
THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, 1960–1968 In the mid-1950s, African Americans chose to confront the system of prejudice and segregation that existed across the United States. This map shows the national scope of the civil rights movement from 1960 to 1968.
CANADA
WASHINGTON
Portland
OREGON
IDAHO
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
WYOMING
NEBRASKA
NEVADA
UTAH
COLORADO
KANSAS
Oakland
San Francisco
Palo Alto
CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles (Watts)
ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
OKLAHOMA
TEXAS
Denver
Wichita
Tucson
Houston
MINN.
Minneapolis
WISCONSIN
Milwaukee
IOWA
Waterloo
Chicago
ILL.
South Bend
IND.
MICH.
Flint
Pontiac
Detroit
Toledo
OHIO
Youngstown
Cleveland
Dayton
Cincinnati
Niagara Falls
Buffalo
Rochester
Englewood
PENN
Pittsburgh
Washington
W.VA.
Louisville
KENTUCKY
Kansas City
MISSOURI
Nashville
TENN.
Memphis
ARK.
Little Rock
Pine Bluff
Birmingham
MAY 17
Anniston
MAY 13
Atlanta
Itta Bena
Grenada
MISS.
MAY 14
Americus
Jackson
MAY 24
ALA.
Montgomery
MAY 20
GA.
Tallahassee
LA.
New Orleans
Tampa
FLA.
Jacksonville
St. Augustine
Riviera Beach
Greensboro
N.C.
SOUTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA
MD.
Cambridge
Baltimore
DEL.
Philadelphia
N.J.
New York
Newark
CONN.
Hartford
MASS.
Boston
White Plains
N.H.
VT.
MAINE
NEW YORK
PACIFIC OCEAN
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Gulf of Mexico
MEXICO
CUBA
0 200 400 Km.
0 200 400 Mi.
HAWAII
0 100 Km.
0 100 Mi.
U.S.S.R.
ALASKA
CANADA
0 250 500 Km.
0 250 500 Mi
PACIFIC OCEAN
Major riots
1965
1966
1967
1968
Peaceful demonstrations
Route of first Freedom Riders, 196
Kennedy elected
Sit-ins begin
Berlin Wall erected
Port Huron Statement
King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
Kennedy assassinated; Johnson becomes president
Johnson elected
Watts riot
Black Panthers formed
Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated
Urban riots peak
Woodstock
1960
1961
1962
1963
1964
1965
1966
1968
1969
1850
1900
1950
2000

CHAPTER 29

Great Promises, Bitter

Disappointments, 1960-1968

Kennedy and the New Frontier

- What expectations did John Kennedy and his advisers have, and how did those expectations run into constraints?
- How did Kennedy's civil rights choices differ from Eisenhower's?
- How did civil rights activists choose to confront those resisting integration in the South?

Flexible Response

- What expectations shaped Kennedy's choices in foreign policy?
- What were some of the outcomes of Kennedy's concerns and interests in the Third World?

Beyond the New Frontier

- How did Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program expand on the expectations of the New Deal?
- How did Johnson choose to attack the constraints that African Americans and other minorities were facing?

New Agendas

•What constraints influenced the civil rights movement in the mid-1960s? What was the outcome?

•What choices did the youth movement explore? How justified were young people's criticisms of traditional American society?

(INTRODUCTION)

Expectations
Constraints
Choices
Outcomes

John F. Kennedy symbolized a new beginning and promised a better society for all Americans. He energized the nation, raising *expectations,* especially among the poor and minorities, that he would press for solutions to end poverty and discrimination. But Kennedy faced political *constraints* from conservatives in Congress who objected to an expansion of liberal programs and civil rights legislation. As a result, during his three years in office, Kennedy achieved only some of his goals. He *chose* to delay civil rights legislation. The *outcome* was a domestic record of legislation that expanded on existing programs but did not chart new paths of social policy.

Kennedy also vowed to intensify the global struggle against communism. To defeat communism, he *chose* to fund both an arms race and a space race with the Soviet Union. Yet the *outcome* was not a safer and less divided world. The erection of the Berlin Wall, the Cuban missile crisis, and events in Vietnam symbolized heightened tensions.

Building on Kennedy's legacy, Lyndon Johnson *chose* to create the largest expansion of New Deal—style legislation since the Depression. Johnson's Great Society waged a war on poverty and discrimination, promoted education, and created a national system of healthcare for the aged and poor. Johnson, too, faced *constraints.* Conservatives opposed the Great Society's social and political goals, and some moderates objected to its cost and the ineffectiveness of many programs. An expanding war in Vietnam also added *constraints* to Johnson's domestic program.

By 1968, growing social and political turmoil was contributing to the rejection of liberal policies. The optimistic *expectations* Kennedy had inspired were declining amid the divisions of American society. Within the civil rights movement, Black Power leaders *chose* confrontation over compromise. Urban riots and violence drove wedges between African-American leaders and some white supporters. The emergence of a youth-centered counterculture that *chose* to reject traditional social and moral values also worked to fragment American society. The *outcome* was that a decade that began with great optimism ended with diminished *expectations* of what the federal government could accomplish.

Kennedy and the New Frontier

Republicans had every reason to worry as the 1960 presidential campaign neared. The last years of the 1950s had not been kind to the Republican party. The Cold War seethed to be going badly as the Soviets downed an American spy plane over the Soviet Union, launched *Sputnik* into space, and supported Castro in Cuba. Domestically, there seemed little or no direction from the White House. The Democrats had gained control of Congress in 1958. The economy also had lapsed into a recession.

On the Democratic side loomed John Fitzgerald Kennedy, a youthful, vigorous senator from Massachusetts. Kennedy, a Harvard graduate, came from a wealthy Catholic family. Some worried

counterculture A culture with values or lifestyles in opposition to those of the established culture.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy Massachusetts senator who was elected president in 1960, established the Peace Corps, and forced Khrushchev to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba; he was assassinated in 1963.

New Frontiers

1960 Kennedy elected president Sit-ins begin
Boynton v. Virginia

1961 Bay of Pigs invasion
Alliance for Progress
Peace Corps formed
Berlin Wall erected
Vienna Summit
Freedom rides begin
SNCC formed

1962 Cuban missile crisis
James Meredith enrolls at the University of Mississippi
SOS's Port Huron Statement

1963 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
Limited Test Ban Treaty
Gideon v. Wainright
March on Washington
Ngo Dinh Diem assassinated
Kennedy assassinated; Johnson becomes president

1964 Civil Rights Act
Freedom Summer in Mississippi
War on Poverty begins
Johnson elected president
Escobedo v. Illinois
Griswold v. Connecticut
Berkeley Free Speech Movement

1965 Malcolm X assassinated
Watts riot
Selma march
Voting Rights Act
Medicaid and Medicare established
Elementary and Secondary Education Act

1966 Stokely Carmichael announces Black Power
Black Panther party formed
Miranda v. Arizona

1967 More than seventy-five major urban riots

1968 Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated
Urban riots in more than 125 cities
Kerner Commission report

about his young age (43) and lack of experience, and others worried about his religion—no Catholic had ever been elected president. To lessen these possible liabilities, Kennedy had added the politically savvy Senate majority leader, **Lyndon Baines Johnson** of Texas, to the ticket, called for a new generation of leadership, and emphasized that those who were making religion an issue were bigots. He challenged the nation to enter a **New Frontier,** to improve the overall quality of life for all Americans, and to reinvigorate American foreign policy against communism.

Facing Kennedy was Eisenhower's vice president, Richard M. Nixon. Trying to distance himself from the image of Eisenhower's elderly leadership, Nixon promised a forceful, energetic presidency and emphasized his executive experience and history of anticommunism. He, too, promised to improve the quality of life, support civil rights, and defeat international communism.

