

Chapter 36: American Zenith (1952-1963)

Affluence and its Anxieties

- There was a surge in home construction, especially in the suburbs
- Electronic computing was invented
 - The transistor was invented in 1948, originally was huge
 - IBM was the major computer manufacturer
 - Allowed for “better billing and inventory control and opened new frontiers in areas like airline scheduling, high-speed printing, and telecommunications”
- The airplane industry, both military and civilian, grew
 - The government collected planes in the Strategic Air Command (SAC)
 - Boeing created the 707, the first large passenger jet
- There was an increase in service jobs or office jobs, known collectively as “white collar” jobs, that outnumbered the “blue collar” jobs (i.e., labor in factories)
 - ¾ of the new jobs created between 1950 and 1980 were “clerical or service work”
 - Lowering number of factory workers meant declining union membership because most union members fought against work conditions in factories
 - Unions peaked at 35% membership in 1954, declined after that
- Many women returned to traditional housewife lives after the war
 - At first, most embraced the “cult of domesticity” because no one found any objection to that traditional role
 - Later in the 1950s and in the next few decades, more women became employed in the new white-collared jobs
- Once women had established roles as both housekeepers and workers in the workforce, society began to question these dual roles
 - Betty Friedan wrote *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) that supported the women’s movement, promoting the idea of working at home and in outside jobs

Consumer Culture in the Fifties

- America became mostly a consumer economy, with many inventions and attractions to make buying easier or more attractive to customers
 - Fast food was invented with McDonald's (1948)
 - The credit card was invented with Diner’s Club (1949)
 - Amusement parks were invented with Disneyland (1955)
- The TV was invented and became very popular
 - There were only 6 TV stations in 1946, but 442 by 1956
 - There were 7 million TVs in 1951 and almost every home had one by 1960
 - Companies spent \$10 billion annually on advertisements in the 1950s
 - Some critics complained that it was “degrading the public’s aesthetic, social, moral, political, and educational standards”
 - Television helped to spread religion and commercialize sports

- Sports teams generally moved to the South or West, setting off a general settlement trend of moving south or west
- Popular music was revolutionized
 - Elvis Presley created the rock 'n roll style, which melded white and black music and became very popular amongst children
- Advertisements became more sexually alluring
 - Marilyn Monroe became an icon and the infamous *Playboy* magazine became popular
- Some people (traditionalists) were opposed to this new social trend towards consumerism
 - This mostly consisted of well-educated people, such as Harvard sociologist David Riesman or Harvard economist John Galbraith

Work, Exchange, and Technology: The rate at which work occurred increased during the 1950s, especially with the production and sale of consumer goods. The invention of fast food and the credit card made it much easier to buy food and most other products. The rise of the passenger jet, and computing increased productivity to travel and compute more quickly. The creation of TVs and amusement parks allowed for advertisements to happen and people to feel obliged to buy the new products. All of this contributed to the rise of consumerism and more lavish spending, which had been downed by the economic downturns of the Great Depression and WWII. Overall, the increase of the mass sale of these ordinary products improved the standard of living of many Americans while also contributing to the overall economic growth from 1950 into the 1970s.

The Advent of Eisenhower

- The Democrats were unpopular because of “the military deadlock in Korea, Truman’s clash with MacArthur, and war-bred inflation”
 - The Democrats nominated Adlai E. Stevenson as their presidential election of 1952, not very enthusiastic for his win
- The Republicans nominated Dwight D. Eisenhower, war hero of WWII, as their presidential nominee
 - Richard Nixon was his vice president
 - Nixon was accused of receiving campaign gifts, he responded with denials in the Checkers speech and saved his reputation
- The Republicans won the election of 1952, 442 to 89 electoral votes
 - Eisenhower flew to Korea to try and make arrangements, and the Korean war was finally ended a few months later
 - By its end, the Korean War had lasted 3 years, killed 30,000 Americans and over a million Chinese and Koreans (North and South)
 - The end of the war did not enact much change, with the return of the 38th parallel marking the division between communist North Korea and democratic South Korea
- Eisenhower strove to be a “people’s person,” showing “sincerity, fairness, and optimism” — he wanted the people to confide in him
 - This made him extremely popular

