreated us so long, that we are tired – tired of being segregated and humiliated, tired of being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression.'* All present agreed the boycott would take place.

## The boycott continues

- White people were sure the boycott would collapse quickly. Montgomery's mayor predicted: *'Come the first rainy day and the Negroes will be back on the buses'*.
- But that did not happen. Black people walked or cycled to work, or got lifts from friends with cars. Some organised taxi services, charging 10 cents for a ride, the same fare as the buses.
- The city then revived an old law that forbade taxis to charge less than 45 cents, more than most black people could afford.
- In response, King set up a private taxi service. Donations to pay for it came from black and white sympathisers across America. Local churches ran the service with military-like precision.

## Whites counter-attack

- White leaders tried a variety of tactics to break the boycott.
- Activists, including Rosa Parks, were sacked from their jobs.
- Local insurance companies refused to cover the black taxi service, but an agent got cover from Lloyd's of London.
- Police harassed black drivers, penalising them for every tiny breach of the road traffic laws.
- White drivers flung stones and rotten eggs at black pedestrians. Sometimes snipers fired on them. Bombers blew up black taxis and churches.

## Attacking Martin Luther King

- As the leader of the MIA, Martin Luther King was especially targeted.
- Whites tried to discredit him by spreading rumours that he was embezzling funds.
- He was arrested for breaching Alabama's anti-boycotting laws, found guilty and fined \$500.
- His home was bombed while his wife and baby were in it. When a black crowd demanded revenge, King told them to put their guns away and '*love our white brothers no matter what they do to us*'. His father begged him to give up but he refused.

## Legal victory

- When it became clear that no compromise was possible, the NAACP took a case against bus segregation. They won when the Supreme Court declared that it was unconstitutional.
- After 382 days the boycott had achieved its aims. On **21 December 1956**, Parks, King, Nixon and other black people rode in the front seats of the first integrated bus.
- But their victory changed little. Whites stopped using buses and the Ku Klux Klan beat up black passengers. The homes and churches of King and Abernathy were bombed. Segregation continued in other areas of life.

## Why the Montgomery bus boycott was important

- Although the bus boycott did not end violence or segregation in Montgomery, it achieved other important results.
- It undermined the smug Southern white idea that black people were 'happy' with their status as second-class citizens.

- The tenacity and courage of ordinary black people, and the skill with which they organised the boycott, showed that white claims about black inferiority were untrue.
- It produced a new black leader in Martin Luther King.
- The tactics used – local boycott, non-violent protest and legal action – became the model for successful civil rights campaigns in many parts of the South over the next ten years.
- Media coverage, and especially TV images, made many white Americans aware of the deprivation and indignities suffered by Southern black people and the violence and harassment that followed every attempt to demand equality.

## The end of the civil rights movement

### 1956–1965: The campaign continues

Over the next ten years the campaign to win full citizenship for black people continued through a series of confrontations with white Southern authorities.

- **1957: School integration in Little Rock, Arkansas**
  - When nine black students entered Little Rock’s all-white Central High School, white mobs attacked them in front of TV cameras. After the world watched white supremacists shrieking ‘lynch her’ at a terrified 15-year-old girl, a reluctant President Eisenhower sent in Federal troops to protect the students
- **1960: ‘Sit-ins’**
  - At Woolworth’s store in Greensboro, North Carolina black people could buy food in the café but not eat it there. On **1 February 1960**, four black students bought food, quietly sat down to eat and refused to leave until they had finished.
  - ‘Sit-ins’ spread across the South. Over 70,000 people, mostly students, entered segregated toilets, cinemas, parks, etc. Following non-violent principles, they allowed themselves to be beaten and imprisoned without retaliation.
  - In October, Martin Luther King joined a sit-in in Atlanta. He was arrested and sentenced to hard labour. This pushed the race issue into the Presidential campaign.
  - The Republican candidate, Richard Nixon, ignored it, but the Democrat, John F. Kennedy, supported King. A majority of black people voted for Kennedy, helping him to win.
- **1961: The Freedom Ride**
  - The Supreme Court had outlawed segregation on inter-state trains and buses, but Southern states had ignored the ruling. To force the Federal government to act, an inter-racial group of students set out on a two-week ‘Freedom Ride’ across the South.
  - White supremacists met them with horrifying violence, which left two dead.

Most state police either ignored violence of white mobs or joined in.

- Media coverage and international embarrassment forced Kennedy to send Federal marshals to protect the students and end segregation on inter-state transport.