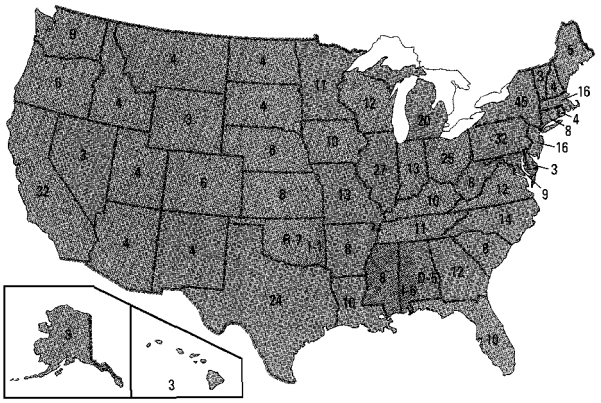
Politics entered a new era in 1960 when the two candidates agreed to hold televised debates. Nixon

Lyndon Baines Johnson Senate majority leader who became Kennedy's vice president in 1961 and president when Kennedy was assassinated in 1963.

New Frontier Program for social and educational reform put forward by John F. Kennedy; though charismatically presented, it was resisted by Congress.

was proud of his debating skills and thought he could score many points against Kennedy. Kennedy recognized, however, that the candidate who appeared calmer and more knowledgeable would "win" the debate. Nixon made a poor impression before the camera. He appeared tired and haggard. He looked at Kennedy and not the camera when answering questions. Worst of all, he sweated. By contrast, Kennedy appeared fresh and confident. The differences in appearance were critical. The radio audience believed that Nixon won the debates, but to the 70 million television viewers, the winner was the self-assured and sweat-free Kennedy.

The televised debates helped Kennedy, but victory rested on his ability to hold the Democratic coalition together. The Texan Johnson used his political clout to keep the South largely loyal even as Kennedy blasted the lack of Republican leadership on civil rights. Kennedy scored the narrowest of victories. Nixon carried more states, 25 to 21, but Kennedy had a narrow margin over Nixon in popular votes and won the electoral count, 303 to 219 (see Map 29.1).



	Electoral Vote		Popular Vote	
Kennedy (Democrat)	303	56.5%	34,226,731	50%
Nixon (Republican)	219	40.75%	34,108,157	50%
Byrd (Independent)	15	2.75%	501,643	0%

♦ **MAP 29.1 Election of** 1960 Although Richard Nixon won in more states than John F. Kennedy, Kennedy defeated his Republican opponent by a slim eighty-four electoral votes and fewer than nineteen thousand popular votes in the closest presidential election in the twentieth century.

The New Frontier

Kennedy's inaugural address fired the imagination of the nation. Speaking in idealistic terms, he promised to march against "the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself." He asked all Americans to participate, exhorting them to "ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

Kennedy's staff and cabinet kept up the image of change and activism. Recruiting from businesses and universities, he appointed men and women whom one reporter dubbed the "best and the brightest." Rhodes scholars and Harvard professors descended on the White House. They included historian Arthur Schlesinger, economist John Kenneth Galbraith (both personal advisers), McGeorge Bundy (national security director), and Dean Rusk (secretary of state). Ford Motor Company's president, Robert McNamara, was tapped for secretary of defense. In a controversial move, Kennedy gave the position of attorney general to his younger brother Robert. John Kennedy praised his choices as men with the "know-how" to solve problems. Not everyone was impressed. Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn remarked that he would "feel a whole lot better . . . if just one of them had run for sheriff once."

Kennedy was politically astute enough to recognize that the new Congress was likely to be an obstacle to substantial innovation. The Democrats lost twenty-two seats in the House in the 1960 elections. Although the Democrats still controlled both houses of Congress, Kennedy could not count on many conservative, southern Democrats to support the New Frontier. Therefore, he opted to push for a limited domestic agenda that included traditional Democratic proposals such as a higher minimum wage and increased Social Security benefits. He decided to delay civil rights and social legislation and instead concentrate on shaping foreign policy and improving the economy.

To spur economic recovery, Kennedy called for more government spending and business- and income-tax cuts. The defense budget was the first beneficiary, growing by almost 20 percent. Meanwhile, the economy rebounded from the "Eisenhower recession," as unemployment fell to 5 percent.

When liberals complained about the lack of civil rights legislation and new social programs, Kennedy pointed to the coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats. "There is no sense in raising hell and then not being successful," he observed. He promised a civil rights bill and programs to attack poverty in 1963 and 1964.

Civil Rights and the Kennedys

During the campaign, Kennedy had promised "moral leadership" in support of civil rights, but once in office, he moved cautiously. He did appoint several blacks to high office and district courts, including Thurgood Marshall to the United States Circuit Court, but civil rights advocates were far from satisfied. They noted that some judicial appointments went to recognized segregationists, including Harold Cox of Mississippi, who had once referred to African Americans as "niggers" and "chimpanzees" in court. Kennedy did not ban segregation in federal housing until November 1962.

Civil rights activists were resolved, nevertheless, to force an end to segregation. Even as Kennedy assumed office, a new wave of black activism was striking at segregation in the South. The sit-in movement began when four freshmen at North Carolina A&T in Greensboro, decided to integrate the public lunch counter at the local Woolworth's store. On February 1, 1960, they entered the store, sat down at the counter, and ordered a meal. A black waitress told them she could not serve them, but still they sat and waited for service. No one tried to remove or arrest them. When the store closed, they were still unserved. They returned to campus as heroes. The next day, twenty A&T students sat at the lunch counter demanding service. By the end of the week, similar sit-ins had spread throughout the South.

In April 1961, the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC,** pronounced "snick") was formed to coordinate the increasing number of sit-ins and boycotts of stores, recreational facilities, libraries, bus and train stations, and lunchrooms. Although SNCC professed nonviolence, it was much more militant than King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). SNCC spurred more than seventy thousand people to protest for integrated public facilities in more than 140 cities, including some outside the South. Many of those participating in demonstrations were young college students. In some cities, including Greensboro, demonstrators achieved equal service with a minimum of resistance, but particularly in the Deep South, whites reacted violently. Officials in Orangeburg, South Carolina, blasted protesters with high-pressure fire hoses and arrested them.

Sharing headlines with those "sitting in" were the **freedom** riders. Prior to Kennedy's taking office, the Supreme Court had ruled in *Boynton v. Virginia* (1960) that all interstate buses, trains, and terminals be desegregated. James Farmer of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) planned a series of "freedom rides" to force integration on southern bus lines and stations. Farmer knew that riders would meet with opposition and hoped to put pressure on the president to uphold the Court's decision. The first buses of freedom riders left Washington, D.C., in May 1961, headed toward Alabama and Mississippi. The freedom riders expected trouble. Governor John Patterson of Alabama had announced that integration would come only over his "dead body." In Anniston, Alabama, a mob of angry whites attacked the buses, setting them on fire and severely beating several freedom riders. The savagery continued at Birmingham. When asked why no police were at the station to protect the

sit-in The act of occupying the seats or an area of a segregated establishment to protest racial discrimination.

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Organization formed to give young blacks a greater voice in the civil rights movement; it initiated black voter registration drives and freedom rides.

freedom riders Civil rights protesters who rode buses throughout the South in 1961 to press for integration in bus terminals.

riders, Birmingham public safety commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor explained that it was a holiday—Mother's Day.

As Farmer had predicted, the violence forced the federal government to respond. Hoping to avoid further bloodshed, Justice Department official John Seigenthaler obtained state and local protection for the riders through Alabama. But as the buses approached Montgomery, the police and National Guard escorts mysteriously vanished, leaving the freedom riders to face a large and violent crowd alone. A brutal attack left many freedom riders injured, including Seigenthaler, who was beaten unconscious. After an hour of terror, the police finally arrived and restored order.

A livid Attorney General Robert Kennedy deputized local federal officials as marshals and ordered them to escort the freedom riders to the state line, where Mississippi forces took over. Battered and bloodied, the riders continued to the state capital, Jackson. There they were peacefully arrested for violating Mississippi's recently passed public order laws. The jails quickly filled as more freedom riders arrived and were arrested. The nation waited for the administration to act. Finally, in September 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission declared that it would uphold the Court's decision prohibiting segregation. Faced with direct federal involvement, most state and local authorities grudgingly accepted the desegregation of bus and train terminals.

