

## The Cold War and American Society, 1945-1953

The U.S. struggle to contain Soviet communism world wide resulted in what came to be known as the "**Cold War.**" Although full-scale war between the U.S. and Soviet Union did not occur, two major wars—Korea and Vietnam—and many smaller conflicts, occurred between 1946 and 1991 over the battle between democracy and communism.

Use space below for notes

### I. Roots of the Cold War

#### A. U.S. point of view

1. Stalin sought to create "spheres" of influence in Eastern Europe
  - a. **Yalta Conference:** Soviet pledge to allow democratic elections in eastern Europe was broken in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria.
    - Later, Czechoslovakia & Hungary became dominated by Moscow
  - b. USSR refused to release East Germany while the U.S., Britain and France gave back their western German zones to the new democratic West Germany.
2. The U.S. wanted democracy spread throughout the world with a strong United Nations to maintain global peace.
  - The Soviet Union eventually supported resistance to democracy throughout the world.
3. U.S. sought to gain access to new markets and raw materials to fuel its booming economy.
4. Churchill's "**Iron Curtain" Speech** warned Americans of Soviet expansion (March 1946 in Fulton, Missouri)
  - Americans now realized that a protracted conflict with the USSR was a reality.

#### B. Soviet point of view

1. U.S. did not open a second front in Western Europe early enough; millions of Soviet soldiers died fighting the brunt of the German armies alone until mid-1944.
2. U.S. and Britain froze Russia out of the atomic bomb project.
3. U.S. terminated lend-lease to the USSR in 1945 and refused \$6 billion plea from Stalin while granting Britain \$3.75 billion in 1946.
4. Soviets wanted a security guarantee for the Soviet western border, especially Poland
  - a. USSR had been twice attacked by Germany in 20th century.
  - b. Eastern Europe would now become a "buffer zone"
5. Soviets sought to rebuild their war-ravaged economy using

Eastern Europe's industrial equipment and raw materials.

C. War-torn areas were partitioned along ideological lines

1. Korea & Vietnam split into northern and southern zones: controlled by communists in the north and pro-democracy forces in the south.
  - Two major wars would be fought by the U.S. during the Cold War: Korean War (1950-53); Vietnam (1964-1973)
2. Germany split into 4 zones with Berlin also being split in to quadrants.
  - The issue of Berlin nearly resulted in full-scale war in 1948-1949

II. Shaping the Postwar World

A. **Bretton Woods Conference** (1944): attended by western Allies

1. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** would provide loans for countries struggling from economic depression
2. World Bank founded to promote economic growth in war-torn and underdeveloped areas; served to stabilize currencies.
3. International currencies would be pegged to the U.S. dollar
4. Soviets declined to participate.

B. **United Nations**

1. Yalta Conference -- "Big Three" had called for a conference on a world organization to meet in April 1945 in the United States
2. UN Charter created a General Assembly composed of all member nations
  - In reality, the Assembly had the power to make recommendations but lacked enforcement powers.
3. **Security Council** was composed of five permanent members: U.S., USSR, China, Britain, and France
  - Any single veto would overrule a proposal
  - Seven additional nations elected by the General Assembly for 2-year terms
  - Responsible for settling disputes among UN member nations.

C. The German Question

1. **Nuremberg Trials**

- a. Potsdam Conference had decided on punishing war crimes and a program of de-Nazifying Germany.
- b. Allies tried 22 top Nazis at Nuremberg, Germany during 1945 and 1946.
- c. 12 Nazis hanged and seven sentenced to long jail terms.
- d. Legal critics in the U.S. condemned the trials as judicial lynchings because the defendants were tried for offenses that had not been clear-cut crimes when the war began.

## 2. Partition of Germany

- a. Soviets dominated their Eastern German zone after WWII.
  - Sought to strip East German resources and ship them to Russia as compensation for war losses.
  - Didn't want a revitalized Germany that could again be a threat.
- b. U.S. and Western Europe believed Germany's economy was vital to the recovery of Europe
  - West Germany eventually became an independent country when US, France and Britain gave back each of their occupation zones.
- c. 1949, a democratic West Germany was created (Federal Republic of Germany)
- d. East Germany was created under Soviet domination (German Democratic Republic)

## D. Reconstruction of Japan

1. Despite Soviet protests, the U.S., led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, implemented democracy in Japan (Allied Control Council); U.S. remained for 7 years after the war.
  - Japan adopted a constitution in 1946 renouncing militarism & introducing a Western-style democracy.
2. Japanese war criminals tried between 1946-48; 7 hanged (including Hideki Tojo); 18 were sent to prison
3. Within a few decades, Japan would become an economic powerhouse.