- **1962: The battle at Mississippi State University**

- No black student ever attended Mississippi State University before **James Meredith** applied. After Federal courts ordered the university to admit him, Kennedy sent Federal Marshals to protect him. A mob of 3,000 white racists attacked them and Kennedy sent in 13,000 troops to restore order.
- All this violence sickened many Southern whites and businessmen realised that the riots damaged the South's image. Support for segregation began to collapse.

## 1963: Birmingham and the March on Washington

- In Birmingham, Alabama black people were excluded from many jobs, the Ku Klux Klan was active and the police chief, **Bull Connor**, was famous for his mindless brutality.
- Knowing this, King agreed to a march protesting at the lack of black jobs. When Bull Connor turned police dogs on peaceful black marchers, more protests broke out and Kennedy had to propose a **Civil Rights Act**.
- To put pressure on Congress to pass it, black activists organised a **March on Washington**. Over 250,000 people turned up and King electrified them with his famous 'I have a dream' speech.
- After Kennedy was assassinated, President **Lyndon Johnson** used his considerable political skills to get the Civil Rights Act through Congress.

## 1964: Freedom Summer

- In Mississippi white supremacists, aided by the State police, shot, beat up or killed anyone who tried to get black people to register to vote.
- To draw attention to this, civil rights activists organised a '**Freedom Summer**'. Volunteers from the North, many of them white students, set up schools for black children and encouraged their parents to register.
- Violence flared when white supremacists beat up volunteers. In June two white students and one black student were brutally killed.
- The death of white students shocked the country. The FBI identified the killers, but Mississippi State officials refused to try them for murder.

Point to note

The film **Mississippi Burning** is based on this episode.

## 1965: Selma and the Voter Registration Act

- When Alabama State troopers attacked a peaceful march in Selma, a black Second World War veteran exclaimed '*the Germans were never as inhuman as the troopers of Alabama*'.
- King went to Selma to complete the interrupted march. They were under constant attack and a black minister was murdered.
- President Johnson went on TV to say that '*it is wrong – deadly wrong – to deny any of your fellow Americans the right to vote in this country*'. By then many members of Congress, even conservatives, had come to the same conclusion.
- In 1965, Congress passed the **Voter Registration Act**. Literacy tests and other tricks which stopped black people from registering were declared illegal, and the Federal government took on responsibility for implementing the rules.

## Racial issues in the North

- The civil rights campaign focused on the South and did little for black people in the North.
- Most of them lived in **ghettos** in big cities (see p.292). Poor education and high unemployment meant that they missed out on the affluence that other Americans enjoyed in the 1960s.
- They were harassed by white police and suffered from gang violence and drug abuse.
- In 1965, their anger exploded into fierce riots in the **Watts** area of Los Angeles. Thirty-four people died and property worth \$40 million was destroyed.
- President Johnson set up an enquiry and some cities tried to improve conditions in the ghettos.
- Martin Luther King went to **Chicago** where howling mobs of Poles, Italians and Irish stopped a protest march.
- Lack of support from local black leaders and the Chicago city government forced him to withdraw.

## Divisions in the movement

- Divisions now appeared in the civil rights movement as some black leaders lost faith in non-violence:
  - '**Black Power**' and '**Black Pride**' groups emphasised the ethnic heritage of African Americans by wearing African dress and adopting African names.
  - '**Black nationalists**' wanted black people to have their own state, funded by compensation from white Americans for the wrong of slavery. Some also advocated violence.
  - The '**Black Panthers**', a tiny group with links to crime and drugs, talked of killing white people.

- These extremist groups alienated white supporters from the civil rights movement.

## The assassination of Martin Luther King

- After Chicago, King recognised that civil rights were not enough. He opposed the Vietnam War, noting that far more was spent killing Vietnamese than improving living conditions for the poor.
- He began a campaign for government funds to develop depressed areas.
- In April 1968, he went to **Memphis**, Tennessee to help a strike by sanitation workers.
- The protest turned violent and a depressed King returned to his hotel. The next morning he was assassinated.
- In over 100 cities across America, his death was marked by violent riots in which 46 people died.

## The results of the civil rights campaign

- For many of those involved, King's death marked the end of the civil rights campaign. The results were mixed.
- Black people with money or education could now get jobs that had previously been closed to them.
- Black people could register to vote and some were elected to office. In 1967 the first black mayor was elected, and in 1989 the first black governor.
- Legal segregation disappeared though that did not mean that the races mixed a great deal.
- In theory schools were no longer segregated, but in practice they continued to be. In cities, North and South, whites moved into white suburbs and sent their children to local, mainly white schools or to private schools. Older state schools in the city centres became, in practice, mostly black.
- To deal with this inequality, the Supreme Court ordered that children be **'bussed'** from one school district to another, but this was not successful and was later reversed.
- After Ronald Reagan became President in 1980, the Federal government reduced the help it gave to poor (mostly black) communities and largely ceased the pursuit of social justice.