Hoping to steer the activism away from freedom rides and sit-ins, the Kennedy administration argued that efforts should be focused on voter registration drives. There followed the Voter Education Project, a cooperative movement among the major civil rights organizations, which with federal protection would provide the right to vote to many who had been denied since the days of Reconstruction. The results of this effort, which ended in 1964, seemed impressive: the percentage of black voters in the South increased from 29.4 percent to 43.1 percent of blacks eligible to vote. But most of the success came in urban areas, where white opposition was less pronounced than in rural areas. In addition, many of those involved in voter registration were brutally attacked and jailed. The federal government provided minimal protection on the whole.

In some instances, Robert Kennedy hoped to prevent racial violence by a show of federal force, as in the case of **James Meredith,** who integrated the University of Mississippi in 1962. Kennedy sent 500 federal marshals to guard Meredith, hoping that a show of force would prevent violence. The tactic did not work. Thousands of white students and nonstudents attacked Meredith and the marshals. Two people were killed and 166 marshals were wounded before 5,000 army troops arrived. Protected by federal forces, Meredith, who had transferred from a black college, became the University of Mississippi's first African-American graduate in May 1963.

Martin Luther King, Jr., and the SCLC focused their attention next on overturning segregation in Birmingham, Alabama. Organizers planned a series of protest marches demanding the integration of Birmingham's businesses. On Good Friday, 1963, King led the first march and along with others was arrested. From his cell, he wrote a nineteen-page "letter" aimed at those who denounced his activism in favor of patience. The "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" called for immediate and continuous, peaceful civil disobedience. Freedom was "never given voluntarily by the oppressor," King asserted, but "must be demanded by the oppressed." Smuggled out of jail and read aloud in churches and printed in newspapers across the nation, the letter rallied support for King's efforts in Birmingham.

On May 3, young and old alike filled the streets of Birmingham and confronted "Bull" Connor 's police, who attacked the marchers with nightsticks, dogs, and high-pressure fire hoses. Television caught it all. Connor 's brutality not only horrified much of the American public but caused many Birmingham blacks to reject the tactic of

public order laws Laws passed by many southern communities to discourage civil rights protests; they allowed the police to arrest anyone suspected of intending to disrupt public order.

James Meredith Black student admitted to the University of Mississippi under federal court order in 1962; in spite of rioting by racist mobs, he finished the year and graduated in 1963.

♦ On August 28, 1963, one-quarter of a million people gathered in Washington, D.C., to support racial equality. Martin Luther King, Jr., electrified the crowd by saying, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live . . . where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character." *Francis Miller, LIFE Magazine, © Time Warner Inc.*

nonviolence. The following day, many African Americans fought the police with stones and clubs. Fearing more violence, Birmingham's businessmen met with King on May 10, 1963, and agreed to hire black salespeople. Neither the agreement nor King's pleading, however, halted the violence. Two days later, President Kennedy ordered three thousand troops to Birmingham to maintain order.

Kennedy concluded that the time had come to fulfill his campaign promise to make civil rights a priority. In June 1963, observing that America could not be truly free "until all its citizens were free," he announced that he would send Congress civil rights legislation mandating integration in places of public accommodation.

To pressure Congress to act on the bill, King and other civil rights leaders organized the **March on Washington.** The August 28 march drew the largest crowd in American history, with over 250,000 people attending. King capped the day with an address that electrified the throng. He promised to continue the struggle until justice flowed "like a mighty stream," but he warned about a "whirlwind of revolt" if black rights were denied. "I have a dream," he offered, "that even Mississippi could become an oasis of freedom and justice" and that "all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing . . . 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!'"

The march and reactions to white violence against African Americans might have been expected to work in favor of civil rights legislation. But as of November 1963, when Kennedy left for a campaign trip to Dallas, Texas, his bill was still languishing in committee in the House of Representatives.

Flexible Response

If Kennedy was slow to bring federal power to bear on civil rights, he had no reluctance to use

nonviolence Doctrine of rejecting violence in favor of peaceful tactics as a means of gaining political objectives.

March on Washington Meeting of a quarter of a million civil rights supporters in Washington in 1963, at which Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.

♦ Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev met with John Kennedy at the Vienna Summit in June 1961. After their first meetings, Kennedy, who had been warned that Khrushchev's style ranged from "cherubic to choleric," was convinced that the Soviet leader had bested him and that he had appeared to be a man "with no guts." Following the Vienna Summit, Kennedy was determined to be tougher with the Soviets. "If Khrushchev wants to rub my nose in the dirt, it's all over," Kennedy stated after their meeting. *Wide World Photos.*

executive power when it came to foreign policy. Kennedy increased military spending to begin a buildup of both nuclear and conventional forces. Space exploration also received a new priority. In April 1961, the Soviets had hurled the first human being, **cosmonaut** Yuri Gagarin, into space. Kennedy informed Congress that funding was needed not only to catch up with the Soviets but to beat them to the moon by the end of the decade. Congress agreed and funded the *Apollo* project.

The country's Cold War challenges were not limited to racing against Soviet arms development and space exploration. An equally important confrontation had been shaping up in the developing regions of the globe. Kennedy employed the strategy of **flexible response** to win the "hearts and minds" of developing nations for the West. This strategy involved special military units like the Green Berets who were trained to deal with Communist insurgency by living off the land and gaining the people's trust. The strategy also featured the use of American economic aid and of the **Peace Corps,** composed of idealistic young men and women who volunteered to help the people of the developing world.

Confronting the Soviets

Kennedy's biggest immediate problem in the Third World lay just to the south of the Florida Keys. The presence of a Communist regime in Cuba was simply intolerable to Kennedy. In January 1961, the newly elected president approved the operation planned by the Eisenhower administration to topple Fidel Castro (see page 636).

The invasion of Cuba began on April 17, 1961. Over fourteen hundred CIA-trained Cuban exiles landed at the Bay of Pigs. The predicted uprisings

cosmonaut A Soviet astronaut.

flexible response Kennedy's strategy of considering a variety of military and nonmilitary options when facing foreign policy decisions.

Peace Corps Program established by President Kennedy in 1961 to send young American volunteers to other nations as educators, health workers, and technicians.

Bay of Pigs Site of a 1961 invasion of Cuba by Cuban exiles and mercenaries sponsored by the CIA; the invasion was crushed within three days and embarrassed the United States.

in support of the invaders did not occur, however, and within three days Castro's forces had captured or killed most of the invading force. Kennedy took responsibility for the fiasco but voiced no regrets for his aggressive policy.

To blunt the growing appeal of Castroism in Latin America, Kennedy announced a sweeping foreign-aid package, the **Alliance for Progress.** He proposed over $20 billion in aid to show that "liberty and progress walk hand in hand." In return, Latin American nations were to introduce land and tax reforms. Actions fell short of promises. The United States granted far less than proposed, and Latin American governments implemented few reforms and frequently squandered the aid, much of which ended up in the pockets of government officials. Throughout the 1960s in Latin America, the gap between rich and poor widened.

To try to recapture some of the "can-do" image deflated by the Bay of Pigs disaster, Kennedy sought an opportunity to stand toe to toe with the Soviets. That opportunity came when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed to meet Kennedy in Vienna in June 1961 to discuss Berlin, Laos, and a nuclear test ban treaty. After his first private meeting with the Soviet leader, Kennedy was shaken and angry. He thought that Khrushchev had bullied him. In following meetings, Kennedy stood his ground more firmly, stressing that the United States would remain true to its international commitments, especially in Berlin. Khrushchev was unmoved and maintained a December deadline for Allied withdrawal from Berlin.