## III. "Containment"

### A. 1947, US Ambassador to Russia, George Kennan, warned Truman that the USSR sought to expand its empire.

1. Soviet leaders had an ideology that "the outside world was hostile and that it was their duty eventually to overthrow the political forces beyond their borders."
2. Soviet policy in eastern Europe, Germany, and the Middle East was of great concern
3. Kennan's ideas became the basis for Truman's "containment" policy.

### B. Truman Doctrine

1. Defined U.S. foreign policy for next 20 years.
  - "It must be the policy of the U.S. to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."
2. Initiated a policy of "containment": prevention of the spread of communism worldwide
3. March 12, 1947, Truman asked Congress for \$400 million to

support democracy in Turkey and Greece since the British were no longer able.

- The result was positive for democracy in both countries
4. Truman quickly recognized Israel in 1948 as the new country would be a bastion of democracy in the Middle East.

### C. Marshall Plan (1947)

1. France, Italy and Germany were still suffering from economic chaos after WWII.
  - U.S. feared Communist parties could exploit these hardships and take control.
2. Sec. of State George C. Marshall invited Europeans to create a joint plan for economic recovery. U.S. would provide financial assistance.
  - a. Soviets walked out of the conference in Paris in July, 1947, claiming it was a U.S. ploy to dominate Europe
    - Czechoslovakia was initially interested in aid but pressure from the USSR forced a veto.
    - Eastern European nations were prohibited from accepting aid from the U.S. or western Europe.
  - b. Congress at first balked at the huge aid package but changed course after a Soviet-sponsored *coup d'etat* in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 extended the influence of communism in eastern Europe.
3. The plan allocated \$12.5 billion over four years in 16 cooperating countries.
4. Within a few years, most recipients of the plan's aid were exceeding prewar output; seen as the "economic miracle."
  - Communism lost ground in Italy and France

### D. U.S. government reorganization and rearmament

1. **National Security Act of 1947** created the **Department of Defense**
  - a. **Department of Defense** created (replaced the War Dept.)
    - Headed by a new cabinet post, Secretary of Defense
    - Housed in the new massive Pentagon building in Alexandria, Virginia
  - b. **National Security Council (NSC)** and **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** were created by Truman in 1948 and 1949
    - Became the president's chief source on foreign affairs
  - c. **NSC Number 68** (1950)
    - Issued in response to communist victory in China and the onset of hostilities in Korea.
    - U.S. would implement a rigorous worldwide defense of Communism with "an immediate and large-scale build up of our military."

2. 1948, the first peacetime military draft was enacted
3. "Voice of America" authorized by Congress; beamed U.S. broadcasts behind the iron curtain promoting democracy
4. Atomic Energy Commission created in 1946 -- established civilian control over nuclear development and gave president sole authority over the use of atomic weapons in warfare.

**E. Berlin Airlift (1948-49)**

1. Berlin, deep inside East Germany, was cut off from the west by Soviet forces in 1948.
  - a. USSR response to the creation of West Germany
  - b. U.S., French, and British zones in Berlin became an "island" inside East Germany
    - Soviets also shut off electric power
    - 2 million West Berliners, in effect, became hostages
    - Berlin became a symbolic issue for both sides.
2. U.S. organized a massive airlift for nearly a year; 277,000 flights, 2 million tons.
3. Many thought World War III was inevitable
4. Soviets lifted the blockade in May 1949 and the crisis subsided.

**IV. Cold War during Truman's 2nd term (under Secretary of State Dean Acheson)**

**A. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**

1. Created in response to the Berlin Crisis
2. Established April 4, 1949 by 12 nations including U.S., France, Britain, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Iceland, and Canada.
  - a. In 1953, Turkey & Greece joined.
  - b. West Germany joined in 1954
3. Collective security organization that essentially warned USSR that a threat to any NATO members would be met with force.
4. In 1955, USSR formed **Warsaw Pact** as a response to NATO which included all **Eastern Bloc** countries -- **satellite countries**

**B. Other collective security organizations**

1. **Organization of American States (OAS)** in 1948 : collective security organization against communist expansion in Latin America
2. ANZUS (1951): U.S. forged a collective security agreement with Australia and New Zealand to promote democracy in the Pacific.
3. SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization) formed in 1954: included Philippines, Pakistan, Thailand, New Zealand, Australia, France and U.S.
4. CENTO (1955): included several countries in the Middle East including Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and United Kingdom