## Key personality

### Martin Luther King (1929–1968)

- Born in Atlanta, Georgia, the son and grandson of well-known Baptist ministers, **Martin Luther King** got his early education in segregated schools and colleges in the South but later studied in integrated universities in the North.
- He joined the **NAACP** and was elected to its executive council. In 1954 he became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.
- He was elected President of the **Montgomery Improvement Association** (MIA) which led the bus boycott and took a successful case to the Supreme Court.
- In 1957 he formed the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference** (SCLC) to mobilise the moral authority and leadership of black churches behind the non-violent campaign for civil rights.
- King was influenced by the German theologian **Reinhold Niebuhr** who said that evil could not be overcome by reason but must be confronted. The non-violent campaign of **Gandhi** against British rule in India also inspired him.
- King and the SCLC wanted to bring the deprivation and indignities suffered by Southern black people to the notice of white Americans. They used the violent reaction of Southern authorities to publicise the situation and strengthen their demands for justice.
- King's skilful rhetoric, moderate goals, great personal courage and insistence on non-violence built a powerful coalition of poor and prosperous black people with liberal white sympathisers, including Christian and Jewish leaders.
- The movement successfully forced a reluctant Federal government to enact civil rights legislation and to enforce it in the South.
- The coalition broke up after 1965 due to the passing of the Civil Rights Acts, the explosion of black violence in northern cities, divisions among black leaders and King's growing opposition to the war in Vietnam.
- Martin Luther King was murdered in Memphis by a Nazi sympathiser, James Earl Ray, on 4 April 1968.

### Point to note

Up to the 1960s Americans of African descent were usually called 'colored' or 'Negro'. Martin Luther King, among others, used these terms. But as part of the civil rights movement, many rejected these names as labels used by other people and instead chose to call themselves 'blacks' or 'black people'. These names are still used today, though since the 1980s the term 'African American' has also come into common use.



# The campaign for women's rights

Although American women had gained the right to vote in 1919, they still suffered from discrimination into the 1960s. The campaign for civil rights for black people made women more aware of their situation and encouraged them to demand equal treatment with men.

## Housewives and mothers: 1945–1965

- Before 1940, few married women worked outside the home, but when war came, they replaced men in the arms factories and produced the weapons needed for victory.
- When the war ended the men returned to their jobs and women were expected to return to being housewives and mothers. This view of women's role continued up to the 1960s.
- In books and films, the stereotypical girl was frivolous and empty-headed. Her main aim was to marry a strong, handsome man who would take care of her for the rest of her life.
- This stereotype had an impact on women's career opportunities:
  - The number of women going to university declined in the 1950s.
  - Women found it hard to get jobs in government, business or the media except as secretaries or cleaners.
  - Able, well-qualified women were usually paid less than their male colleagues for the same work and did not get promotion.
  - Most women gave up paid work when they married (usually around 20) and depended on their husband's income. Divorce was rare among ordinary Americans.
  - There were few women in politics.

## The changing role of women

- By the end of the 1950s the lives of American housewives were starting to change. There were several reasons for this:
  - Life in the new suburbs could be lonely for a wife, separated from family and friends.
  - It could also be boring as labour-saving devices like dishwashers reduced the amount of work to be done around the house.
  - Women who were well educated felt they were wasting their education on housework and childminding.
  - Full employment meant that there was a demand for more workers so women easily found jobs outside the home.
  - Depending on a husband for money was humiliating so even poorly paid part-time work gave a woman some independence.