Returning home, Kennedy asked for large increases in military spending and called fifty-one thousand reservists to active duty. Some advisers advocated the use of force if the Soviets interfered with Western control of West Berlin. To some it appeared that Kennedy and Khrushchev were moving to the brink of war over Berlin. In August 1961, the Soviets added a new point of confrontation by erecting a wall between West and East Berlin to choke off the flow of refugees fleeing East Germany. Although the Berlin Wall challenged Western ideals of freedom, it did not directly threaten the West's presence in West Berlin. The Berlin crisis finally faded when Khrushchev announced that he no longer cared about the December deadline. The wall remained as a stark reminder of where Soviet and American interests collided.

Far more serious than the Berlin crisis was the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. On October 14, an American U-2 spy plane discovered that medium-range nuclear missile sites were being built in Cuba. Such missiles would drastically reduce the time the United States had to launch a counterattack on the Soviet Union. Kennedy decided on a showdown with the Soviets over the missiles.

Kennedy rejected both an invasion of Cuba and air strikes against the missiles as too dangerous. Instead, he decided on a naval blockade of Cuba until Khrushchev met the U.S. demand to remove the missiles. On Wednesday, October 24, a confrontation seemed imminent as two Soviet freighters and a Russian submarine approached the quarantine line. The Soviet vessels, however, stopped short of the line. Khrushchev had decided not to test Kennedy's will. On October 26, he sent a message that the Soviet Union was ready to remove the missiles from Cuba if the United States publicly announced it would not invade the island. The basis of a solution had been found. The United States publicly pledged not to invade Cuba, and Khrushchev ordered the removal of the missiles. In a nonpublicized, separate agreement, the United States agreed to remove its missiles from Turkey.

Kennedy basked in the victory over Khrushchev, but he also recognized how near the world had come to nuclear war. Kennedy subsequently sought to defuse Soviet-American tensions. A "hotline" telephone link was established between Moscow and Washington to allow direct talks in case of another East-West crisis. In June 1963, Kennedy suggested that the United States would halt its nuclear testing. By July, American-Soviet negotiations produced the **Limited Test Ban Treaty.**

Alliance for Progress Program proposed by Kennedy in 1961 through which the United States provided aid for social and economic programs in Latin American countries.

Limited Test Ban Treaty Treaty signed by the United States, the USSR, and nearly one hundred other nations in 1963, banning nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, and underwater.

It prohibited nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in space, and under the seas but allowed underground testing. By October 1963, one hundred nations had signed the treaty, although the two newest atomic powers, France and China, refused to participate.

Vietnam

Vietnam represented one of the most significant challenges that Kennedy faced. South Vietnamese president **Ngo Dinh** Diem was losing control of the countryside to the South Vietnamese Communist rebels, the **Viet Cong.** Kennedy rejected arguments that American troops were needed to turn the tide, but he did send more military and civilian "advisers." By November 1963, the United States had committed sixteen thousand advisers to Vietnam—compared with only a few hundred in 1961.

The Viet Cong were only part of the problem. Diem's administration was unpopular. A Roman Catholic whose family had been French officials, Diem did not believe in democracy. He ruled through a handpicked, largely Catholic bureaucracy. Everyone else, including Vietnam's Buddhists, the religious majority, opposed his rule. With American support, Diem cracked down on his opponents. Reformers, rival officers, and protesting Buddhists were jailed, tortured, and killed. In protest, on June 10, 1963, a Buddhist monk set himself on fire. Other self-immolations followed. To the shock of many Americans, Diem's sister-in-law, Madame Nhu, referred to the protests as "Buddhist barbecues." To Kennedy and his advisers, Diem had become a liability. The administration secretly informed several Vietnamese generals that it would approve of a change of government. The army acted on November 1, killing Diem and creating a new military government. However, the new government brought neither political stability nor better results against the Viet Cong.

Death in Dallas

In late 1963, Kennedy decided to visit Dallas, Texas, to try to heal divisions within the Texas Democratic party. There he was assassinated on November 22. Police quickly captured the reputed assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald. The next day, a local nightclub owner, Jack Ruby, shot Oswald to death in the basement of the police station. Many wondered if Oswald had acted alone or was part of a larger conspiracy. To dispel rumors, the government formed a commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren to investigate the assassination. The commission announced that Oswald had acted alone. Most Americans accepted the findings at the time.

Kennedy's assassination traumatized the nation. Many people canonized the fallen president as a brilliant, innovative chief executive who combined vitality, youth, and good looks with forceful leadership and good judgment. Lyndon B. Johnson, sworn in as president as he flew back to Washington on the plane carrying Kennedy's body, was not cut from the same cloth. Kennedy had attended the best eastern schools, enjoyed the cultural and social life associated with wealth, and liked to surround himself with intellectuals. Johnson, a product of public schools and a state college education, distrusted intellectuals. Raised in the hill country of Texas, his passion was politics. By 1960, his congressional experience was unrivaled: he had served from 1937 to 1948 in the House of Representatives and from 1949 to 1961 in the Senate, where he had been Senate majority leader. Johnson knew how to wield political power and how to get things done in Washington.

Beyond the New Frontier

Five days after Kennedy's death, Johnson asked Congress for "no memorial oration or eulogy" for

Ngo Dinh Diem President of South Vietnam (1954-1963), who jailed and tortured opponents of his rule; he was assassinated in a coup in 1963.

Viet Cong Vietnamese Communist rebels in South Vietnam.

self-immolation Suicide by fire as an act of sacrifice to a cause.

the fallen president other than the passage of Kennedy's civil rights bill. The Civil **Rights Act of** 1964 became law on July 2, 1964. The law made it illegal to discriminate for reasons of race, religion, or gender in places and businesses that served the public. Putting force behind the law, Congress established a federal Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) and empowered the executive branch to withhold federal funds from institutions that violated the act.

Johnson wanted to do more, however, than pass legislation that had been initiated by Kennedy. He wanted to create his own legacy. His first step in realizing this ambition was declaring the **War on** Poverty in 1964.

Johnson's assault against the poverty that afflicted at least one-fifth of the American people was to be fought on two fronts: expanding opportunities and improving the social environment. He believed that only the federal government was capable of this task. Therefore, he projected a huge expansion of federal responsibility for social welfare. Special efforts would be made to provide education and job training for the young: "Our chief weapons will be better schools . . . better training, and better job opportunities to help more Americans, especially young Americans, to escape from squalor and misery." The Manpower and Development Training Act, the Job Corps, Head Start, and the Work Incentive Program all aimed at providing new educational and economic opportunities for the disadvantaged. In 1964, the Job Corps enrolled unemployed teenagers and young adults (ages 16 to 21) who lacked employable skills. In 1965, Head Start reached out to disadvantaged preschoolers to give them an opportunity to gain important thinking and social skills.

Conservative Response

Johnson's social programs prompted a reaction from a group of conservatives and ultraconservatives called the New Right. The New Right decried many of the political and social changes taking place in society. According to these conservatives, liberals and a national welfare state were destroying the traditional American values of localism, self-help, and individualism.

The New Right targeted the Supreme Court and Chief Justice Earl Warren as the major causes of what it regarded as the subversion of American life. The rabidly anti-Communist John Birch Society even demanded the impeachment of Warren. From the mid-1950s through the 1960s, the Supreme Court under Warren handed down one decision after another that angered conservatives. To them, the Court seemed to be forcing the liberal agenda of individual rights, social justice, and equality down society's throat. The Court, they believed, had promoted civil rights and the rights of individuals at the expense of society. In *Gideon v. Wainright* (1963) and *Escobedo v. Illinois* (1964), the Court's rulings declared that all defendants had a right to an attorney, even if the state had to provide one. In *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966), the Court held that anyone who was arrested had to be informed of his or her right to remain silent and to have an attorney present during questioning (now called the Miranda warning). The New Right argued that these decisions had tipped the scales of justice in favor of the criminal.

Conservatives believed that the Warren Court's actions also threatened traditional values by allowing the publication of sexually explicit materials and by forbidding prayers and the reading of the Bible in public schools *(Abington v. Schempp,* 1963). The Court's decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1964), which overturned Connecticut's laws forbidding the sale of contraceptives, also disturbed them.