- His critics claim that he could have used this popularity to mobilize the country for civil rights, but rather he “hoarded” his power of popularity to himself

Politics and Power: The presidential election of 1952 was won by the Republicans both because of a loss of confidence in the incumbent Democratic administration of Truman and because of the large popularity of the war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower. When Eisenhower flew over to Korea shortly after his election, his popularity was increased because he helped stop the bloody and stalemated war that ended only a few months later. Like in the past with generals Andrew Jackson or Zachary Taylor, Eisenhower also embodies the popularity of a war general for America — because the wars are so costly both in dollars and in human lives, the changes made by a general can be as influential as political change to the people. However, he also did not want to tarnish his high reputation with the idea of enacting social change, which was not totally encouraged under the Republican conservative government — as a result, he had the potential to wield a lot of power in social change but decided not to use it, potentially for selfish reasons. This decision to make a moral or a popular choice is a common one for the President, and often it ends up being the popular decision to keep himself in favor with the people.

Desegregating American Society

- By 1950, 2/3 of America’s African Americans still lived in the South, which featured strong segregation
 - The old and rigid Jim Crow laws were still in effect from the Reconstruction Era
 - Blacks in the South were forced to use “separate public toilets, drinking fountains, restaurants, and waiting rooms,” as well as schools and sections of a train
 - Only about 20% of eligible black voters in the South were registered to vote
- Segregation prompted violent protests by African Americans
 - There were multiple riots that ended in the death of some blacks
 - Some authors and artists expressed the troubled situation of race relations in the U.S. making the U.S. seem less idealistic to foreigners
- Mostly in the North, desegregation began to occur as blacks fought for integration into public facilities
 - The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) advocated for desegregation of schools in a Supreme Court ruling and won
 - Desegregation occurred concurrently with the repeal of other racist acts, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act
- In the South, desegregation happened at a slower rate
 - There were some riots, such as Rosa Parks and her determined effort to resist segregation in buses with the Montgomery bus boycott
 - This boycott involved many African Americans boycotting buses for over a year in order to desegregate buses
 - Martin Luther King, Jr. pushed for desegregation, influenced many people and organized moving speeches

Seeds of the Civil Rights Revolution

- Truman was horrified by reports of black veterans being lynched

- He responded by desegregating the armed forces
- However, the government was mostly unmotivated to help blacks, with Congress being majority conservative Republican and Eisenhower having little interest in racial issues
- Chief Justice Earl Warren led the Supreme Court to pursue social issues
 - Because the conservative government was largely indifferent towards social change, many people were against his initiative towards solving social issues
- The court case Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954) stated that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional
 - This reversed the ruling of the case *Plessy v. Ferguson* that allowed for the existence of “separate but equal” (segregated) facilities
 - This act was resisted in the deep South, with many southern Congressmen signing the “Declaration of Constitutional Principles” (1956) that pledged their support for segregation
 - As a result, ten years later there would only be 2% of the school-age blacks in desegregated schools
 - Eisenhower did not support the case
 - He had a personal background with interactions solely with other caucasians and dealt little with race relations
- Despite Eisenhower’s reluctance to support desegregation, he supported the ruling *Brown v. Board of Education* in Little Rock, Arkansas to allow nine black students to enroll in Central High School (1957)
 - He authorized federal troops to escort the black students to their classes against Arkansas’ governor’s use of the National Guard to prevent them from enrolling
- Congress passed a Civil Rights Act (1957), the first one since the Reconstruction Era
 - It created a Civil Rights Commission to protect blacks’ voting rights
- There were various forms of resistance by the black community to segregation
 - MLK created the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) that “aimed to mobilize the vast power of black churches on behalf of black rights”
 - This was because “the churches were the largest and best-organized black institutions” in America, despite segregation
 - There was a “sit-in” movement begun in 1960 when blacks sat in whites-only segregated facilities and refused to move until they were served equally (similar to sit-in strikes of union workers in the early 1900s)
 - The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was created by black students as another organization against segregation
 - Many of these members were young and very passionate against segregation