C. The Soviet Union exploded an atomic bomb in September 1949

1. The U.S. no longer had a nuclear monopoly
2. The world now had two atomic powers

D. China became Communist in 1949: People's Republic of China

1. U.S. supported Nationalist leader **Jiang Jieshi** (Chang-Kai-Shek) during WWII
2. In late 1949, **Mao Zedong's** (Mao Tse-tung) communist forces defeated the last of Jiang's forces and the Nationalists fled to **Formosa (Taiwan)**.
  - Mao was supported by the Soviet Union
3. Loss of China was seen as a major defeat for U.S. containment.
  - a. 25% of world's population became communist in one shot.
  - b. Truman criticized for allowing China to fall to communists.
  - c. Truman replied that China had never been his to lose.
4. U.S. refused to recognize the People's Republic of China ("Red China") and maintained Jiang's regime on the UN Security Council
  - a. USSR boycotted the Security Council in protest
  - b. The People's Republic of China not recognized as a permanent Security Council member until 1973.

E. **The Hydrogen Bomb**

1. U.S. exploded an H-bomb in 1952
  - Many scientists felt H-bomb had become an instrument of genocide; many times more powerful than the A-bomb.
2. In 1953, Soviets successfully exploded an H-bomb; nuclear arms race continued.
3. The world now had two superpowers: U.S. and USSR
4. For the first time in history, humankind had the ability to end civilization.

F. **Korean War (1950-53)**

1. Background
  - a. During WWII, Russian troops occupied northern Korea while U.S. troops occupied southern Korea.
  - b. 1949, both set up rival regimes on each side of the 38th parallel.
    - North Korea was led by communist dictator Kim Il-Sung and was supported by the Soviet Union
  - c. Secretary of State Dean Acheson claimed Korea was outside the essential U.S. defense perimeter in the Pacific and U.S. forces in Korea were reduced.
2. June 1950, the North Korean army with Soviet-made tanks invaded South Korea and took nearly all of the country.
3. Truman invoked NSC-68, a call to quadruple U.S. defense

spending, and ordered a massive military buildup well beyond the purposes of the war.

- The U.S. soon had 3.5 million men in uniform and was spending \$50 billion per year on defense—13% of GNP
4. UN Security Council (with Russia absent) voted 9-0 to provide military aid to South Korea.
    - UN established a military force with Truman's choice, **Gen. Douglas MacArthur**, as UN commander who took his orders from directly from the U.S.
    - U.S. forces comprised 4/5 of UN troops in Korea
  5. By August 1950, North Korea captured nearly all of South Korea
    - North Korea had superior military aid from the Soviet Union.
  6. MacArthur directed a surprise amphibious landing at **Inchon** behind Korean lines.
    - a. Within two weeks, UN forces recaptured nearly all of South Korea as North Koreans retreated behind the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.
    - b. Although the original objectives were complete, MacArthur ordered UN forces to cross North of the 38th parallel with the support of Truman and the UN.
      - North Korean forces were driven back near the Chinese border.
    - c. UN then called for the establishment of a unified and democratic Korea.
  7. November 1950, 300,000 Chinese soldiers crossed the Yalu River into North Korea; forced UN troops to retreat with heavy losses back across 38th parallel.
    - It seemed to the U.S. that Korea might be completely lost
  8. Truman fired MacArthur
    - a. Truman sought a **limited war** (announced it Nov. 28, 1950)
      - US would seek specific objectives rather than total victory
      - Nuclear weapons would not be used
      - Original objective reemerged to restore the border between North and South Korea at the 39<sup>th</sup> parallel.
      - Invasion of China might mean Soviet retaliation in Europe or Asia.
      - Truman's decision for a limited war may have averted a world war.
    - b. MacArthur was against limited war: "No substitute for victory"
      - Asked for nuclear weapons to be used on China and demanded strong military action against Chinese cities.
      - Believed political decisions in Washington, D.C. hampered the conduct of war.
    - c. MacArthur circumvented Truman and demanded a total North Korean surrender.
      - He thus undercut Truman's attempt at negotiations and directly challenged the president's power.