The 1964 Election

The Republican presidential candidate in 1964 offered conservatives a chance to reassert their traditional values and patriotic ideals. Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona had voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and against censuring Senator

Civil Rights Act **of 1964** Law that barred segregation in public facilities and forbade employers to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, or national origin.

War on Poverty Lyndon Johnson's program to help Americans escape poverty through education, job training, and community development.

Joseph McCarthy in 1954 (see page 629). He had opposed "Big Government" and he promised to deal with Communists more forcefully. Whereas Johnson promised not to Americanize the war in Vietnam, Goldwater was willing to commit American troops and even to use nuclear weapons.

In a war of slogans and television spots, Johnson's ads scored more points. Democrats answered one memorable Goldwater slogan, "In your heart you know he's right," by claiming, "In your guts you know he's nuts." Another Johnson ad suggested that a trigger-happy Goldwater would lead the nation into a nuclear holocaust. In a lopsided election, Americans gave Goldwater only 38.4 percent of the popular vote. Over forty new Democratic legislators swelled the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives.

Shaping the Great Society

Having beaten Goldwater, Johnson pushed forward legislation to enact his **Great** Society—his vision of an America freed of racial injustice and poverty. Between 1965 and 1968, more than sixty programs were put in place. Most sought to provide better economic and social opportunities. The Appalachian Regional Development Act (1965), Public Works and Development Act (1965), and Model Cities Act (1966) focused on developing economic growth in cities and long-depressed regional areas. The Omnibus Housing Bill (1965) provided $8 billion for constructing low- and middle-income housing and supplementing low-income rent programs.

Johnson's priorities, however, were health and education. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) was the first general educational funding act passed by the federal government. It granted more than a billion dollars to public and parochial schools for textbooks, library materials, and special-education programs. Poorer school districts were supposed to receive the highest percentage of federal support, but much of the money went to more affluent suburban school districts.

Passage of the Medical Care Act (1965) represented an even greater achievement to Johnson. This act revolutionized healthcare by providing Medicare to help the elderly cover their medical costs. For those on welfare, Medicaid provided funds to states to provide free healthcare.

Johnson also was committed to ending racial discrimination. He signed an executive order requiring government contractors to ensure nondiscrimination in jobs. He also appointed the first African-American cabinet member, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Robert Weaver; the first African-American woman federal justice, Constance Baker Motley; and the first black on the Supreme Court, Thurgood Marshall.

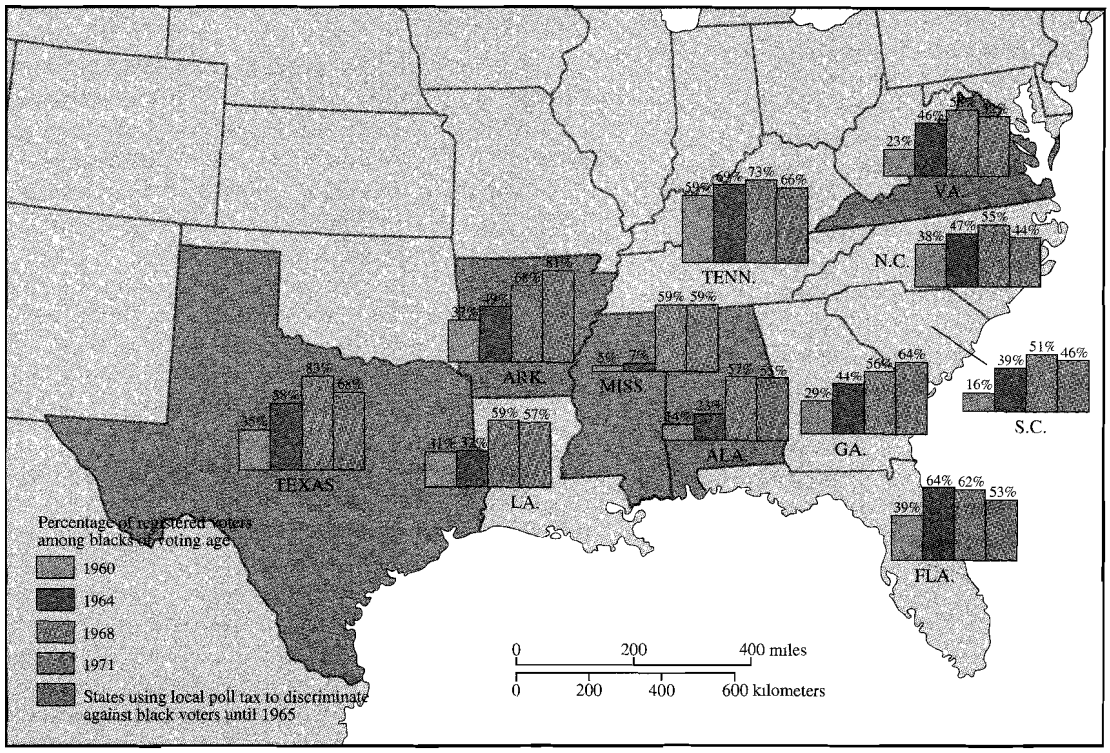
Johnson followed up these appointments with proposals for a voting rights bill. Civil rights leaders had made voting rights their next major issue after passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For nearly one hundred years, most southern whites had viewed voting as a privilege reserved for whites. Led by SNCC's Bob Moses, the **Freedom Summer** of 1964 called for whites and blacks to go to Mississippi to open "Freedom Schools" and to encourage African Americans to register to vote. The Freedom Schools taught basic literacy and black history and tutored African Americans so that they could pass the Mississippi voter literacy test. Prospective black voters in Mississippi had to convince a white registrar that they understood the Constitution and the duties of citizenship. White hostility made the work of registering black voters dangerous. Violence occurred almost daily in Mississippi from June through August 1964. Six Freedom Summer workers were murdered, but the crusade registered nearly sixty thousand new African-American voters. By December 1964, Johnson concurred with

Great Society Social program that Johnson announced in 1965; it included the War on Poverty, protection of civil rights, and funding for education.

medicare Program of health insurance for the elderly and disabled established in 1965; it provides government payment for healthcare supplied by private doctors and hospitals.

medicaid Program of health insurance for the poor established in 1965; it provides states with money to buy healthcare for people on welfare.

Freedom Summer Effort by Civil Rights groups in Mississippi to register black voters and cultivate black pride during the summer of 1964.



♦ **MAP** 29.2 African **Americans and the Southern Vote,1960-1971** An important part of the civil rights movement was to reestablish the African-American vote that had been stripped away in the South following Reconstruction. Between 1960 and 1971, with the outlawing of the poll tax and other voter restrictions, African-American voter participation rose significantly across the South.

Martin Luther King, Jr., on the need for federal voting legislation.

Pointing to the violent response civil rights leaders had met with in Selma, Alabama, in March 1965, Johnson urged Congress to act. King had called for a freedom march from Selma to Montgomery because of the former town's adamant and violent opposition to integration. On March 7, 1965, hundreds of freedom marchers faced fifty Alabama state troopers and Sheriff Jim Clark's mounted officers at Selma's Pettus Bridge. After ordering the marchers to halt, the state troopers fired tear gas and charged. As the marchers fled back to Selma, Clark's men chased them down, wielding rubber tubing wrapped with barbed wire. Television coverage of the onslaught stirred nationwide condemnation of Clarks' tactics. Johnson told Governor George Wallace that he would not tolerate any further interference with the march. When twenty-five thousand people resumed the march on March 25, the National Guard escorted them.

In response to Johnson's pressure, Congress passed the 1965 Voting Rights Act. It banned a variety of methods, such as literacy tests, that states used to deny blacks the right to vote (see Map 29.2). In Selma, 60 percent of qualified African-American voters registered, voted, and stopped

freedom march Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in March 1965.