American and National Identity: After almost two hundred years of American history, blacks were still not socially equal to whites because of segregation. Despite legislation passed in the Reconstruction Era and into the 1950s giving blacks emancipation, citizenship, franchisement, and desegregation (in schools), the ultraconservative Deep South still rejected federal law and supported the harsh Jim Crow laws and segregation. Even federal law could not undermine the extremely strong cultural ties of the South to the slavery and subjection of the African Americans, even though slavery had been abolished a century

before. While the Border States and the North scrambled to comply with the laws, the South continued to reject them. This uneasy desegregation then led to the rise of civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, as well as civil rights organizations such as the SCLC and the SNCC that actively but peacefully protested against segregation.

Eisenhower Republicanism at Home

- Eisenhower pledged to practice “dynamic conservatism”
 - He wanted to practice liberal policies relating to social issues and conservative policies concerning economics
 - This was a cautious approach that continued some of the New Deal programs and helped reassure the people in a time recovering from a time of economic depression and world war
 - For example, he supported social security, unemployment insurance, and labor and farm programs that he believed kept the economy stable
 - However, he also avoided increasing the national spending, especially on the military
- Eisenhower dealt strictly with illegal immigration from Mexico with Operation Wetback (1954)
 - This was caused by both pressure from Americans and from the Mexican government worrying that it would damage the (legal) immigration of Mexicans in the bracero program (program for Mexican farm labor in America)
 - Approximately 1 million illegally-immigrated Mexicans were sent back to Mexico in 1954 due to this program
- Eisenhower wanted to reverse the new Native American assimilation and return to the Dawes Severalty Act
 - This was reversed due to popular rejection of the idea by many Native Americans
- Eisenhower supported the Federal Highway Act of 1956 that gave \$27 billion of federal funding to build 42,000 miles of highways
 - This would help the U.S. in wartime (because the U.S. feared a military war with the Soviets) by allowing easier mobilization of troops and supplies, and during peacetime by mobilizing civilians, especially to and from suburbs
 - As a result, suburbs flourished (and some main city areas declined)
 - This also helped give many jobs for construction

A “New Look” in Foreign Policy

- The U.S. wanted to step up its military strength in case of a Soviet attack on any of the democratic nations while also lowering its military spending
 - Secretary of State John Foster Dulles created the Policy of Boldness to solve both of these problems
 - This policy dictated that the SAC would be built up with bomber planes and nuclear bombs (which were relatively cheap because they were a single bomb)
 - Despite the new Policy of Boldness, Eisenhower still looked to relieve tensions with the Soviet Union diplomatically

- The Hungarians revolted against the Soviet Union to try and gain their independence in the Hungarian uprising (1955)
 - They asked for U.S. aid, but the U.S. did not use its new Policy of Boldness nukes
 - This showed that the use of the nuclear weapons was to be reserved for only the direst of cases (i.e., all-out war with Soviet Russia)

The Vietnam Nightmare

- Some Southeast Asian countries, such as Vietnam, were sick of being under European (French) control
 - They became increasingly communist (as they went against the democratic French government)
 - The U.S. spent about \$1 billion a year to fund French troops in Vietnam to fight off the communists
 - The U.S. had the choice to use its bombers from the Policy of Boldness, but Eisenhower again decided not to use them to spare extraneous conflict
- The Vietnamese nationalists' guerrilla warfare won over the French troops in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu
 - This split Vietnam into a northern, communist section and a southern, democratic section (similar to Korea)
 - The northern section wanted to unify with the southern section, but the southern section did not want to unify with the northern section