## Key personality

### Marilyn Monroe (1926–1962)

- Marilyn Monroe seemed to reflect exactly what America wanted women to be in the 1950s.
- Born Norma Jeane Mortenson, she had a troubled childhood, being moved around between her natural mother, foster parents and an orphanage.
- Married at 16, she went to work in a factory while her husband served in the army. Spotted by a photographer, she became a fashion model.
- After her picture appeared in several magazines, the film studio **Twentieth Century Fox** gave her a contract in 1946. Shortly after, she dyed her hair blonde and changed her name to **Marilyn Monroe**.
- After playing minor parts, she had her first starring role in 1953 in the film *Niagara*. This led to a string of hit films, like *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), *The Seven Year Itch* (1955), and the ever-popular *Some Like it Hot* (1959).
- In these and other films she was typecast as a sex-symbol, the stereotypical brainless ‘dumb blonde’.
- Monroe herself longed to be taken seriously as an actress, but she was not given the roles which would let her show her talent.
- Her private life was unhappy. Her first marriage failed, as did her second to the sports star Joe DiMaggio. She then married **Arthur Miller**, one of America’s most respected playwrights, and supported him when he was accused of communist sympathies during the McCarthy period.
- He wrote the script for her last film, *The Misfits*, but their marriage too ended in divorce. Unhappiness led to drug use and she became difficult to work with.
- She was found dead of a drugs overdose in August 1962. Because she was reported to have had affairs with several rich and famous Americans, including President Kennedy, rumours still surround the circumstances of her death.

## Campaigning for women’s rights

- Early in the 1960s, inspired by the black civil rights movement, women too began to demand their rights.
- One of the leaders of the campaign was **Betty Friedan**.



## Key personality

### Betty Friedan (1921–2006)

- From a prosperous Jewish family, **Betty Goldstein** took a degree in psychology, but gave up work after marrying Carl Friedan and having children.

- She found life as a wife and mother in the suburbs frustrating and lonely. She sent a questionnaire to women who had been in university with her and found most of them shared her feelings.
- This formed the basis of her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, which appeared in 1963.
- Based on interviews with thousands of housewives, Friedan claimed that the happy suburban housewife was a myth. This myth, which she called ‘*the feminine mystique*’, kept women passive and childlike and stopped them using their talents and education to find fulfilment in work.
- Friedan argued that there was a gap between what society expected of women and what women wanted for themselves. She called this ‘*the problem that has no name*’.
- Her book influenced many women to change their way of life.
- In 1966, she helped to found the **National Organisation of Women (NOW)**. It campaigned for equal pay for women, access to contraception and abortion and equal opportunities in all walks of life.
- She also helped to found the **National Women’s Caucus**. It campaigned for more women in political life and for an **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)** to the Constitution.
- Friedan organised rallies and made speeches in support of these causes, but she rejected the arguments of more radical feminists who blamed men. In 1963, she said: ‘*Some people think I’m saying: “Women of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your men.” It’s not true. “You have nothing to lose but your vacuum cleaners.”*’

## The achievements of the women’s movement

- The women’s movement had considerable success.
- The **1964 Civil Rights Act** outlawed discrimination on the grounds of gender as well as race.
- The Federal government insisted that companies applying for government contracts must employ women and men on equal terms.
- More women went to university and major universities, like Yale and Princeton, admitted women for the first time.
- More women got high-profile jobs in the media, became involved in politics and were elected to office.
- Some states legalised abortion, and in a case (**Roe v Wade**) in 1973, the US Supreme Court upheld a woman’s right to have one.
- But the top jobs in politics and business remained closed to women and the Equal Rights Amendment failed to pass.

## Divisions

- The women's movement split in the 1970s. Some extremists blamed men for all the ills of society and wanted to live without them.
- These views were rejected by Friedan and the majority of women, but they strengthened the position of people who rejected feminist arguments and still accepted the idea that a woman's place was in the home.

## Exam questions

- 1 In what ways did the Montgomery bus boycott, 1956, advance the cause of the civil rights movement? *(HL 2007)*
- 2 What contribution did Martin Luther King make to US affairs? *(HL 2011)*
- 3 What were the main developments in race relations in the US between 1945 and 1968? *(HL 2013)*

# Culture and religion

## 6

### Culture in the age of consensus

#### The age of consensus

The 20 years after the Second World War are sometimes called '*the age of consensus*'. During them, many Americans agreed in being proud of their country, happy with economic and social conditions and optimistic about the future.

Point to note

**Consensus:**  
agreement on most  
topics; an absence of  
conflict.

- This consensus was due to:
  - The economic prosperity that followed the hardships of Depression in the 1930s, and war in the early 1940s.
  - Pride in America's success as 'defender of the free world' in the Second World War and the Cold War.
  - The 'red scare' and McCarthyism of the 1950s made it difficult to publicly criticise America without being accused either of sympathising with communism or of being unpatriotic.
- In these years it seemed as if '*the American Dream*' – that anyone who worked hard could succeed – was true.
- The consensus was reinforced by books, films and TV programmes where the good guys always won and the endings were always happy.

