

JFK and LBJ Packet: The 1960s

Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans - born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage ... Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.

John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961

The 1960s were in many ways both the best and the worst of times. On the one hand, the postwar prosperity carried the U.S. economy to its peak. At the same time, racial strife, a controversial war in Vietnam, and student radicalism started to tear the country apart. The proud superpower began to learn its limits both in the jungles of Vietnam and on the streets at home.

John F. Kennedy's New Frontier

The decade began with an election that proved symbolic of the changes that were to come.

The Election of 1960

President Eisenhower had not been able to transfer his popularity to other Republicans, and the Democrats retained control of Congress through Eisenhower's last two years in office.

Nixon. At their convention in 1960, the Republicans unanimously nominated Richard Nixon for president. During his eight years as Eisenhower's vice president, Nixon had gained a reputation as a statesman in his diplomatic travels to Europe and South America. In a visit to Moscow, he stood up to Nikita Khrushchev in the so-called kitchen debate (which took place in a model of an American kitchen) over the relative merits of capitalism and communism. Still a young man at 47, the Republican candidate was known to be a tough and seasoned campaigner.

Kennedy. Through the early months of 1960, several Democrats believed they had a chance to secure the nomination of their party. Liberal Democrats still liked Adlai Stevenson of Illinois, and southern Democrats supported the Senate majority leader, Lyndon Johnson of Texas. In the primaries, however, a charismatic and youthful 43-year-old senator from Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy, defeated his rivals. Going into the convention, he had just enough delegates behind him to win the nomination. To balance the ticket, the New Englander chose a Texan, Lyndon B. Johnson, to be his vice presidential running mate - a choice that proved critical in carrying southern states in the November election.

Campaign. The new medium of television was perhaps the most decisive factor in the close race between the two youthful campaigners, Nixon and Kennedy. In the first of four televised debates - **the first such debates in campaign history** - Kennedy appeared on screen as more vigorous and comfortable than the



pale and tense Nixon. On the issues of the day, Kennedy attacked the Eisenhower administration for the recent recession and for permitting the Soviets to take the lead in the arms race. As it proved, what Kennedy called a "missile gap" was actually in the U.S.' favor, but his charges seemed plausible after Sputnik. As the first Catholic



presidential candidate since Al Smith (1928), Kennedy's religion became an issue in the minds of some voters. Religious loyalties helped Nixon in rural Protestant areas but helped Kennedy in the large cities.

Results. In one of the closest elections in U.S. history, **Kennedy defeated Nixon by a little over 100,000 popular votes (.02% of the popular vote)**, and by a slightly wider margin of 303 to 219 in the electoral college. Many Republicans, including Nixon, felt the election had been stolen by Democratic political machines in states like Illinois and Texas by stuffing ballot boxes with "votes" of the deceased.

Domestic Policy

At 43, Kennedy was the youngest candidate ever to be elected president. Youthful energy and a sharp wit gave a new, personal style to the presidency. In his inaugural address, Kennedy spoke of "the torch being passed to a new generation" and promised to lead the nation into a **New Frontier** (*the name of JFK's domestic reform program*). The Democratic president surrounded himself with both tough-minded pragmatists like Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, and liberal academics like economist John Kenneth Galbraith. For the sensitive position of attorney general, the president chose his younger brother, Robert Kennedy. The youthful couple in the White House, John Kennedy and his attractive wife, Jacqueline ("Jackie"), **brought style, glamour, and an appreciation of the arts to the White House**. The press loved Kennedy's witty news conferences, and soon his administration was likened to the mythical kingdom of **Camelot** and the court of King Arthur.



New Frontier programs. The promises of the New Frontier proved difficult to keep. Kennedy called for aid to education, federal support of health care, urban renewal, and civil rights, but his domestic programs languished in Congress. While few of them became law during his thousand-day administration, **most were passed later under President Johnson**. (*the coalition of conservative Southern democrats and Republicans blocked them*)

On economic issues, Kennedy had some success. He faced down big steel executives over an inflationary price increase and achieved a price rollback. In addition, the economy was stimulated by increased spending for defense and space exploration, as the president committed the nation to land on the moon by the end of the decade. (***the U.S. economy boomed even more in the 1960s than in the 1950s*)

Foreign Affairs

With his domestic programs often blocked, Kennedy increasingly turned his attention to foreign policy issues. In 1961, he set up the **Peace Corps**, an organization that recruited young American volunteers to give technical aid to developing countries. Also in 1961, another foreign aid program, **the Alliance for Progress**, was organized to promote land reform and economic development in Latin America. Congress was also persuaded to pass the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, which authorized tariff

reductions with the recently formed European Economic Community (Common Market) of Western European nations.