Cold War Crises in the Middle East

- The U.S. was worried that the USSR would gain control of the rich and essential oil fields in the Middle East
 - When the Iranian government began to resist the influence of the western, democratic nations, the CIA organized a coup that installed a new, western-sympathetic leader
 - Later, the Iranians overthrew this resented new leader and held a newfound hatred for the Americans
- President Gamal Nasser of Egypt needed funds to build a dam on the Nile for irrigation and power
 - The U.S. and Britain initially offered financial funding but withdrew their help once Egypt started to negotiate with the Soviets
- In return to the withdrawal of the offer, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, which threatened Europe and America's access to the oil fields of the Middle East
 - The French and the British coordinated an attack on Egypt to try and free the Suez Canal, assuming that the U.S. would supply them with oil while they attacked and the oil supply from the Middle East was disrupted
 - Eisenhower refused to supply oil to the invaders, and the invasion promptly failed
 - This was known as the Suez Crisis, another major European attempt to impose its influence on other nations to strengthen its military power against the Soviets

- In response to the invasion, the oil-rich countries of the Middle East formed the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which dominated the oil industry and controlled its sale to the European nations, which essentially limited their military power as well

America in the World: During the 1950s the U.S. decided for and against global intervention in several world issues, largely unsuccessfully. This was opposed to the solely isolationist view that the U.S. had between the two world wars and the very interventionist view directly after WWII. For example, the U.S. shunned illegal Mexican immigrants, essentially forcing some influence on Mexico. While this supported both the American and Mexican goals of keeping the Bracero program afloat (illegal, cheap labor migrants would undermine the program) it also ruined the prospects of the million Mexican immigrants deported back to Mexico. The U.S. decided not to intervene in the Hungarian uprising, nor directly fight in the Vietnam War or drop an atomic bomb. They did, however, intervene in the Middle East to try and gain the oil fields of Iran but refused to aid the invading Britain and France in Egypt during the Suez Canal Crisis. Thus the U.S. did intervene a lot in global politics, but usually did so unilaterally; aiding other nations or solving their conflicts, especially by dropping nuclear bombs, was out of the question.

Round Two for Ike

- The presidential election of 1956 was Eisenhower against Stevenson again, this time with a 457 to 73 electoral vote (even larger margin) to make Eisenhower president again
- Eisenhower tried to root out corruption from the government by passing the Landrum-Griffin Act (1959) because of multiple investigations of government officials that had exposed scandals
- The Soviets launched Sputnik I and II into space, the first artificial satellites
 - This worried the U.S. because they believed the satellites could be used to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles on the U.S.
- Eisenhower created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to research about space and missile development
 - By the end of the decade several satellites had been launched successfully (and some unsuccessfully)
 - Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) (1958) to promote STEM education in schools

The Continuing Cold War

- Both the U.S. and the USSR wanted to stop nuclear tests so as to not pollute the atmosphere, but continued to do so out of mutual distrust
- The U.S. and USSR decided to meet at a conference in 1960 to negotiate, but this fell apart when a U.S. spy plane was shot down over the USSR and suspicions rose again
- Latin America became angsty about the U.S.'s Cold War policies
 - They did not like how the U.S. invested billions in helping Europe but only millions to its neighbors in Latin America
 - They did not like how the U.S. supported dictators that only claimed they were fighting communism

- The dictator of Cuba was one example; he was ousted by new dictator Fidel Castro, who ended up being very hostile to the Americans and causing the break of economic relations between the U.S. and Cuba as well as turning Cuba into a communist state