- d. Truman fired MacArthur from his command and ordered him back to US.
    - MacArthur returned home a hero
    - A Congressional committee investigated Truman's decision
    - Truman successfully defended his decision
  - e. Significance: Civilian control of the U.S. military was reaffirmed; the president was the commander-in-chief
9. Cease-Fire
- a. Negotiations began in July 1951 and continued for 2 years while the war continued.
    - Presidential candidate in 1952 Dwight D. Eisenhower pledged to personally go to Korea and get stalled negotiations moving again.
      - Eisenhower won in 1952 and within weeks visited Korea.
    - Eisenhower threatened to use nuclear weapons unless the deadlocked peace negotiations were successful.
  - b. Cease-fire was signed on July 27, 1953 (armistice still in effect today)
    - **38th parallel** as a boundary was restored.
    - A DMZ (de-militarized zone) was established along the border
  - c. Americans were disappointed at the unclear conclusion of the war (WWII had been a clear-cut victory)
10. Results of Korean War
- a. 54,000 US soldiers and 3,000 UN soldiers dead; 103,000 UN soldiers wounded (including Americans); 2 million civilians dead (mostly in South Korea); over 1.5 million dead Chinese and North Korean soldiers.
    - Total casualties were as high as 4 million.
  - b. UN successfully repelled North Korea's attack on South Korea
  - c. The U.S. successfully enforce its "containment" policy

**Memory Aid for Cold War under President Truman:**

<b>T</b> Truman's	Truman Doctrine, 1947
<b>M</b> uscles	Marshall Plan, 1947
<b>B</b> rought	Berlin Crisis, 1948-49
<b>N</b> asty	NATO, 1948
<b>R</b> ed	<b>Red Scare</b>
<b>C</b> hina	China becomes communist, 1949
<b>A</b> cross	Atomic bomb exploded by Soviets, 1949
<b>K</b> orea	Korean War, 1950-53

## V. Truman's First Term -- domestic policy

### A. Taft-Hartley Act , June 1947

1. Passed by Congress over Truman's veto (the Republicans won control of Congress in 1946)
2. Conservative response to the growing power of labor unions
  - a. In 1946, over 4 million workers went on strike demanding higher wages.
  - b. Shutdowns in the auto, steel, electric, railroad, and maritime industries ensued.
  - c. Much striking activity orchestrated by **John L. Lewis**, president of the United Mine Workers, who demanded higher pay, safer work conditions, and a small tax on coal to fund worker pensions.
3. Major provisions of Taft-Hartley Act
  - a. Most important: 80 day cooling-off period for strikers in key industries
  - b. Outlawed the "closed-shop" (process of hiring only union members)
    - The "union shop" was allowed (which obligated new workers to become union members)
4. By 1954, 15 states (mostly in the South) passed "**right to work**" laws outlawing the "union-shop."
5. Unions still flourished; AFL had 8 million in 1950; CIO 6 million

### B. Civil Rights: gains for African Americans

1. 1946, Truman created the President's Committee on Civil Rights
  - In 1947, committee published *To Secure These Rights*, calling for desegregation of American society, anti-lynching legislation and an end to poll taxes.
2. **Jackie Robinson** became the first African American in Major League Baseball in 1947 (Brooklyn Dodgers)
3. 1948, president banned racial discrimination in federal government hiring practices and ordered **desegregation of the armed forces**
  - Blacks were integrated in 1953

### C. 22nd Amendment, 1951 ("Anti-FDR amendment")

1. Limited president to two terms; or a maximum of 10 years if he, as vice president, assumed the presidency due to the death or departure of a previous president.
  - Did not apply to Truman but to all others after him
2. Largely a conservative move in the face of over 17 years of continuous Democratic rule in the White House (FDR and Truman)
  - FDR had been elected to four terms and many saw this as an

opportunity for the executive branch to consolidate excessive power.

## VI. The "Red Scare"

### A. American Fears of communism and its sympathizers:

1. Communism at home: fear of spies infiltrating U.S. gov't: Alger Hiss, Rosenbergs
2. Spread of communism around the world (Eastern Europe, China, Korea)
3. Fear of nuclear war: Soviet A-bomb in 1949; H-bomb in 1953, *sputnik* in 1957
4. Fear of another depression (recessions in 1946-47 and early '50s convinced some that a depression might trigger the growth of communism)
5. Demagogue politicians used fear for gain (HUAC, McCarthy)
6. American culture reflected these fears with movies such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *The Blob*, and *Them*
7. Note: this was the 2nd red scare of 20th century (the first occurred after WWI: 1919-1920 during Wilson's presidency.)

### B. **Smith Act of 1940**

1. Made it illegal to advocate the overthrow of the government by force or to belong to an organization advocating such a position.
2. Immigrants who belonged to such organizations could be deported.
3. Used by the Truman administration to jail leaders of the American Communist Party.
  - 11 communists were brought to trial in New York in 1949 and sent to prison for advocating the overthrow of the US gov't by force.