Bay of Pigs Invasion (1961).

Kennedy made the **worst mistake of his presidency** shortly after entering office. He gave his approval to a Central Intelligence Agency scheme planned under the Eisenhower administration to use Cuban exiles to overthrow Fidel Castro's regime in Cuba. In April 1961 the CIA-trained force of Cubans landed at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba but failed to set off a general uprising as planned. Trapped on the beach, the anti-Castro Cubans had little choice but to surrender after Kennedy rejected the idea of using U.S. forces to save them. Castro used the failed invasion to get even more aid from the Soviet Union and to strengthen his grip on power.



Castro used the failed invasion to get even more aid from the Soviet Union and to strengthen his grip on power.

Effects: (1) major embarrassment to JFK (2) led to further crises with Cuba

Berlin Wall.

Trying to shake off the embarrassment of the Bay of Pigs defeat, Kennedy agreed to meet Soviet premier Khrushchev in Vienna in the summer of 1961. Khrushchev seized the opportunity in Vienna to



threaten the president by renewing Soviet demands that U.S. troops be pulled out of Berlin. Kennedy refused. In August, the **East Germans, with Soviet backing, built a wall around West Berlin.** Its purpose was to **stop fleeing East Germans from fleeing to West Germany.** As the wall was being built, Soviet and U.S. tanks faced off in Berlin. Kennedy called up the reserves, but he made no move to stop the completion of the wall. In 1963, the president traveled to West Berlin to assure its residents of continuing U.S. support. To cheering crowds, he

proclaimed: "Freedom has many difficulties, and democracy is not perfect, but we have never had to put a wall up to keep out people in ... As a free man, I take pride in the words, '*Ich bin ein Berliner*' [I am a Berliner]."

The Berlin Wall stood as a gloomy symbol of the Cold War until it was torn down by rebellious East Germans in 1989.

Cuban Missile Crisis (1962).

The most dangerous challenge from the Soviets came in October 1962. U.S. reconnaissance planes discovered that the Russians were building underground sites in Cuba for the launching of offensive missiles that could reach the United States in minutes. Kennedy responded by announcing to the world that **he was setting up a naval blockade of Cuba until the weapons were removed. A full scale nuclear war between the superpowers seemed likely if Soviet ships challenged the U.S. naval blockade.** After days of tension, Khrushchev finally agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba in exchange for Kennedy's pledge not to invade the island nation. [** it has recently been revealed that the Soviets had placed 54 tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba. If American troops had invaded Cuba (as the military wanted) there would have been nuclear war.*]



The Cuban missile crisis had a **sobering effect on both sides.** Soon afterward, a telecommunication hot line was established between Washington and Moscow to make it possible for the leaders of the two countries to talk directly during a crisis. In 1963, the Soviet Union and the United States - along with nearly one hundred other nations - signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty to end the

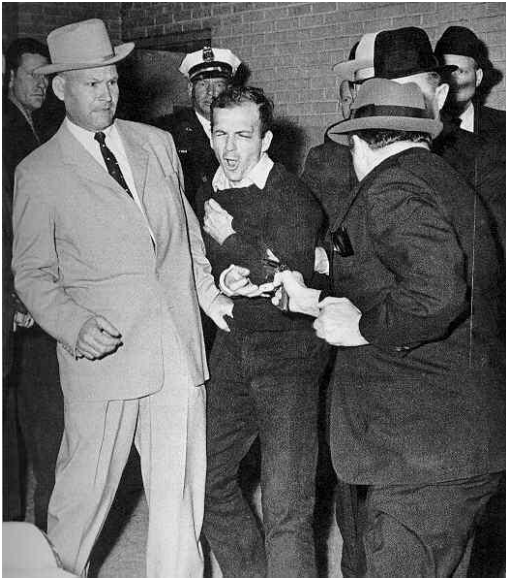
testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. [*it also banned testing in outer space and underwater*] This first step in controlling the testing of nuclear arms was offset by a new round in the arm race for developing missile and warhead superiority.

Flexible response.