Kennedy Challenges Nixon to the Presidency

- Richard Nixon was chosen to be the Republican nominee for the election of 1960
 - He showed himself to be mature
 - He had gained popularity in the kitchen debate with USSR leader Khrushchev in Moscow the year before about “American consumerism over Soviet economic planning”
- John F. Kennedy was chosen to be the Democratic nominee for the election
 - He was a Roman Catholic, which many of the majority Protestant population were somewhat against
 - While this spurred away some Southern Protestants, it encouraged many Northern Catholics to vote for him, perhaps even helping his campaign
 - Kennedy also became more popular in a series of on-TV debates with Nixon, in which he was more lively and appealing to the American people
- Kennedy won the election 303 to 219 electoral votes, but with only a 118,000 popular vote difference
 - He was the first Roman Catholic president and the youngest president
 - He had strong political backing in the election from “workers, Catholics, and African Americans”
- Eisenhower was respected in his last days as President for his “decency, goodwill, and moderation”
 - During his presidency Alaska and Hawaii had been admitted as states into the U.S.
 - He felt sad that he could not end the Cold War’s tensions with the USSR and warned of a “military-industrial complex”
 - This means a government’s military that is tied to the arms industry, which encourages war at the benefit of the arms industry and the economy but not necessarily for moral means

Politics and Power: The end of Eisenhower’s presidency was a time of difficult relations with the Soviets. The Soviets had sent out the first artificial satellites, which worried the U.S. because this meant also the ability to send intercontinental weapons out into space as well that could reach the U.S. at any time. As a result, the U.S. revamped its science research with the creation of NASA and science research with the NDEA. This “space race” was similar to the Cuban missile crisis in that it could mean a nuclear war at any moment. A U.S. spy plane was spotted and shot down over the USSR, which increased suspicions and ruined a meeting for negotiations between the two nations. Eisenhower even left his presidency with a warning in his farewell address against a nation wedded to the arms industry and therefore to war. Political relations between the U.S. and the USSR decreased as the military power of both increased.

A Cultural Renaissance

- The U.S. had become a hub of the arts during this time period, especially in NYC
 - There was a focus on the modern arts, especially abstract expressionism by James Pollock in the 1940s through 1950s
 - This involved very abstract art, and regular concrete art forms were not as popular
 - This was more about what the author felt and less about what actually existed in the painting
 - Architecture was revolutionized with the popularization of the International Style, or the modernist style
 - This involved sleek modern, steel buildings that are now common in many American cities like NYC
 - Literature also improved in the postwar era
 - In war stories there was often a sense of realism, and often the war stories were written for satirical reasons
 - Also common were stories about the new affluence of the U.S.
 - Some writers tackled the issues of social issues such as homophobia in their writing
 - Many novels were about teenagers coming of age and the struggles involved (i.e., like YA fiction, still very popular genre today)
 - Poetry was often lamenting of the societal norms of a sexualized, consumerist economy
 - Theater brought to life some of the social issues of the time period, such as McCarthyism and women's rights
- The "Beat Generation" included people of the 1950s who believed that social conformity was becoming too prevalent and that everyone should be "marching to one's own 'beat'"
 - It "advocated free-form experimentation in life as well as literature"

New Cultural Voices

- Black authors in the North such as Richard Wright and James Baldwin built off of the literary achievements of the Harlem Renaissance literature to write their own literary masterpieces such as *Native Son* and *The Fire Next Time* (respectively)
- The South experienced a Southern Renaissance in black literature
 - African American writers turned away from being reminiscent of antebellum America and more appreciative of the modern South
- Jewish authors also became prevalent by writing many novels in the 1950s

Kennedy's "New Frontier" Spirit

- Kennedy was very impassioned and empowering in his speeches, telling America that a new generation of Americans had come forth and it was glamorous
 - Kennedy encouraged the idea of a "New Frontier" — that the U.S. was always braving new challenges in science and in society
- Kennedy assembled very young cabinet members, including his brother Robert F. Kennedy as attorney general