#### The growth of leisure

- The post-war economic boom gave the majority of Americans a higher income and more free time than ever before.
- The average working week fell from over 50 hours in 1914 to 40 by 1960, and the Federal government introduced laws which guaranteed all workers an annual holiday.
- Money and leisure allowed many ordinary people to enjoy activities that once only the wealthy could afford.
- A leisure industry emerged to supply their needs:
  - Companies sprang up to organise package holidays.

- People took cruises or went on overseas holidays.
- Firms like Disney branched out from making films to creating theme parks and other holiday activities.
- A popular leisure activity was shopping and large shopping malls were opened to take advantage of this.

## Films and TV

- Before the war people went to the cinema several times a week and Hollywood stars were admired and copied.
- After the war the film industry suffered a double blow:
  - The arrival of TV cut into its audiences.
  - The McCarthy witch-hunts (see p.266) targeted leading writers and undermined trust in the industry.
- TV was invented before the war, but TV broadcasting in America did not begin until the 1940s.
- Early TV sets were very expensive, but prices fell sharply in the 1950s, and by 1960 most homes had one. At first the pictures were black and white, but colour was widespread by 1970.
- TV changed family life. The TV set became the focal point of the living room. Families gathered around it during meals, often eating pre-cooked ‘TV dinners’.
- From the start, TV programmes were sponsored, with up to ten minutes of advertising every hour. Sponsors had a big influence on the programmes that were put out. Many were ‘soap operas’, but sport was also hugely popular.
- The novelty of having entertainment at home tempted people away from the cinemas. Hollywood fought back with colour spectacles, lavish musicals and special effects which were best enjoyed on a big screen. In the 1980s films like *Star Wars* and *ET* won back audiences from TV.

## Sport

- Money and more leisure time allowed more people to enjoy tennis, cycling and golf than ever before. Sports centres and an interest in fitness also encouraged people to swim and run.
- But far more people watched sport on TV than ever played a game. Once advertisers realised this they poured millions of dollars into spectator sports.
- The main American sports – **baseball** and **American football** – became multimillion-dollar businesses. Teams turned professional and star players became famous and wealthy.
- Big national competitions, like the **Super Bowl**, attracted millions of viewers and huge advertising revenue for TV channels.

- Minority sports, like tennis and golf, also attracted large audiences. The number of tournaments increased rapidly and the leading players made fortunes.
- Racial segregation existed in most sports. It was 1947 before a black man was selected for a major baseball team, and it was not until the 1970s that a black manager was appointed. Most golf and tennis clubs practised racial segregation.
- Boxing was one sport where black men fought white men on an even footing. The most famous sportsman of the 1960s was the boxer **Muhammad Ali**.



## Key personality

### Muhammad Ali (1942–)

- Born into a poor family in Kentucky, **Cassius Clay** took up boxing at 12 and won a gold medal in the 1960 Olympics.
- He turned professional in 1960, and won all 19 of the fights that followed.
- In 1964, he fought the world champion **Sonny Liston**. Before the fight he boasted that he would ‘float like a butterfly and sting like a bee’, but his victory over Liston took everyone by surprise.
- Between 1964 and 1967, he defended his title nine times.
- In 1964, Clay surprised the world by joining the **Nation of Islam**, which rejected Christianity as the religion that enslaved black people. Claiming that Clay was a ‘slave name’ given to his ancestors by their white masters, he now called himself **Muhammad Ali**.
- The Nation of Islam wanted a separate black nation and not the integration of black and white that Martin Luther King hoped for. This made Ali a controversial figure among Americans, both black and white.
- He also courted controversy by opposing the Vietnam War. He refused to join the US army, remarking ‘*I ain’t got no quarrel with those Vietcong.*’
- In 1967, he was stripped of his title, which meant he could not fight, and was also sentenced to jail for refusing to be conscripted.
- After three years his sentence was reversed and he was allowed to fight again. In 1971, he met the undefeated **Joe Frazier** in the ‘fight of the century’. After a tough fight, Frazier won.
- In 1974, he fought the world champion **George Foreman** in Zaire in Africa. Against expectations, Ali won. The so called ‘rumble in the jungle’ came to symbolise the racial struggle between black and white Americans. Ali’s victory was seen as a victory over the establishment that had tried to silence him as a spokesperson for African Americans.
- He remained world champion until 1978, when he was defeated by **Leon Spinks**. In 1979, he recovered the title when he defeated Spinks again.
- Muhammad Ali retired from boxing in 1981 after winning 56 bouts and losing five. Many people consider him the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time.