A different Cold War challenge were the many "brushfire wars" in Africa and Southeast Asia, in which insurgent forces were often aided by Soviet arms and training. Such conflicts in the Congo (later renamed Zaire) in Africa and in Laos and Vietnam in Southeast Asia convinced the Kennedy administration to adopt a policy of flexible response. Moving away from Dulles' idea of massive retaliation and reliance on nuclear weapons, Kennedy and McNamara decided to increase spending on conventional (non-nuclear) arms and mobile military forces. While the flexible-response policy reduced the risk of using nuclear weapons, it also increased the temptation to send elite special forces, such as the Green Berets, into combat in third world countries like South Vietnam.

Assassination in Dallas

After just two and a half years in office, President Kennedy's "one brief, shining moment" was cut short on November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas, as two bullets from an assassin's rifle found their mark. After the shocking news of Kennedy's murder, millions of stunned Americans were fixed to their televisions for days and even witnessed the killing of the **alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald**, just two days after the



president's assassination. The **Warren Commission**, headed by **Chief Justice Earl Warren**, concluded that **Oswald was the lone assassin**. For years afterward, however, unanswered questions about the events in Dallas produced dozens of **conspiracy theories** pointing to possible involvement by **(1) organized crime, (2) Castro, (3) the CIA, and (4) the FBI**. For many Americans, the tragedy in Dallas and doubts about the Warren Commission marked the beginning of a loss of credibility in government.

In retrospect. At the time, John Kennedy's presidency inspired many idealistic young Americans to take seriously his inaugural message and to "ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country." More recently, however, his belligerent Cold War rhetoric has drawn criticism from historians. Nevertheless, the Kennedy legend endured for years and cast a spell on American politics through the 1960s and 1970s.

Lyndon Johnson's Great Society

Two hours after the Kennedy assassination, Lyndon Johnson took the oath of office as president aboard an airplane at the Dallas airport. On the one hand, as a native of rural west Texas and a graduate of a teacher's college, he seemed less polished and sophisticated than the wealthy, Harvard-educated, well-mannered Kennedy. On the other hand, Johnson was a much more experienced lawmaker and politician. He had started out in politics during the depression as a devoted follower of Roosevelt's New Deal. (He was Senate majority leader during the 1950s)



As the new president, Johnson was determined to expand the social reforms of the New Deal. Having spent almost 30 years in Congress, he knew how to get things done. Shortly after taking office, Johnson persuaded Congress to pass (1) an expanded version of Kennedy's civil rights bill and (2) Kennedy's proposal for an income tax cut. The latter measure sparked an increase in jobs, consumer spending, and a long period of economic expansion in the sixties.

The War on Poverty

Michael Harrington's best-selling book on poverty, *The Other America* (1962), helped to focus national attention on the 40 million Americans still living in poverty. Johnson responded by declaring in 1964 an "unconditional war on poverty." The Democratic Congress gave the president almost everything that he asked by creating the **Office of Economic Opportunity** (OEO) and providing this antipoverty agency with a billion-dollar budget. The OEO sponsored a wide variety of self-help programs for the poor, such as (1) **Head Start** for preschoolers, (2) the **Job Corps** for vocational education, (3) literacy programs, and (4) legal services. The controversial Community Action Program allowed the poor to run antipoverty programs in their own neighborhoods.

Like the New Deal, some of Johnson's programs produced results, while others did not. Nevertheless, before being cut back to pay for the far more costly Vietnam War, the War on Poverty did significantly reduce the number of American families living in poverty.

The Election of 1964

Johnson and his running mate, Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, went into the 1964 election with a clearly liberal agenda. In contrast, the Republicans nominated a staunch conservative, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, who advocated ending the welfare state, including TVA and Social Security. A TV ad by the Democrats pictured Goldwater as a dangerous extremist, who would be quick to involve the United States in nuclear war.

Johnson won the election by a landslide, taking **61% of the popular vote** (This is the highest percentage of the popular vote ever won by a president!) - a higher figure than FDR's landslide of 1936. In addition, Democrats now controlled both houses of Congress by better than a two-thirds margin. A Democratic president and Congress were in a position to pass the economic and social reforms originally proposed by President Truman in the 1940s.

Great Society Reforms

The list of Johnson's legislative achievements in 1965 and 1966 is long and includes new programs that would affect U.S. society to the end of the century:

- Medicare, a health insurance program for those 65 and older
- Medicaid, government-paid health care for the poor and disabled
- the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, providing aid especially to poor school districts
- a new immigration law, abolishing the discriminatory quotas based on national origins passed in the 1920s and greatly increasing opportunities for Asians and Latin Americans to emigrate to the United States
- the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities, providing federal funding for worth creative and scholarly projects
- two new cabinet departments: the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- increased funding for higher education
- increased funding for public housing and crime prevention

Congress also passed programs to regulate the automobile industry, in response to Ralph Nader's book *Unsafe at Any Speed* (1965). Clean air and water laws were enacted in part as a response to Rachel Carson's exposé of pesticides, *Silent Spring* (1962). First lady Lady Bird Johnson contributed to improving the environment with her Beautify America campaign.