### C. **House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)** and the indictment of **Alger Hiss**

1. HUAC was created in 1945 to root out communism in the U.S.
  - a. Committee was sensationalistic, also going after public figures in Hollywood.
  - b. Liberals and members of the New Deal were targeted
  - c. Senate counterpart to HUAC was also active in anti-communist investigations.
2. Richard Nixon led the movement to indict **Alger Hiss**, a distinguished member of the "eastern establishment," prominent ex-New Dealer, and current member of the U.S. State Department
3. Hiss denied being a Communist agent in the 1930s but was convicted of perjury in 1950 and sentenced to 5 years in prison.
4. Nixon gained national prominence; was elected vice president 5 years later.

**D. Truman's "loyalty" program**

1. Truman countered HUAC with anti-communist programs of his own.
  - a. The attorney general identified 90 "disloyal" organizations who were not given the right to prove their innocence.
  - b. Truman gave the FBI approval and resources to go after suspected "reds"
2. Loyalty Review Board investigated more than 3 million federal employees
  - About 3,000 people resigned or were dismissed without a formal indictment
3. Loyalty oaths were increasingly demanded of employees, especially teachers
4. Many people believed their civil liberties were being suppressed.
5. Gov't employees were forbidden to:
  - a. criticize US foreign policy
  - b. advocate equal rights for women
  - c. own books on socialism
  - d. attend foreign films

**E. McCarran Internal Security Bill (1950)**

1. Required communist-front organizations to register with the attorney general and prevented their members from defense work and travel abroad.
2. Truman vetoed this bill which authorized the President to arrest and detain suspicious persons during an "internal security emergency".
  - a. Many felt this bill was a step towards a police state.
  - b. Congress passed it anyway

**F. The Rosenbergs, 1954**

1. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted and executed for giving atomic bomb secrets to the Soviets.
2. Both were avowed communists.
3. Americans were horrified that an American couple had sold out their country.

**G. Blacklisting**

1. Many actors, writers, and directors had dabbled with the Communist Party in the 1930's when it was considered fashionable.
2. 10 of these movie industry people, the "**Hollywood Ten**" refused to testify and decided to go to prison rather than testifying to the HUAC, claiming protection from the Constitution.
3. The industry responded by denying work to 250 actors, writers, and directors.

## H. McCarthyism

1. **Senator Joseph R. McCarthy** (Wisconsin Republican) became America's most notorious demagogue by playing on Americans' fears of communism.
2. In Feb. 1950, he asserted that 200 unknown Communists were in the State Department.
  - a. He made sweeping accusations, employed guilt by association, and used documents out of context (even going so far as to doctor photos and documents)
  - b. The public was convinced he was looking out for national security.
  - c. He was unable to substantiate his claims but ruined many gov't officials in the process.
  - d. Almost no one was safe from his accusations.
  - e. His supporters tended to be Republican and blue-collar
3. Other Accusations:
  - a. Claimed the Democratic party was guilty of 20 years of treason
  - b. Wanted Truman impeached for being soft on communism (despite the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, NATO, Berlin Airlift, and the Korean War)
  - c. Claimed Secretary of State George Marshall was an instrument of a Soviet conspiracy.
  - d. Hinted Eisenhower was "soft on communism."
  - e. McCarthy slandered people, would sometimes publicly claim they were gay as well as communist.
4. McCarthy's Senate hearings created an atmosphere of conformity and fear
5. Presidents Truman and Eisenhower despised McCarthy but did little to oppose him
6. Downfall of McCarthy occurred when he took on the Army in 1954
  - a. McCarthy was intensely examined by Joseph Welch, an Army attorney who exposed some of McCarthy's unethical tactics.
  - b. By December, 1954, the Senate passed a resolution condemning McCarthy 67-22
  - c. McCarthy died three years later from alcohol and exhaustion.
7. Did the end of McCarthy signal the end of the red scare? Not really, but the hysteria did mellow.
  - a. *Sputnik* caused some hysteria in 1957; Americans feared Soviets were technologically superior.
  - b. Some Americans built bomb shelters in their back yards fearing nuclear war with Soviets
  - c. School's continued "duck and cover" drills to prepare for a nuclear attack.
  - d. The John Birch Society, an ultra-conservative nationalist group, emerged in late 1950s; continued an attack on liberals for the

- next two decades.
- e. Aggressive rooting out of suspected communists still existed.
8. **Arthur Miller's *The Crucible***: popular play in the 1950s that used the 1692 Salem Witch Trials as a metaphor for McCarthyism.

