Chapter 28
Uncivil Wars: Liberal Crisis and Conservative Rebirth, 1964-1972
The Great Society: Liberalism at High Tide

John F. Kennedy’s Promise

• His ability to inspire the younger generation, he laid groundwork for liberal reform

• After Kennedy’s assassination, president’s would embrace the idea that image mattered as much as reality

Lyndon B. Johnson and the Liberal Resurgence

• Johnson moved fast on civil rights legislation (Chapter 27)

War on Poverty

• One-fifth lived in poverty

• Economic Opportunity Act-
  • Head Start, Job Corps, Upward Bound

• Community Action Program (CAP)
The 1964 Election

• Lyndon Johnson (Dem); heir of FDR; legacy of Kennedy
• Barry Goldwater (Rep)
  • Anti-communist, anti-Civil Rights, anti-government

Great Society Initiatives

• Health care
  • Medicare and Medicaid
• Education
  • $1 billion to Elementary and Secondary Education
  • Higher Education Act-
• Environment reform
  • Expanded national parks, air and water improvement, endangered species, highway beautification
• Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
• Immigration Act of 1965-
Assessing the Great Society

• Americans living below the poverty line dropped from ___ to ___ from 1963 to 1968.
• Millions of AA moved into the middle class
• AA poverty was cut in half

The Women’s Movement Reborn

• The new era of liberal reform reawakened the American women’s movement

Labor Feminists

• Feminist concerns were kept alive in the 1950s and 1960s by working women
  • Maternity leave and equal pay
• More working women than ever before by 1970
  • “double day”
Betty Friedan and the National Organization for Women

- Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* - 1963
- Less children
  - Promotion of birth control
- Liberal divorce laws
- 42% of college population
- Equal Pay Act 1963
- NOW
  - Modeled after NAACP
- Competing agendas in Democrat Party

“A girl should not expect special privileges because of her sex but neither should she adjust to prejudice and discrimination.”
— Betty Friedan

Escalation under Johnson

• Containment, like Kennedy

Gulf of Tonkin

• In 1964 N. Vietnamese torpedo boats fired on U.S. Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin
• Justification Johnson needed
• Did not reveal plans to public. Why?

The New American Presence

• In 1965 escalation of war: ground troops and bombing
  • Napalm
  • Guerilla warfare
• Munich analogy
• Operation Rolling Thunder
  • Effect:
Public Opinion on the War

- Television
  - Villages burned
  - Suspects killed on live TV
- Concealing bad news
- Federal deficit would plague U.S. economy in the 1970s
- Military draft
- Activists groups, students, clergy, civil rights advocates

Rise of the Student Movement

- SDS (Students for Democratic Society)

The New Left

- What’s Old Left?
- Sit in demonstration at Berkeley University in 1964
- 1967 abolish of automatic student deferments
- How did students avoid the draft?
  - Conscientious objector
  - Leave
  - National guard
  - Destroyed records
Young Americans for Freedom

• Conservative students were less noisy but more numerous
• Young Americans for Freedom (YAC) were the largest student political organization; defended free enterprise and supported the war

The Counterculture

• Other young Americans rebelled against authority and middle-class respectability
• Hippies
• “Beatlemania”
• Marijuana and LSD
• San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury; NY’s East Village; Chicago’s Uptown
  • Dropouts, drifters, runaways/“flower children”
• Media coverage made it seem as though all American youth were reflecting the nation’s social and cultural norms
Days of Rage, 1968-1972

- 1968 was the most shocking year in postwar decades. Violence in Vietnam combined with political assassinations lead to a sense of hopelessness and despair.