## Literature

- Reading remained a popular activity. Cheap paperback books appeared during the war and helped to encourage an interest in literature, as did the greater leisure time and the general increase in higher education from the 1950s.
- The number of publishers increased. Books were sold in supermarkets as well as in traditional bookshops, and lists of ‘bestsellers’ encouraged people to read the current popular hit.
- Most bestsellers were light reading, such as Edna Ferber’s *Giant* (1952) or Leon Uris’s *Exodus* (1958).
- But towards the end of the 1950s and early 1960s there was a growing interest in more challenging works.
- The **Beat** writers, such as the poet **Allen Ginsberg** and the novelist **Jack Kerouac** experimented with freer forms of writing and discussed drugs and sexuality in ways that were considered shocking at the time.
- In *Catch 22* (1961) **Joseph Heller** satirised the horrors of war and the ability of modern society, especially bureaucratic institutions, to destroy the human spirit.
- One of the most controversial of these new writers was the novelist and journalist **Norman Mailer**.



### Key personality

#### Norman Mailer (1923–2007)

- Born into a Jewish family in New Jersey, Mailer grew up in New York and studied aeronautical engineering at Harvard. During the Second World War he served with the United States Army in Southeast Asia.
- His first novel, *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), was based on his wartime experiences. Controversial for its strong language, it was published when he was 25 and made him famous.
- In the conservative 1950s, he had difficulty getting his next two novels published because of their frank treatment of sex. This led to problems with drink, drugs and violence, culminating in the stabbing of his wife during a drinking bout in 1961. He got away with a suspended sentence when she refused to press charges.
- From the late 1950s, he lived in Greenwich Village, New York. He turned more to journalism and became involved in left-wing politics.
- At this time he developed a new writing form – the non-fiction novel. It used the techniques and insights of novel writing to illuminate factual subjects.
- Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, he reported on the Democratic and Republican Conventions, on the civil rights movement and on the protests against the war in Vietnam.



- Arrested for his part in an anti-war demonstration, he wrote about the experience in his book *Armies of the Night* which won the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction in 1968.
- He also used this technique in *Of a Fire on the Moon* (1970) to explore the moon landing and in *The Fight* (1974) which reported on the boxing match between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in Zaire in 1974. His 1979 book, *The Executioner's Song*, about convicted killer Gary Gilmore was a major popular success.
- Mailer was married six times, and had nine children by his various wives.
- In 1971 he clashed with the women's movement after suggesting in *The Prisoner of Sex* that gender may shape how a person perceives reality. This made him a hate figure among some feminists who pointed to the preoccupation with violence in his writing.
- Mailer wrote over forty books, including biographies of Muhammad Ali, Marilyn Monroe and Pablo Picasso. He also wrote many film scripts, essays and journalistic pieces.

## The collapse of consensus

### Consensus ends

- In the 1960s, the post-war consensus collapsed because:
  - Young people challenged the values of their parents.
  - The civil rights and women's movements and the Vietnam War divided Americans.
  - The revelation of inner city poverty and the race riots undermined faith in the American Dream.
  - The 1970s recession, which increased poverty and unemployment, further undermined this faith. It also made taxpayers more reluctant to help their poorer fellow Americans.

### Youth culture

- The children born after the war (the 'baby boomers') were entering their teens from the late 1950s. The first 'teenagers', they were better educated than their parents, with no memory of economic depression or war.
- They could easily get part-time jobs and with money to spend they developed a distinctive youth culture.
- A whole industry grew up to supply them with magazines, films, records, make-up and books.
- Many of them rejected the consensus of the 1950s and wanted to follow their own tastes and opinions.
- This created a 'generation gap' between young people and their parents.

## Music

- Music played a key part of youth culture.
- In the late-1950s, musicians like **Chuck Berry** and **Elvis Presley**, with their rock and roll rhythms ('devil's music' according to many of the older generation) and open sexuality, appealed to teenagers but outraged parents.
- In the 1960s, young people admired pop groups like the **Beatles** and the **Rolling Stones**, copied their dress and hairstyles and listened to their views on drugs, race and war.

## The sexual revolution

- Young people in the 1960s had a more permissive attitude to sex than their parents because the contraceptive pill reduced the fear of pregnancy.
- This in turn undermined support for the censorship of books and films and encouraged the open discussion of issues like pornography, homosexuality and abortion, which before had been almost totally hidden.