**VII. Election of 1948:** Truman defeated Dewey in a stunning upset

- A. Democrats were split into three camps:
1. Truman supporters of the **"Fair Deal"**:
    - Platform called for the extension of New Deal programs and more civil rights for African Americans
  2. **"Dixiecrats"**: States' Rights Party led by Strom Thurmond of South Carolina that was opposed to Truman's civil rights initiatives.
  3. A new Progressive party under liberal Henry Wallace who believed Truman was not going far enough in supporting liberal causes
- B. Thomas Dewey was nominated by the Republicans; Earl Warren was the vice presidential nominee
- Platform included anti-"big-labor" plank and reduction of New Deal policies.
- C. Truman's victory came with support from farmers, workers, and African Americans who felt threatened by the Republicans.
- D. Democrats established a clear majority in both houses of Congress

**VIII. Truman's "Fair Deal"**

- A. 1949, Truman called for a **"Fair Deal"** including housing, full employment, and higher minimum wage, better farm supports, new TVAs and extension of Social Security, and increased rights for African Americans.
- B. The only major successes were the raising the minimum wage, public housing and extending old-age insurance to more beneficiaries (Social Security Act of 1950)
- A proposed program of continued price supports for farmers failed to pass Congress and food surpluses continued to pile up (driving farm prices down).
- C. In essence, Truman was able to preserve New Deal programs but was unable to add to them.
- Coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats prevented little more than the maintenance of existing programs.
- D. Truman decided not to run for reelection in 1952
1. Military deadlock in Korea, war-induced inflation, and White House scandal made him very unpopular by 1952.

## IX. Election of 1952

- A. Adlai E. Stevenson nominated by Democrats; liberal platform
- B. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, a moderate, was nominated by Republicans
  - Richard Nixon was selected as his vice presidential running mate
- C. Result: Eisenhower defeated Stevenson 442-89
  - Became the first Republican president since Herbert Hoover in the early 1930s

## X. The “Vital Center”: 1948-1968

- A. A political consensus developed in America, although bitter political wrangling continued to characterize American politics.
  1. The term was coined in 1949 by Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who would later serve in the Kennedy administration.
  2. The term did not mean the political center between conservatism and liberalism. Rather, it meant a democratic consensus against totalitarianism, especially communism.
- B. Three major components to the “vital center” were common in both major parties:
  1. Anti-communism; containment
  2. Belief that economic growth could solve all of society’s problems
    - John F. Kennedy later said, “rising tides lift all boats”
  3. Political pluralism: belief that a variety of ideas could compete in America.
    - For example, the New Deal was accepted by both parties (although it did not expand significantly after 1938)
- C. The “vital center” elected Truman in 1948; Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956; Kennedy in 1960; and Lyndon Johnson in 1964.
- D. Flaws in the “vital center”
  1. The Vietnam War later exposed problems with containment
  2. As many as 25% of Americans lived in poverty; the economic boom did not “lift all boats”
  3. Jim Crow demonstrated lack of true pluralism in America
- E. The “Vital Center” was shattered in 1968
  1. The Vietnam War pit hawks against doves and amplified a generation gap between the older generation and the “baby boomers”
  2. White conservative backlash against liberalism: “Great Society” programs of Johnson, the civil rights movement, and apparent lack of law and order during the Vietnam War, contributed to

Republican control of the White House for 20 of the next 24 years.

- Popular 1970s TV show, *All in the Family*, had Archie Bunker as the “loveable” bigot who exemplified the conservative backlash

#### XI. The “**Affluent Society**”: American Society in the Post-WWII era (1945-1970)

##### A. **G.I. Bill of Rights** (Servicemen’s Readjustment Act), 1944

1. Response to unemployment fears from 15 million returning GIs from WWII.
  - Social unrest (e.g. race riots) after World War One became a lesson to better provide for veterans after WWII
  - About 10.2 million veterans participated in the program by 1956
2. Sent about 7.8 million veterans to school.
  - a. A majority attended technical and vocational schools.
  - b. The number of students in universities and colleges swelled
  - c. Eventually, about \$14.5 billion was spent on program.
3. Veteran’s Administration (VA) guaranteed about \$16 billion in loans for veterans to buy homes, farms, and small businesses.
  - About 2.4 million participated in VA programs
4. The G.I. Bill contributed to economic prosperity that emerged in the late 1940s

##### B. **Baby Boom**

1. 1950s population grew by over 28 million; 97% in urban and suburban areas.
2. Between 1946 and 1961, 63.5 million babies were born; between 1931 and 1946, only 41.5 million had been born
3. Proportional growth in population was unprecedented in American history.
4. The baby boomers became major targets of businesses who sought to cash in on their sheer numbers and relative affluence.