- Because many were very highly-educated and somewhat stubborn, “these appointees made up an innercircle notable for its aura of brash confidence and self-conscious sophistication”
- Kennedy created the Peace Corps, a U.S. group of volunteers dedicated to help people in poorer nations
- Despite his enthusiasm, Kennedy was restricted by weak Democratic Congressional majorities
 - Kennedy expanded the House Rules Committee with Democrats to weaken the strong conservative majority in it
 - “Key medical and education bills remained stalled in Congress”
- Kennedy was both liberal and conservative when it came to corporate economics
 - He supported a tax bill that lowered taxes to support large companies
 - He became angry at steel manufacturers for unfairly raising the price of steel
- Kennedy supported NASA’s space research
 - After \$24 billion in research, two NASA astronauts landed on the moon in the Apollo mission (1969)
 - This helped regain some of the prestige of America after the USSR showed up the U.S. with their ability to beat the U.S. in launching the first satellite and man into space

Culture and Society: The economic growth of America allowed for people to live more comfortable lives, and less economically-necessary art fields flourished. NYC became a hub for the arts, and art developed for all people: in the North with modernism in urban architecture, in the South with the Southern Renaissance, for black authors, for abstract expressionists, among others. People began to move away from the depressing, nostalgic and concrete art forms to move towards more abstract, optimistic art forms relating to present and future rather than past. The same vibe that made the Harlem Renaissance artists so innovative pushed along this optimistic generation. Along with the optimism in art forms was a new social optimism led by Kennedy, the idea that the entire society was on a “New Frontier” that could help the poor (with the Peace Corps) and even land people on the moon (with NASA’s Apollo mission). Society was in a general upswing of emotion, allowing for rich cultural development and innovation.

Foreign Flare-ups and “Flexible Response”

- The USSR desired to cut off access of East Germany and East Berlin from the western nations, despite Kennedy’s insistence against it
 - They built the Berlin Wall separating East and West Berlin to prevent East Germans from going through to West Germany through Berlin
 - To western nations this looked like a prison wall, a sign of suppression and limitation
- Western Europe flourished in the early parts of Kennedy’s presidency
 - European nations benefitted strongly from the Marshall Plan and the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC), a free trade agreement throughout Europe (later the European Union, or EU)
 - Kennedy passed the Trade Expansion Act (1962) that promoted trade within the EEC
 - The level of global trade led to the new term: globalization, implying the immense degree to which nations are economically interdependent
- Kennedy wanted a better plan to face the USSR if conflict arose

- The Policy of Boldness essentially created the decision “between humiliation and nuclear incineration” — neither are great choices
- Defense Secretary McNamara created the idea of a “flexible response” — i.e., various degrees of military action depending on the gravity of the conflict
 - This made it easier to choose military conflict over diplomacy in smaller-scale conflicts, such as in Vietnam
- The Northern Vietnamese government grew corrupt and wanted to defeat the southern, pro-US Vietnam
 - Kennedy increased the number of troops in South Vietnam
 - Despite initially supporting South Vietnam against the communist North Vietnam, it eventually turned against them and ordered a coup against South Vietnam because it was too reactionary and could not impose enough promising social and political reform to match the American idea of a better government there

Cuban Confrontations

- Kennedy created the Alliance for Progress, essentially a pact of friendship with Latin America, but there was little amity and progress between U.S.-Latin American relations
- Kennedy authorized a CIA scheme designed to lead a coup against Fidel Castro with exiles from Cuba in the Bay of Pigs invasion
 - The invasion failed and the Cubans became ever more communist and hostile towards the U.S.
 - Later the U.S. found Soviet nuclear missiles being shipped over to Cuba, which was dangerously close to the U.S.
- Kennedy prevented a bombing of Cuban missile sites, instead diplomatically placing an embargo on Cuba and asking for the missiles to be removed — this tense time of almost all-out nuclear war was known as the Cuban missile crisis
 - He threatened the USSR that an attack on the U.S. would mean severe retaliation on the USSR
 - After a week, the USSR agreed to remove Russian missiles from Cuba if the U.S. would remove its own missiles from Turkey
 - This agreement showed Khrushchev as a soft-willed traitor to the Soviets, who ousted him
- After the Cuban missile crisis there was some attempt at reconciliation with the USSR
 - After long negotiations with the Soviets after the missile crisis, Kennedy finally got a nuclear test ban treaty with the Soviets passed
 - A hotline was drawn from Washington D.C. to Moscow for immediate communication in case of emergency
 - Kennedy gave a speech asking the Americans not to view the Soviets as all demonic people, encouraged them to think less negatively about them