## Counter-culture

- A minority of young people turned their backs on the consumer society and the American Dream.
- Many were students who were active in the civil rights or women's movement or in opposing the Vietnam War.
- Others went further. Known as '**hippies**', they wore colourful old clothes, and long hair, used drugs and practised 'free love'. Some went to live in **communes** where all property was held in common.
- A few advocated an all-out attack on the capitalist society, using violence and terror.
- The counter-cultural movement fizzled out in the 1970s because:
  - The decline in the economy reduced the amount of money available and forced students to work harder.
  - Reasons for protest disappeared when the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War ended and the bans on abortion and homosexuality were removed.
  - The spread of sexually transmitted diseases in the 1970s, and especially HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, made casual sex dangerous.

## Multiculturalism

- Part of the 'American Dream' was the idea that the US was a 'melting pot' where all races blended and could live together harmoniously.

- The civil rights campaign showed this was a myth, at least where black people were concerned.
- In the 1970s, some black people began to seek their roots in Africa.
- They also pointed out that they and their achievements had been written out of American history and culture. For example, there had been many black cowboys, but they were not mentioned in books or films.
- This led to demands that schools and universities teach African-American studies.
- Other groups followed their example. American Indians renamed themselves **Native Americans**. They dug up old treaties that the US government had made with their ancestors and demanded that it keep the terms. They also began to revive their ancient cultures and languages.
- Women pointed out that women's experiences were also written out of American history. Universities began to offer courses in 'women's studies'.
- After that Irish, Jewish, Polish and many other racial groups became interested in the experience of their immigrant ancestors and tried to construct the stories of their people's experience in America.
- Until the 1960s, most immigrants to America were from Europe, but that changed in 1965. America now accepted immigrants from around the world on the basis of the skills they had to offer.
- This produced a flood of newcomers, many from Asia and Latin America. These people brought their languages and culture with them.
- This created a debate on whether multiculturalism was a good policy or whether the US should demand that all newcomers learn English and conform to American values.

## Religion in American society

### Religion in the American Constitution

The American Constitution says '*Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or the prohibiting the free exercise thereof*'. This guarantees American people freedom to practise their religion and prevents the government favouring one religion above another.

### The various Churches

- The US is a mainly Christian country with a small minority of Jews and Muslims.
- Over half of all Americans belong to one of the many **Protestant Churches**, such as Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists. All Presidents have been Protestants, apart from Kennedy, who was Catholic.

- Many Methodists and Baptists (also called ‘**evangelicals**’) are **fundamentalists**. They believe that the Bible is the word of God and that every word in it is true. Many fundamentalists live in the south and southwest.
- Because of the Constitution, anyone can start a new Church, and a number of new religions, such as the **Mormons** and the **Jehovah’s Witnesses**, began in America in the last 150 years.
- About a quarter of Americans are **Roman Catholics**. Their leader is the Pope in Rome, though many American Catholics disagreed with him on issues like birth control and divorce.
- **Jews**, divided into Reform, Conservative and Orthodox, are the third biggest religious grouping in the US.
- There were few Muslims registered in the US until the 1980s.

## Race and religion

- In the American South, white people refused to sit in church with black people, so racially separate churches sprang up.
- Black churches helped black people to survive discrimination and black clergymen like Martin Luther King played a leading role in the struggle for civil rights (see p.300).
- In the 1960s, some black people, like the boxer **Muhammad Ali**, rejected Christianity as the religion of their oppressors and converted to the **Muslim faith**.

## Religion in the 1950s

- During the Cold War the leaders of the churches backed their government in the fight against ‘godless communism’.
- Few people questioned this. Many considered the US was ‘*God’s own country*’ and believed God was on their side in the Cold War. In 1956 ‘*In God we Trust*’ was put on coins and notes as the national motto.
- Protestant evangelicals also organised crusades to persuade people to give up drinking, swearing and gambling and to turn to Christ. One of the most important of these was **Billy Graham**.



### Key personality

#### Billy Graham (1918–)

- William Franklin (Billy) Graham was born into a Presbyterian family but joined the **Southern Baptist Church** in 1934. He was ordained a minister in 1939.
- Graham became a **fundamentalist** and preached at ‘Youth for Christ’ rallies across the US and Europe in the 1940s. With his sincerity and vitality, he

attracted many converts, urging them to read the Bible and develop a personal relationship with Jesus.