##### C. **Economic boom: 1950-1970 -- "The Affluent Society"**

1. National income nearly doubled in the 1950s; almost doubled again in the 1960s.
  - a. Americans enjoyed about 40% of the world’s wealth despite accounting for only 6% of population.
  - b. By the mid-1950s, 60% of Americans owned their own homes compared with only 40% in the 1920s.
  - c. A majority of postwar jobs went to women in urban offices and shops.
    - By the 1990s, women accounted for about half of total workers.
    - A clash between demands of suburban domesticity and

realities of employment sparked the feminist revolt in the 1960s.

- d. The US. economy was largely fueled by the growth of the defense industry.
  - Accounted for over 50% of the national budget by 1960.
- e. Cheap energy and the increased supply of power facilitated economic growth.
- f. Rising productivity (due to increases in education and technology) increased the average Americans standard of living two-fold.

2. **Consumerism** mushroomed as Americans had more disposable income

- Americans bought cars, gadgets for their homes, vacations, and ate out at restaurants in unprecedented numbers

3. **The Middle class**

- a. By the mid-1950s, about 60% of Americans were categorized as middle-class; double the percentage in 1929.
  - The middle class of the 1950s era was classified as households that made between \$3,000 and \$10,000 per year.

b. **Suburbs**

- Grew six times faster than cities in 1950s.
  - By 1960, 25% of all existing homes in America had been built during the 1950s.
- Resulted from increased car production, white flight from urban areas due to black migration into northern and midwestern cities, and gov't policies that insured both builders and homeowners.

D. **Cult of domesticity re-emerges**

1. Some advocated that science supported the idea that women could only find fulfillment as a homemaker.
2. The concept of a woman's place being in the home was widespread in magazines, TV, and society in general.
  - Popular 1950s TV shows reinforced the cult of domesticity: *Father Knows Best*, *Ozzie & Harriet*, and *Leave it to Beaver*
3. **Dr. Benjamin Spock: *Commonsense Book of Baby and Child Care***
  - a. Sold average of 1 million copies per year between 1946 and 1960.
  - b. Emphasized women's primary responsibility was to stay home and nurture their children.
  - c. Stated that parents should trust themselves as they attend to their children's physical and psychological needs.

### E. **Sunbelt vs. Frostbelt** (or Rustbelt)

1. Sunbelt is a 15-state area stretching from Virginia through Florida and Texas to Arizona and California (includes all former Confederate states)
2. Advent of **air-conditioning** spurred enormous growth
  - a. Population increase was twice that of the old industrial zones of the Northeast.
  - b. California which became most populous state by 1963.
3. War industries and high-tech industries attracted millions to the west coast.
4. The aerospace industry and huge military installations attracted millions to Texas and Florida.
5. Traditional Midwest industrial workers lost ground as many of their jobs were shipped overseas.
  - "Rustbelt" states of the Ohio Valley were angered at federal spending for Southern and Western states
6. Every president elected since 1964 (with the exception of Barack Obama) has come from the Sunbelt.
7. Sunbelt's representation in Congress has increased significantly.

## XII. Culture in the 1950s

### A. **Television & Movies**

1. TV emerged as the most popular entertainment medium in the 1950s replacing radio (TV hit the consumer market in 1947)
  - 90% of American homes had at least one television by 1960.
  - The number of hours the average American watched TV per day soared during the 50s and subsequent decades.
  - TV programs tended to reflect the conformity of the decade.
  - Movie box-office receipts dropped as more Americans remained content to see TV programming.
2. Some movie stars became icons to the younger generation in 1950s:
  - James Dean portrayed the angst of American youth
  - Marilyn Monroe became the quintessential sex symbol

### B. **Rock n' Roll**

1. Derived primarily from African American blues
2. Before Elvis, it was known as "race" music and would not be played on mainstream radio stations.
3. **Elvis Presley** burst on the scene in 1956 and brought rock n' roll to the masses
4. Rock n' Roll became the music of the younger generation and emphasized the increasing generation gap between youth and their parents.

### C. Art

1. **Abstract expressionism** (1950s)
  - a. Artists attempted spontaneous expression of their subjectivity using splattered paint and color field painting.
  - b. Included **Jackson Pollock**, Willem deKooning, and Mark Rothko
2. Architecture: **Frank Lloyd Wright** (1867-1959)
  - a. Most famous architect in U.S. history.
  - b. He believed buildings should flow from their sites; not imitate Greek and Roman models.
  - c. Developed the "Prairie Style" for homes at the turn of the century
  - d. Contrasted with Louis Sullivan (skyscraper architect) who believed "form follows function"
    - Wright had begun his career in Sullivan's firm
  - e. Wright's most famous works were done after 1930 [e.g. Fallingwater (1937) and the Guggenheim Museum (1959)]

### D. The Beat generation (beatniks) -- late 1950s

- a. Consisted of a group of alienated young men
  - The movement began in Greenwich Village, NY.
  - "Beatniks" rebelled against the conformity and conservatism of middle-class America
  - Emphasized alcohol, drugs, sex, jazz, Buddhism, and a vagabond lifestyle.
- b. **Jack Kerouac: *On the Road*** became the "bible" for restless youth
  - Was largely an autobiographical work
- c. **Allen Ginsburg, "Howl"** (1956)
  - The profane poem echoed Kerouac's philosophy
  - A profanity trial against a bookseller who sold Ginsburg's poetry resulted in a legal victory as the judge stated the poem had "redeeming social importance."