Voting Rights Act Law passsed by Congress in 1965 that outlawed literacy and other voting tests and authorized federal supervision of elections in areas where black voting had been restricted.

Sheriff Clark's bid for reelection. By 1968, the percentage of African Americans registered to vote had risen by 30 percent; in Mississippi, it had increased from 7 percent to 67 percent.

Although Johnson's civil rights agenda met with great success, by 1966 many Great Society programs were underfunded and diminishing in popularity. An expanding American war in Vietnam, white backlash to urban riots, and partisan politics forced reductions in the budget of the War on Poverty. Still, by 1970 the Great Society had contributed to nearly a 10 percent decrease in the number of people living below the poverty line. Between 1963 and 1968, African-American unemployment fell nearly 42 percent. Johnson did not totally cure any of society's ills, but he did provide the basis for a more democratic and nondiscriminatory country. In the process, he widened the functions of the federal government more than any president since Franklin D. Roosevelt.

New Agendas

By the end of 1965, federal legislation had confirmed that *de jure* segregation—segregation established by local ordinances or state laws—was illegal in the United States. But equality depended on more than laws. Neither the 1964 Civil Rights Act nor the 1965 Voting Rights Act guaranteed justice, removed oppressive poverty, or provided jobs. *De facto* discrimination—the product of economics, social tradition, and custom—and prejudice remained.

African Americans' frustrations soon changed the nature of civil rights protest. By 1964, more than half of the nation's black population lived in northern cities, and more than a million mostly poor and unskilled blacks left the South during the 1960s. They entered an environment where unskilled jobs were declining and black unemployment was high. Poverty, false hopes, and frustrations led to increased violence and crime. African Americans saw largely white police forces as suppressors rather than protectors. By the mid-1960s, the nation's cities were primed for racial violence. Minor race riots had occurred in 1964, but it was the 1965 Watts riot that shook the nation.

New Voices

Watts did not look like most other ghettos. It was a community of largely single-family homes and duplexes. The fairly new buildings were usually well maintained. There was little open discrimination in Los Angeles, which was among the nation's leaders in public assistance programs, spending more than $500 million a year. But Watts had more than four times the people per block than the rest of the city. Male unemployment was 34 percent, and almost two-thirds of the residents were on public assistance. Finally, the nearly all-white Los Angeles police force had a reputation for racism and brutality.

In this climate, Officer Lee Minikus stopped Marquette Frye for drunk driving on August 11, 1965. What started as a simple arrest soon mushroomed into a major riot. A crowd of onlookers gathered as more police arrived and as Frye and Minikus began to scuffle. The police charged through the crowd of about 150 bystanders using nightsticks, and word quickly spread through Watts that the police were attacking innocent people. The Watts riot followed. Many residents pelted the police with stones and bottles and vented their anger by looting and setting fire to cars and stores. When firefighters and police arrived to restore order and to put out the flames, they had to dodge snipers' bullets and Molotov cocktails. It took fourteen thousand members of the California National Guard and over one thousand police and eight hundred sheriff's deputies to calm the storm. The costs were high: thirty-four dead, including twenty-eight African Americans, and over $45 million in property destroyed. Four thousand rioters were arrested.

The Watts riot shattered the complacency of many northern whites who had supported civil rights in the South while ignoring the plight of the

Watts Predominantly black neighborhood of Los Angeles where race riots in August 1965 did $45 million in damage and took the lives of twenty-eight blacks.

Molotov cocktail Makeshift bomb made of a bottle filled with gasoline.

inner cities. It also demonstrated a gap between northern blacks and many civil rights leaders. King discovered after the riot that the people of Watts had little use for his "dreams." He was shouted down and jeered. "Hell, we don't need no damn dreams," one skeptic remarked. "We want jobs."

Watts was only the beginning. More deadly urban riots followed, and a new, militant approach to racial and economic injustices erupted: the **Black Power** movement. A change in SNCC's leadership helped usher in a new era of black militancy. By the winter of 1965, Bob Moses had had too much of clubs, dogs, threats, and jails. Emotionally spent, he resigned and moved north. SNCC's new leader, Stokely Carmichael, exalted Black Power. "I'm not going to beg the white man for anything I deserve," he announced. "I'm going to take it." SNCC and CORE quickly changed from biracial, nonviolent organizations to Black Power movements.

Among those receptive to a more militant approach were the Black **Muslims** (the Nation of Islam), founded by Elijah Muhammad in the 1930s. The Black Muslims attracted mostly young males and demanded adherence to a strict moral code that prohibited the use of drugs and alcohol. They preached black superiority and independence from an evil white world. By the early 1960s, there were nearly a hundred thousand Black Muslims, but most whites were concerned with only one: Malcolm X.

By the age of 20, Malcolm Little's life of hard drugs, pimping, and burglary had put him in prison. Behind bars, his intellectual abilities blossomed. He devoured the prison library, took correspondence courses, and converted to the Nation of Islam, becoming Malcolm X. On his release in 1952, he quickly became one of the Black Muslims' most powerful leaders. A mesmerizing speaker, he rejected integration with a white society that, he said, emasculated blacks by denying them power and personal identity. "Our enemy is the white man!" he roared. But in 1964, he reconsidered the policy of rejecting cooperation with whites. Although still a black nationalist, he recognized that to achieve their goals, Black Muslims needed to cooperate with some whites. He broke with Elijah Muhammad, a defection that cost him his life. On February 21, 1965, three Black Muslims assassinated him in Harlem. After his death, Malcolm X's *Autobiography*, chronicling his personal triumph over white oppression, became a revered guide for many blacks.

Malcolm X represented only one model for urban blacks. Others pursued direct action against white power and advocated violence. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale organized the Black Panthers in Oakland, California, in 1966. They were primarily noticeable for adopting Mao Zedong's adage that "power flows from the barrel of a gun." Their willingness to use violence frightened many, but others applauded their militance. New SNCC leader H. Rap Brown told listeners to grab their guns, burn the town down, and shoot the "honky." The summer of 1967 seemed to bring Brown's words to life. Over seventy-five major riots took place, the deadliest occurring in Detroit and Newark, resulting in a nationwide total of eighty-seven dead.

After a third summer of urban riots, President Lyndon Johnson created a special commission chaired by Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois to investigate their causes. The committee's report, issued in March 1968, put the primary blame on the racist attitudes of white America. The study

Black Power Movement beginning in 1966 that rejected the nonviolent, coalition-building approach of traditional civil rights groups and advocated black control of black organizations.

Stokely Carmichael Civil rights activist who led SNCC and who coined the term "Black Power" to describe the need for blacks to use militant tactics to force whites to accept political change.

Black Muslims Popular name for the Nation of Islam, an African-American religious group founded by Elijah Muhammad, which professed Islamic religious beliefs and emphasized black separatism.

Malcolm X Black activist who advocated black separatism as a member of the Nation of Islam; in 1963 he converted to orthodox Islam, and two years later he was assassinated.

Black Panthers Black revolutionary party founded in 1966 that accepted violence as a means of social change; many of its leaders were killed in confrontations with police or sent to prison.

described two Americas, one white and one black, and concluded:

> *Pervasive discrimination and segregation in employment, education, and housing have resulted in the continuing exclusion of great numbers of Negroes from the benefits of economic progress.*

The Kerner Commission believed that the solution to America's racial problem was a "compassionate, massive and sustained" commitment "backed by the resources of the most powerful and richest nation on this earth."