Evaluating the Great Society.

Johnson's Great Society had been criticized for its unrealistic promises to eliminate poverty and for creating a centralized welfare state that was inefficient and very costly. On the other hand, defenders of his domestic policy point out that it gave vitally needed assistance to millions of Americans who had previously been forgotten or ignored - the poor, the disabled, and the elderly. ***Johnson would hurt his peaceful War on Poverty by escalating a real war in Vietnam - a war that resulted in higher taxes and inflation.***

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AND 1965 (these were LBJ's greatest domestic achievements!)

Ironically, a southern president succeeded in persuading Congress to enact the most important civil rights laws since Reconstruction. Even before the 1964 election, Johnson managed to persuade both a majority of Democrats and some Republicans in Congress to pass the **1964 Civil Rights Act, which made segregation illegal [ends Jim Crow] in all public facilities**, including hotels and restaurants, and gave the federal government additional powers to enforce school desegregation. This act also set up the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to end racial discrimination in employment. Also in 1964, the **Twenty-fourth Amendment** was ratified. **It abolished the practice of collecting a poll tax**, one of the measures that, for decades, had discouraged poor persons from voting.

In 1965, the brutality in Selma, Alabama, against the voting rights marches led by Martin Luther King moved the Congress to pass the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**. **This act ended literacy tests** and provided federal registrars in areas in which blacks were kept from voting. The impact was most dramatic in the Deep South, where African Americans could vote for the first time since the Reconstruction era.

Civil Rights and Conflict

The Civil Rights movement gained momentum during the Kennedy and Johnson presidencies. A



very close election in 1960 influenced President Kennedy not to press the issue of civil rights, lest he alienate white voters. But the defiance of the governors of Alabama and Mississippi to federal court rulings on integration forced a showdown. In 1962, **James Meredith**, a young African American air force veteran, attempted to enroll in the University of Mississippi. A federal court guaranteed his right to attend. Supporting Meredith and the court order, Kennedy sent in 400 federal marshals and 3000 troops to control mob violence and protect

Meredith's right to attend class.

A similar incident occurred in Alabama in 1963. **Governor George Wallace** tried to stop an African American student from entering the University of Alabama. [He stated, "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."] Once again, President Kennedy sent troops to the scene, and the student was admitted.



The Leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Throughout the Deep South, civil rights activists and freedom riders who traveled through the South registering African Americans to vote and integrating public places were met with beatings, bombings, and murder by white extremists. Recognized nationally as the leader of the civil rights movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., remained committed to nonviolent protests against segregation. In 1963, he and his followers were jailed in Birmingham, Alabama, for what local authorities judged to be an illegal march. The jailing of King, however, proved to be a milestone in the civil rights movement because most Americans believed King to have been jailed unjustly. From his jail cell, King wrote an essay, "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," in which he argued:

... We need emulate neither the "do-nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle ...

One day the south will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nations back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence ...

The episode moved Kennedy to support a tougher civil rights bill.

March on Washington (1963).

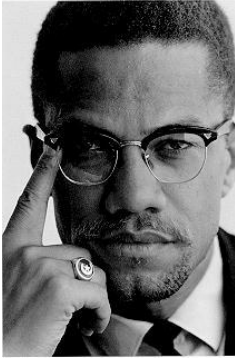
In August 1963, King led one of the largest and most successful demonstrations in U.S. history. About 200,000 blacks and whites took part in the peaceful March on Washington in support of the civil rights bill. The highlight of the demonstration was Dr. King's impassioned "I Have a Dream" speech, which appealed for the end of racial prejudice and ended with everyone in the crowd singing "We Shall Overcome."



March to Montgomery (1965)

When a voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1965 was met with police beatings, President Johnson sent in the troops to protect Dr. King and other civil rights demonstrators. Johnson also sponsored a powerful voting rights bill. Nevertheless, young African Americans were losing patience with the slow progress toward equality and the continued violence against their people by white extremists.