Blood in the Streets

The Tet Offensive

- Attack by N. Vietnam on 6 cities on New Year
- Mockery of “progress”
- Hawks 56% Doves 25%; After Hawks 41% Doves 42%
- Undermined Johnson and discredited war policies
- Johnson’s decision

Political Assassinations

- Martin Luther King 1968
- Robert Kennedy, now a Democratic favorite for president also in 1968
- Losses of King, Kennedy, and Johnson lead to a crisis and weakening of the liberal movement by the Democrats
The Antiwar Movement and the 1968 Election

Democratic Convention
• Police riot in Chicago against anti-war demonstrators in the same city as the Democratic convention lead to...
• The party dispiritedly nominated Herbert Humphrey

Richard Nixon (R)
• Goal was to attract northern working class and southern whites
• Working class were uncertain about blacks and civil rights and believed liberal youth were drug addicts

George Wallace
• Governor of Alabama
• Segregationist (Selma)
• Defined issues- liberal elitism, welfare policies, and law and order

The Southern Strategy/Nixon
• Formally support civil rights, but...
• Campaigned against anti-war movement
The Nationalist Turn

• Black Power and Chicano movements broke with liberal politics of older generation of leaders
• Poverty and white racism were beyond civil rights
• Anti-Vietnam war; unjust war against other people of color
• Cesar Chavez said the draft was biased against the poor
• Muhammad Ali 1967
Women’s Liberation

- Women speakers were jeered at civil rights and anti-war events
- “Women’s lib” went public in 1968 at Miss America pageant
- Sexism and male chauvinism became part of vocabulary
- Latina and black women did not break from civil rights movement for women’s movement
- Abortion, sexual assault, sexual harassment
- Universities (Yale, Princeton, military academics)
- Congress broadened 1964 Civil Rights Act
- Childcare tax deductions 1972
- Equal Credit Opportunity Act 1974
- Cold War liberalism of Democrat party was challenged by black and Chicano nationalists and women’s liberations
  - Catholics
  - Blue collar trade unionists
Stonewall and Gay Liberation

- Majority of gay men and women remained “in the closet”. Why?
- Gay activists demanded immediate and unconditional recognition of their rights
- New York’s Greenwich Village had been raided constantly for decades by police for simply being gay
- When Stonewall Inn was raided in 1969, a two day riot ensued between police
- Despite lobbying, the gay community did not enjoy the same legal protection as other Americans
Richard Nixon and the Politics of the Silent Majority

• Nixon laid the groundwork for the conservative resurgence of the 1980s.
• “silent majority”
• Defender of the middle ground under assault from the radical left

Nixon’s War in Vietnam

Vietnamization and Cambodia

• Drop of troop levels from 543,000 in 1968 to ____ by 1973
• 500,000 protest demonstration in Washington in 1969
• After U.S. invaded neutral Cambodia to invade enemy bases college campuses erupted in protest
• Kent State University 1971
  • 4 killed 11 wounded by National Guard
• Jackson State College
  • 2 students killed
• 450 colleges closed in protest
My Lai Massacre
• 1968 troops executed 500 people in S. Vietnamese village of My Lai
• Revealed to public in 1969
• Only one soldier convicted
• Vietnam Veterans Against the War protest 1971

Détente 1970-1972
• China and Soviet Union
• Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I)
• 1972 Nixon was first U.S. president to visit China
Exit America

- Bomb raids in Vietnam in 1972
- “Christmas bombing” was final bloodletting
- After 1973, gradual cut back aid in South Vietnam
- March 1975, North Vietnamese united Vietnam
- Khmer Rouge Communists in Cambodia took over and killed 1.7 million people in bloody purge
- 58,000 Americans died in Vietnam
- $150 billion war cost
- Divided country and lost confidence in political leaders

The 1972 Election

- Nixon appealed to “silent majority”
- Patriotism, moral and spiritual values
- Appealed to resentment of white families during integration
- Won easily
- Pivotal movement of the country to the right
Watergate and the Fall of a President

• In June 1972 five men were caught at the Watergate Hotel, sight of the Democratic National Committee (before election)
  • Two men were members of FBI/CIA and were working for Nixon’s campaign
• Nixon paid the men to remain silent
• Tapes were discovered that had missing 18 minute gap
• One by one, they confessed and Nixon was ordered to reveal missing taped message
• Evidence that Nixon ordered the cover up and paid them off
• Nixon became the first and only president to resign in 1974
• Laws against presidential abuses
  • War Powers Act
  • Freedom of Information Act
  • Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act