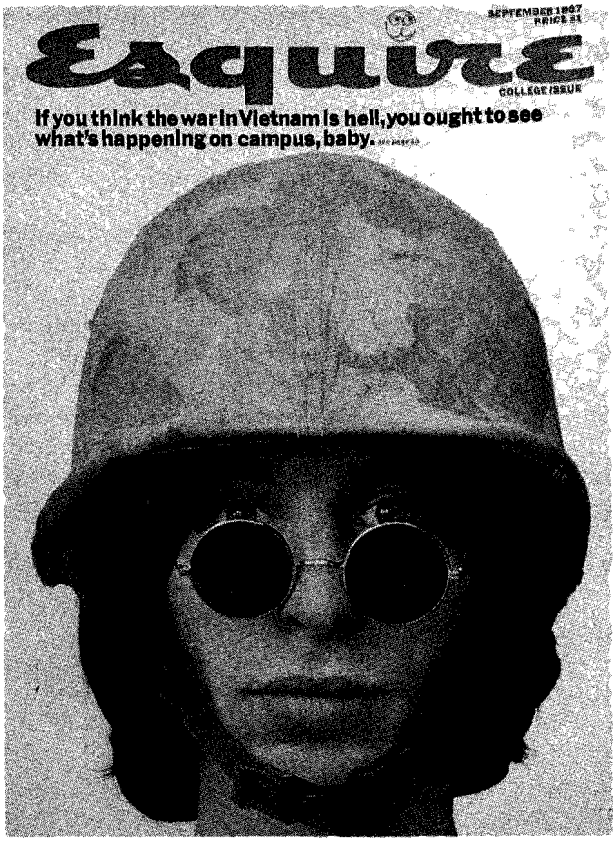
Just a month later, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., sparked a new series of riots across the country. King had been in Memphis supporting striking black sanitation workers when, on April 4, 1968, he was gunned down by James Earl Ray, a white racist. African Americans took to the streets in over 125 cities. Sections of Washington, D.C., were engulfed in flames.

As American cities burned and cries of "Burn, Baby, Burn" and "Black Power!" emerged from the smoke, a white backlash occurred. Many Americans backed away from supporting civil rights. Republican politicians were especially vocal. California Governor Ronald Reagan argued the "riff-raff" theory of urban problems: "mad dogs" and "lawbreakers" were the sole cause of the trouble. Governor Spiro Agnew of Maryland blamed activists like H. Rap Brown. Most Americans applauded as police cracked down on the Black Panthers, arresting or killing the party's membership. As the 1968 political campaign began, law and order replaced the Great Society and the War on Poverty as the main issue.

The Challenge of Youth

As alarming to many Americans as the revolution that was reshaping African-American attitudes was the growing tendency of the nation's white youth to reject traditional values. Although the majority of young people remained quite traditional, an increasing number advocated alternative values. The transformation was particularly noticeable on college campuses.

Many students began to question the goal of education, particularly at huge institutions like the



♦ "We're in a time that's divorced from the past," wrote author Norman Mailer, and from Berkeley to Harvard Yard, college campuses were becoming battlegrounds of the social, cultural, and political changes that were sweeping the nation. Whether participating in the counterculture or the Freedom Summer, or opposing the war in Vietnam or college restrictions, America's youth demanded new values and attitudes in the 1960s. *Michael Barson Collection/Past Perfect.*

University of California at Berkeley and the University of Michigan. Students complained that concern for individuals was missing from education. Education seemed sterile—more like an assembly line producing a standardized product than an effort to create an independent, thinking individual. In *Growing Up Absurd,* Paul Goodman argued that schools destroyed creativity and replaced it with conformity. Reflecting Goodman's view, many students demanded freedom of ex-

pression and a new, more flexible attitude from college administrators and faculty.

Campus activists denounced course requirements and restrictions on dress, behavior, and living arrangements. By the end of the decade, many colleges and schools had relaxed or eliminated dress codes that required the wearing of coats and ties for men and dresses for women. Long hair was accepted for males, and casual clothes like faded blue jeans and shorts became common dress for both sexes on most college campuses. Colleges also lifted dorm curfews and other residence requirements. Some dorms became coed. Academic departments reduced the number of mandatory courses. By the early 1970s, many colleges had introduced programs in fields like African-American, Native American, and women's studies.

Setting their sights beyond the campus community, student activists urged that the campus should be a center for social change. **Students for** a **Democratic Society (SDS),** organized at the University of Michigan in the early 1960s by Tom Hayden and Al Haber, charged that business and government ignored social inequalities. In 1962, SDS issued its Port Huron Statement, which maintained,

> *The search for truly democratic alternatives to the present, and a commitment to social experimentation with them, is a worthy and fulfilling human enterprise, one which moves us and, we hope, others today.*

Hayden argued that the country should strive to build "an environment for people to live in with dignity and creativeness."

The earliest major confrontation between students and university authorities occurred at Berkeley in 1964. Activists led by Mario Savio protested when the administration tried to prevent students from using a plaza on campus to recruit supporters and solicit funds for various social and political causes. Fresh from the Freedom Summer, Savio demanded freedom of speech on campus. Claiming that the university was not fulfilling its moral obligation to provide an open forum for free thought, Savio asked students and faculty to disrupt the university's activities. Over six thousand students responded, seizing the administration building, boycotting classes, and yelling four-letter words. Although Savio and two other organizers were expelled and sentenced to four months in jail, Chancellor Clark Kerr agreed to allow freedom of expression on campus.

The Berkeley Free Speech Movement encouraged other campus organizers. Student activists in growing numbers focused their attention on civil rights, the environment, and social and sexual norms. By the late sixties, though, their loudest protests opposed American foreign policy, the **military-industrial complex,** and the war in Vietnam. Opposition to the war further expanded the number of student activists.

The youth movement's discontent also found expression in what became known as the counterculture. Many young people came to spurn the traditional moral and social values of their parents. "Don't trust anyone over 30" became the motto of the young generation. The counterculture glorified freedom of the spirit and self-knowledge.

Music was one of the most prominent forms of defiance. Musicians like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez challenged society with protest and antiwar songs. Folk music and protest rock, however, were only a small part of the music challenge. For the majority, rock 'n' roll remained dominant. Performers like the Beatles, a British group that exploded on the American music scene in 1964, were among the most popular. The behavior and songs of other British imports such as the Rolling Stones and the Animals depicted a life of pleasure and lack of social restraints. The Grateful Dead and Jimi Hendrix turned rock 'n' roll into a new form of music, psychedelic acid rock,

Students for a Democratic Society Left-wing student organization founded in 1962 to criticize American materialism and call for social justice.

military-industrial complex Term first used by Eisenhower to describe the arms industry; in the 1960s, it was used by radicals to describe all those in power who benefited from U.S. militarism.

Beatles English rock group that gained international fame in 1964 and disbanded in 1970; they were known for the intelligence of their lyrics and their sophisticated instrumentation.

acid rock Rock music having a driving, repetitive beat and lyrics that suggest psychedelic drug experiences.

whose swirls of sound and lyrics acclaimed a drug culture and attacked social conventions.

The message of much music of the sixties was wrapped up in drug use—get "high" or "stoned." For many in the sixties generation, marijuana, or "pot," was the primary means to get high. Marijuana advocates claimed that, unlike the nation's traditional drug, alcohol, it reduced aggression and heightened perception. Thus, they argued, marijuana contributed to the counterculture's ideals of peace, serenity, and self-awareness. A more dangerous and unpredictable drug popular with some was LSD, lysergic acid diethylamide. "Acid" was a hallucinogenic drug that altered the user's perceptions of reality. Harvard psychology professor Timothy Leary argued for its widespread consumption. He believed that by "tripping" on LSD, people could free themselves from the rat race: "turn on, tune in, and drop out." Drugs offered some within the counterculture a new and liberating experience. But they also proved to be self-destructive and deadly, contributing to the deaths of musicians Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, and Janis Joplin.

Another realm of traditional American values the counterculture overturned was sex. Some young people appalled their parents and society by questioning and rejecting the values that placed restrictions on sexual activities. A new openness about sexuality and a relaxation of the stigma on premarital sex turned out to be a significant legacy of the sixties. But the philosophy of **free love** also had a negative side, as increased sexual activity contributed to a rapid rise in venereal disease.