Black Muslims and Malcolm X



Seeking a new cultural identity based on Africa and Islam, the Black Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad preached black nationalism, separatism, and self-improvement. The movement had already attracted thousands of followers by the time a young man serving a prison sentence became a convert and adopted the name Malcolm X. Leaving prison in 1952, Malcolm X acquired a reputation as the movement's most controversial voice. He criticized King as "an Uncle Tom" (subservient to whites) and advocated self-defense - using black violence to counter white violence. He eventually left the Black Muslims to found a more conciliatory Organization of Afro-American Unity, but before he could pursue his ideas, he was assassinated by black opponents in 1965. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* remains an engaging testimony to one man's development from a petty criminal into a major leader.

Black Power and Race Riots

The radicalism of Malcolm X influenced the thinking of young blacks in civil rights organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Stokely Carmichael, the chairman of SNCC, repudiated nonviolence and advocated "black power" (especially economic power) and racial separatism. In 1966, the Black Panthers were organized by **Huey Newton, Bobby Seale**, and other militants as a revolutionary socialist movement advocating self-rule for American blacks.

Riots.

The Panthers' frequently shouted slogans - "Get whitey" and "Burn baby, burn" - made whites suspect that black extremists and revolutionaries were behind the race riots that erupted in black neighborhoods of major cities from 1964 through 1968. In the summer of 1965, for example, riots in the Watts section of Los Angeles resulted in the deaths of 34 people and the destruction of over 700 buildings. There is little evidence, however, that the Black Power movement was responsible for the violence. A federal investigation of the many riots, the **Kerner Commission**, concluded in late 1968 that racism and segregation were chiefly responsible and that the United States was becoming "two societies, one black one white - separate and unequal." By the mid-sixties, the issue of civil rights had spread far beyond *de jure* segregation practiced under the law in the South and now included the *de facto* segregation and discrimination caused by racist attitudes in the North and West.

Murder in Memphis.

Martin Luther King, Jr. received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, but his nonviolent approach was under increasing pressure from all sides. His effort to use peaceful marches in urban centers of the North, such as Chicago, met with little success. King also broke with President Johnson over the Vietnam War because that war was beginning to drain money from social programs. In April 1968, the nation again went into shock over the news that King, while standing on a motel balcony in Memphis, Tennessee, had been shot and killed by a white man. Massive riots erupted in 168 cities across the country, leaving at least 46 people dead. The violence did not reflect the ideals of the murdered leader, but it did reveal the anger and frustrations among African Americans in both the North and the South. [*the term "long hot summers" refers to these riots of the 1960s*]



(CNN)

The Warren Court and Individual Rights

As Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from 1953 to 1969, **Earl Warren** had an impact on the nation comparable to that of John Marshall in the early 1800s. Warren's decision in the desegregation case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) was by far the most important case of the 20th century involving race relations. Then in the 1960s, the Warren Court made a series of decisions that had a profound effect on the criminal justice system, the political system of the states, and the definition of individual rights. Before Warren's tenure as chief justice, the Supreme Court had concentrated on protecting property rights. During and after his tenure, the Court shifted its attention to cases involving the protection of individual rights.

Criminal Justice

Among the many decisions of the Warren Court concerning a defendant's rights, these were most important:

- ◆ *Mapp v. Ohio* (1961) ruled that illegally seized evidence cannot be used in court against the accused
- ◆ *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963) required that state courts provide counsel (services of an attorney) for indigent (poor) defendants
- ◆ *Escobedo v. Illinois* (1964) required the police to inform an arrested person of his or her right to remain silent
- ◆ *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966) extended the ruling in *Escobedo* to include the right to a lawyer being present during questioning by the police.

Reapportionment

Before 1962, it was common for at least one house of a state legislature (usually the state senate) to be based upon the drawing of district lines that strongly favored rural areas to the disadvantage of large cities. The Warren Court's decision in the landmark case of *Baker v. Carr* (1962) declared such practices to be unconstitutional. In *Baker* and later cases, the Court established the principle of "one man, one vote", meaning that that election districts would have to be redrawn to provide equal representation for all of a state's citizens.

Freedom of Expression and Privacy

Other rulings by the Warren Court extended the rights mentioned in the First Amendment to protect the radical actions of demonstrators and students and to permit greater latitude under freedom of the press, to ban religious activities from public schools, and to guarantee adults' rights to use contraceptives.

- ◆ *Yates v. United States* (1957) said that the First Amendment protected radical and revolutionary speech, even by Communists, unless it was a "clear and present danger" to the safety of the country.
- ◆ *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) ruled that state laws requiring prayers and Bible readings in the public schools violated the First Amendment's provision for separation of church and state.
- ◆ *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) ruled that, in recognition of a citizen's right to privacy, a state could not prohibit the use of contraceptives by adults. (This privacy case provided the foundation for later cases establishing a woman's right to an abortion.)