- From 1950, he began to organise his own evangelical crusades through the **Billy Graham Evangelistic Association**.
- Arriving in a city, Graham's people would take over a stadium for a week of nightly sermons accompanied by a choir of thousands. The Association made Graham a wealthy man.
- Graham consistently supported right-wing causes. In the 1950s, he joined McCarthy's anti-communist campaign, in the 1960s he backed US involvement in the Vietnam War, and in the 1970s he was a friend and adviser to Richard Nixon.
- Over the years he never challenged the organisation of American society or called for help for the poor.
- These views won him the support of newspapers and magazines like *Time* which called him '*the Protestant Pope*'. He became America's best known clergyman, and all Presidents after Truman felt it necessary to be seen consulting him.
- In 1960, a Catholic, John F. Kennedy, was elected President. This worried many Protestants who feared the Pope would be the real ruler of America. Kennedy tried to reassure them by consulting Billy Graham.

## Religion in the 1960s

- Religion became less important in US society during the 1960s.
- Censorship of films and books declined and people were open to a wider range of influences.
- Young people with a better education than their parents demanded the right to make up their own minds on issues of sexual morality like divorce and contraception. Many stopped going to church.
- The civil rights movement and the women's movement challenged old (often biblically based) attitudes to race and gender.
- A number of Supreme Court judgements limited the government's right to impose religious views on society. They forbade prayers in state-funded public schools and allowed a woman to choose an abortion.
- The war in Vietnam also undermined the belief of many Americans that their country always fought for just causes. Many clergy were actively involved in campaigning against it.

## The Moral Majority of the 1980s

- The victories for a more open society produced a backlash.

- In the 1980s, right-wing Christian groups appeared calling themselves the ‘**Moral Majority**’. They opposed abortion, wanted prayers in public schools and tax-free status for private religious-run schools.
- Most of them were evangelical Protestants, though many Catholics supported them on abortion.
- Although they called themselves ‘the Moral Majority’, opinion polls showed that most Americans did not support their views.
- The ‘Moral Majority’ had the backing of a number of powerful ‘televangelists’ who used TV to preach not just on Christianity, but on political issues too.
- They were influential in the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, but many mainstream Christian leaders, including Billy Graham, were uneasy at this open linking of religion and politics.
- The ‘Moral Majority’ campaign ended when a number of televangelists were involved in financial and sexual scandals.
- But fundamentalist Christians remained a powerful group in America over the last four decades – one which all political leaders have had to pay attention to.

## Exam questions

- 1 During the period 1945–1989 what was the impact of one or more of the following on American society?
  - Racial conflict
  - Urban poverty
  - Organised crime. *(HL 2006)*
- 2 What was the significance of one or more of the following in US history?
  - Hollywood, between 1945 and 1968
  - The Montgomery bus boycott
  - Religion in modern American culture. *(HL 2012)*
- 3 What contribution did Betty Friedan and/or Norman Mailer make to society in the United States? *(HL 2007)*
- 4 What did one or more of the following contribute to American culture?
  - Marilyn Monroe
  - Muhammad Ali
  - Billy Graham. *(HL 2011)*
- 5 What was the contribution of religion and/or the mass media to modern American culture? *(HL 2013)*

## OL 2013

### B Write a short paragraph on one of the following.

- 1 Harry Truman
- 2 'Organization Man'
- 3 Billy Graham
- 4 SALT and Star Wars.

(30)

### C Answer one of the following.

- 1 How did Joe McCarthy contribute to a 'red scare' in the US?
- 2 What problems did one or more of the following pose for the US:
  - Berlin
  - Korea
  - Cuba.
- 3 What did Muhammad Ali and/or Marilyn Monroe contribute to the rise of the mass media in modern America?
- 4 In what ways did the life and work of Betty Friedan reflect the changing role of women and the family in modern America?

(40)

## OL 2007

### B Write a short paragraph on one of the following.

- 1 Urban poverty, drugs and crime.
- 2 The United States and Cuba.
- 3 Marilyn Monroe.
- 4 'The Organization Man'.

(30)

### C Answer one of the following.

- 1 What part did President Truman play in the history of the United States?
- 2 How did Senator Joe McCarthy influence the direction of foreign policy in the United States?
- 3 What problems did President Johnson encounter in dealing with Vietnam?
- 4 How was it possible for the United States to achieve the moon landing in 1969?

(40)

## OL 2006

### B Write a short paragraph on one of the following.

- 1 The American multinational corporation

- 2 Betty Friedan and the changing role of women
- 3 Youth culture in modern America
- 4 The Moon landing, 1969. (30)

**C Answer one of the following.**

- 1 Why was the Montgomery bus boycott (1956) so important to the story of the civil rights movement?
- 2 What policies did President Johnson follow in relation to the war in Vietnam?
- 3 How important were Marilyn Monroe and/or Muhammad Ali in modern American culture?
- 4 How and why did Billy Graham become such a popular religious leader in the United States? (40)