Perhaps the most colorful and best-known advocates of the counterculture were the **Hippies.** Seeking a life of peace, love, and self-awareness, Hippies tried to distance themselves from conventional society. They flocked in large numbers to northern California, especially to the HaightAshbury neighborhood of San Francisco. Elsewhere, some Hippie groups abandoned the "old-fashioned" nuclear family and lived together as extended families in communes. Hippies expressed their nonconformism by favoring long, unkempt hair and ratty blue jeans or long, flowered dresses. Although the number of true Hippie dropouts was small, their style of dress and grooming greatly influenced young Americans.

The influence of the counterculture peaked in the summer of 1969, when an army of teens and young adults converged on Woodstock, New York, for the largest free rock concert in history. For three days, through summer rains and deepening mud, more than four hundred thousand came together in a temporary open-air community while popular rock-'n'-roll bands performed day and night. Touted as three days of peace and love, sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, Woodstock symbolized for a few fleeting days the power of counterculture values to promote cooperation and happiness.

Timothy Leary Harvard professor and counterculture figure who advocated the expansion of consciousness through the use of drugs such as LSD.

free love Popular belief among members of the counterculture in the 1960s in having sexual activity with as many partners as they liked.

Hippies Members of the counterculture in the 1960s who rejected the competitiveness and materialism of American society and searched for peace, love, and autonomy.

Woodstock Free rock concert in Woodstock, New York, in August 1969, which attracted 400,000 people and was remembered as the classic expression of the counterculture.

SUMMARY

Expectations
Constraints
Choices
Outcomes

The *outcome* of John F. Kennedy's election was a wave of renewed optimism and liberalism. Kennedy's call for a more responsible society and government was at the heart of his New Frontier. Kennedy raised *expectations,* but it was Lyndon B.

Johnson's Great Society that greatly expanded the role of government in social affairs. Heightened *expectations* were clearly visible among the African Americans who looked for legislation to end segregation and discrimination. As Kennedy took office, African-American leaders *chose* to launch a series of sit-ins and freedom marches. Kennedy responded by introducing a civil rights act in 1963 that was finally passed in 1964 after his assassination.

In foreign policy, Kennedy *chose* to expand the international struggle against communism. Confrontations over Berlin and Cuba, a heightened arms race, and an expanded commitment to Vietnam were the *outcomes.*

As president, Johnson *chose* to expand on the slain president's New Frontier. The 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and Great Society legislation were designed to wage war on poverty and discrimination, to provide federal aid for education, and to create a national system of health insurance for the poor and elderly. But by 1968, growing societal and political divisions *constrained* liberalism. African-American activists *chose* to become more militant in their demands for social and economic equality. The nation's youth, too, seemed unwilling to accept the traditional values of society, and they demanded change. Disturbed by the turmoil, conservatives and many moderate Americans *chose* to oppose government programs that appeared to favor the poor and minorities at their expense. The *outcome* was that a decade that had begun with great promise produced disappointment and disillusionment for many.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Anderson, Terry H. *The Movement and the Sixties* (1995).

A skillful examination of the social and cultural currents of the 1960s.

Bernstein, Irving. *Promises Kept: John F. Kennedy's New Frontier* (1991).

A brief and balanced account of Kennedy's presidency that nonetheless presents a favorable report of the accomplishments and legacy of the New Frontier.

Berschloss, Michael. *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960-1963* (1991).

A strong narrative account of the Cold War during the Kennedy administration and the personal duel between the leaders of the two superpowers.

Carson, Clayton. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (1981).

A useful study that uses the development of SNCC to examine the changing patterns of the civil rights movement and the emergence of black nationalism.

Kearns, Doris. *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (1977).

An effective study of how Johnson's background and values shaped his career and the Great Society.

Wolfe, Tom. *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968).

A classic account of the dimensions of the counterculture.

Easy Rider (1969) and *The Graduate* (1967) are two period films that critique traditional social and cultural norms and provide a glimpse of the "values" of the 1960s.

MAKING HISTORY: USING SOURCES FROM THE PAST

• The Debate over Black Power

The Context

By 1965, the civil rights movement had made significant changes in American society. Segregation was illegal under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Yet many African Americans still were denied equality, were mired in poverty, and felt powerless. The outcome was increasing anger among many African Americans, who replaced the philosophy of nonviolence and passive resistance with aggressive self-defense and a philosophy of "Black Power." Used initially by Paul Robeson following the Little Rock crisis (1957), the phrase burst onto the front pages on June 16,1966, when Stokely Carmichael renewed the call for Black Power. Quickly, its advocates seemed to drown out calls for "Freedom Now." A white marcher recalled that the "thundering" demands for Black Power seemed to him "chilling.. frightening." (For further information on the context, see pages 654-656.)

The Historical Question

The phrase "Black Power" grabbed headlines. To many white Americans, it seemed threatening. To many African Americans, it signaled the need to understand the race issue and its resolution in a different way and to make new choices. There was no standard definition of the term. What was Black Power? Was it a call for revolution and racial separation, a pronouncement of racial pride, a cry of desperation?

The Challenge

Using the sources provided, along with other information you have read, write an essay or hold a discussion on the following question. Cite evidence in the sources to support your conclusions. What meanings did **people give to the concept of Black Power?** What historical and social **experiences shaped these meanings?**

The Sources

1 After Stokely Carmichael called for Black Power, he wrote an essay in the *Massachusetts Review* in which he sought to explain the origins and concerns of the Black Power movement. He said:

Negroes are defined by two forces, their blackness and their powerlessness. There have been traditionally two communities in America. The White community, which controlled and defined the forms that all institutions within the society would take, and the Negro community, which has been excluded from participation in power decisions that shaped the society. . . .

In recent years the answer . . . has been .. . something called "integration." According to the advocates of integration, social justice will be ac-complished by "integrating the Negro into the .. . society from which he has been traditionally excluded.". . .

This concept . . . had to be based on the assumption that there was nothing of value in the Negro community . . . so the thing to do was to siphon off the "acceptable" Negroes into the surrounding middle-class white community. . . . Now, black people must look . . . to issues of collective power.

. . . The political and social rights of Negroes have been and always will be negotiable and expandable the moment they conflict with the interests of our "allies." If we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it, and that is precisely the lesson of Reconstruction .. .

. . . To the extent that we are dependent on .. . other groups, we are vulnerable to their influence and domination.

2 Bayard Rustin, long-time civil rights advocate and a past official of CORE, opposed Carmichael's nationalism and separatism. But, as he explained in *Commentary* (1965), African Americans still faced many constraints. He wrote:

The very decade which has witnessed the decline of legal Jim Crow has also seen the rise of de facto *segregation. . . . More Negroes are unemployed today than in 1954. . . . More Negroes attend* de facto *segregated schools today than when the Supreme Court handed down its famous decision. . . .*

. . . Last summer's riots were not race riots; they were outbursts of class aggression in a society where class and color definitions are converging disastrously. . . .

We need allies. The future of the Negro struggle depends on whether the contradictions of this society can be resolved by a coalition of progressive forces which become the effective *political majority.*

3 In 1966, Lerone Bennett, Jr., senior editor of *Ebony,* explained the underlying problems facing black Americans and American society. He wrote:

There is no Negro problem in America. . . .

The problem of race . . . is a white problem .. . white America created, invented the race problem .. .

racism is a mask for a much deeper problem involving not the victims of racism but the perpetrators. . . .

It is fashionable . . . to think of racism as a vast impersonal system for which no one is responsible... . Racism did not fall from the sky; it was not secreted by insects. No: racism in America was made by man, neighborhood by neighborhood, law by law, restrictive covenent by restrictive covenant, deed by deed.

4 In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson created a commission chaired by Governor Otto Kerner to investigate the causes of racial strife that had swept across America and to recommend possible solutions. In March 1968, the final report provided a bleak image of race relations in the United States.

The events of the summer of 1967 are in large part the culmination of 300 years of racial prejudice. . . . Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal. . . . Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American. . . . This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can be reversed. . . .

Violence and destruction must be ended—in the streets of the ghetto and in the lives of people. . . . What white Americans have never fully understood—and what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.