America in the World: The Cold War peaked during Kennedy’s presidency, but it began to decline due to the cautious acts of the president. Germany became ever more divided between East and West, Communist and Democratic; Vietnam also became more divided, North and South; Cuba became more

strongly against the U.S. after the Bay of Pigs incident, leading to the high-tension Cuban missile crisis. Only when the “war” reached its climax with Soviet missiles pointed at the U.S. from Cuba and US missiles pointed at the USSR from Turkey did the nations back down, presumably because they were so close to “mutual destruction” by atomic warfare that they decided that it was best not to go ahead with military action. U.S. diplomatic relations with the USSR began to improve as the Cuban missile crisis was diffused through compromise to remove both nations’ nuclear weapons from the other’s neighboring countries, when nuclear test bans were agreed upon, and when Kennedy encouraged the American people to stop antagonizing the Soviets. Thus the Cold War, although still tense, declined from the threat of all-out nuclear war.

The Struggle for Civil Rights

- Kennedy wanted to promote the civil rights movement
 - He strategically decided to target specific aspects of civil rights to improve by legislation instead of asking for wholesale racial justice, which many people were still strongly against
- African Americans took things in their own hands by creating Freedom Riders, interracial buses to demonstrate desegregation
 - An anti-desegregation group burned one of the Freedom Rider buses, which led Kennedy to send federal troops to protect the Freedom Riders
- The Kennedy Administration and the Civil Rights movement worked together
 - There was a little suspicion of the Civil Rights leaders being communist, but this suspicion cleared up with no evidence
 - The government helped civil rights leaders and the SNCC to create the Voter Education Project (1963) to enfranchise many of the South’s nonvoting blacks
 - Like before with Eisenhower, Kennedy was forced to send in federal troops to protect black students enrolling in schools
 - Kenney gave a speech supporting civil rights in 1963
- MLK led major demonstrations against segregation
 - He peacefully protested in Birmingham, the most segregated big city, and the horrors of the treatment there of blacks were revealed to America (by TV)
 - He led the March on Washington, a peaceful demonstration that involved 200,000 demonstrators and ended in his famous “I Have a Dream” speech
 - Even despite his efforts, violence against blacks continued

The Killing of Kennedy

- Kennedy was shot in an open-top car on November 22, 1963
 - Vice president Johnson became president
 - The murderer Lee Harvey Oswald was murdered by a vengeful man
- Kennedy had really invigorated the nation in the baby boom generation and carried on with his ideals of promoting peace through civil rights and better relations with the Soviets

American and National Identity: Unfortunately, American history is riddled with assassinated presidents. This includes Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley, and Kennedy is the most recent. This shows that the

American identity inevitably includes governmental policies that are controversial, such as President Kennedy's strong support of the civil rights movement, so controversial that some Americans such as Lee Harvey Oswald feel the urge to kill for their cause. Likewise, the Civil Rights movement was another demonstration of American Identity, with Americans fighting stubbornly for their causes, from the American Revolutionary War to union strikes. The Civil Rights leaders advocated passive and peaceful revolt, much like the peaceful worker strikes; the "sit-down" revolts were very similar to unions' "sit-down" strikes. The identity of the African Americans in the US showed an increasing improvement, one that began from slavery in the pre-Civil War era that continues to the less-common-but-still-existing racial violence today.