### XIII. An era of conformity?: Middle-class values and anti-communism

#### A. Conformity in America

1. Church membership increased in the post-war period; Americans were suspicious of those who did not attend church (they could possibly be atheists with communist sympathies)
2. Social life often revolved around married couples and families; those who were single or divorced were often on the outside.
3. Strong patriotism existed in the face of the "Red Scare"; critics were looked upon with suspicion
4. Cult of domesticity was an important component of conformity
5. The movies, TV and radio reinforced middle class values

B. Critics of American society

1. **David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (1950)**

- a. Americans after WWII seemed to conform to peer pressure in social and moral issues (“outer directed”) in contrast to earlier Americans who were “inner directed” and more individualistic and who had internalized self-discipline and morality.
- b. Americans in modern America seemed less likely to take risks or act independently.
- c. Modern Americans’ thinking and habits seemed more likely to be influenced by mass media
- d. Result of such a society would be lack of leadership, individual self-knowledge, and human potential

2. **John Kenneth Galbreath, *The Affluent Society* (1958)**

- a. Argued that U.S. economy was too fixated on achieving higher rates of production
- b. Believed gov’t should provide more money for education and healthcare through a higher sales tax
- c. Highlighted the paradox of the significant amount abject poverty in the U.S. in light of its economic prosperity and dominance overall

3. **C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, (1956):** criticized the influence of the American political, military, and economic elite who seemed to share a common world view.

C. Resistance to conformity

1. Civil Rights movement
2. Rock n’ Roll
3. Beat Generation

## Terms to Know

Cold War	desegregation of armed forces
"spheres of influence"	Presidential Succession Act
Yalta Conference	22 <sup>nd</sup> Amendment
"Iron Curtain" speech, Winston Churchill	"Red Scare"
buffer zone	Smith Act of 1940
Bretton Woods Conference, 1944	House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)
International Monetary Fund	Alger Hiss
United Nations (UN)	Richard Nixon
UN Security Council	Truman's Loyalty Program
Nuremberg Trials	McCarran Internal Security Bill
partition of Germany	Rosenbergs
Containment	Blacklisting, "Hollywood Ten"
George Kennan	Joseph McCarthy
Truman Doctrine	Arthur Miller, <i>The Crucible</i>
Marshall Plan	election of 1948
National Security Act of 1947	"Fair Deal"
Defense Department	"Dixiecrats"
National Security Council, CIA	"vital center"
NSC-68	"Affluent Society"
Berlin Airlift	G.I. Bill of Rights
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	Baby Boom
Warsaw Pact	consumerism
Eastern Bloc, satellite countries	middle-class
Organization of American States (OAS)	suburbia
People's Republic of China	cult of domesticity
Mao Zedong	Dr. Benjamin Spock, <i>The Commonsense Book of Baby and Childcare</i>
Jiang Jieshi	"Sunbelt"
Taiwan (Formosa)	air conditioning
Hydrogen Bomb (H-bomb)	television
superpowers	Rock 'n Roll
Korean War	Elvis Presley
General Douglas MacArthur	abstract expressionism, Jackson Pollock
Inchon	The Beat Generation
"limited war"	Jack Kerouac
38 <sup>th</sup> parallel	Allen Ginsberg
Taft-Hartley Act	David Riesman, <i>The Lonely Crowd</i>
John L. Lewis	John Kenneth Galbraith, <i>The Affluent Society</i>
"right to work" laws	
<i>To Secure These Rights</i>	
Jackie Robinson	

## **Essay Questions**

*Note: This sub-unit is a high probability area for the essay portion of the AP exam. In the past 10 years, five questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.*

1. Analyze the causes of the Cold War between 1945 and 1953.
2. To what extent was President Truman successful in achieving “containment” between 1947 and 1953?
3. To what extent was there conformity and consensus in American society between 1945 and 1960?
4. Analyze the factors that led to the “Red Scare” after World War II.
5. Analyze the factors that led to the “affluent society” during the post-war era.

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