The Warren Court's defense of the rights of unpopular groups and of the freedoms of accused "criminals" provoked a storm of controversy. Critics even called for the impeachment of Earl Warren. Both supporters and critics, however, could agree that the decisions of the Warren Court caused a profound and pervasive revolution in the interpretation of constitutional rights.

Social Revolutions and Cultural Movements

In the early and mid-1960s, various liberal groups began to identify with blacks' struggle against oppressive controls and laws. The first such group to rebel against established authority were college and university students.

Student Movement and the New Left

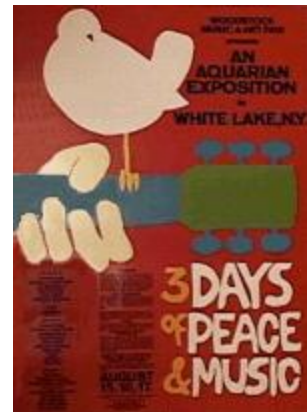
In 1962, at a meeting of the newly formed **Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)** in Port Huron, Michigan, a group of radical students led by **Tom Hayden** issued a declaration of purposes known as the **Port Huron Statement**. It called for university decisions to be made through *participatory democracy* (slogan of the New Left) so that students would have a voice in decisions affecting their lives. Activists and intellectuals who supported Hayden's ideas became known as the **New Left**.

The first major student protest took place in 1964 on the Berkeley campus of the University of California. Calling their cause the Free Speech Movement, Berkeley students demanded an end to university restrictions on students' political activities. By the mid-1960s, students across the country were protesting a variety of university rules, including those against drinking and dorm visits by members of the opposite sex. They also demanded a greater voice in the government of the university. Student demonstrations grew with the escalation of the Vietnam War. Hundreds of campuses were disrupted or closed down by antiwar protests.

The most radical fringe of the SDS, known as the **Weathermen**, embraced violence and vandalism in their attacks on American institutions. In the eyes of most Americans, the Weathermen's extremist acts and language discredited the early idealism of the New Left.

Counterculture

The political protests of the New Left went hand in hand with a new counterculture that was expressed by young people in rebellious styles of dress, music, drug use, and, for some, communal living. The apparent dress code of the "hippies" and "flower children" of the sixties included long hair, beards, beads, and jeans. The folk music of Joan Baez and Bob Dylan gave voice to the younger generation's protests, while the rock and roll music of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Jim Morrison, and Janis Joplin provided the beat and lyrics for the counterculture. As a result of experimenting with hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD, some young people became addicts and destroyed their lives. In 1969, they had one final fling at the **Woodstock Music Festival** in upper New York State. This gathering of thousands of "hippies" reflected the zenith of the counterculture. The movement's excesses and the economic uncertainties of the times led to its demise in the 1970s.



In retrospect. The generation of baby boomers that came of age in the 1960s believed fervently in the ideals of a democratic society. They hoped to slay the dragons of unresponsive authority, poverty, racism, and war. Unfortunately, many became impatient in their idealistic quest and turned to radical solutions and self-destructive behavior. Their methods tarnished their own democratic values and discredited their cause in the eyes of older Americans.

Sexual Revolution

One aspect of the counterculture that continued beyond the 1960s was a change in many Americans' attitudes toward sexual expression. Traditional beliefs about sexual conduct had originally been challenged in the late 1940s and 1950s by the pioneering surveys of sexual practice conducted by **Alfred Kinsey**. His research indicated that premarital sex, marital infidelity, and homosexuality were more common than anyone had suspected. Medicine (antibiotics for venereal disease) and technology (the introduction of the birth control pill in 1960) also played a role in tempting people to engage in casual sex with a number of partners. Moreover, overtly sexual themes in advertisements, popular magazines, and movies made sex appear to be just one more consumer product.

How deeply the so-called sexual revolution changed the behavior of the majority of Americans is open to question. There is little doubt, however, that the new mores weakened the earlier restrictions on premarital sex, contraception, abortion, and homosexuality. Later, in the 1980s, there was a general reaction against the loosened moral codes as a result of an increase in illegitimate births, especially among teenagers, an increase of crimes of rape and sexual abuse, and the deadly outbreak of AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome).

The Women's Movement

Increased education and employment of women in the 1950s, the civil rights movement, and the sexual revolution all contributed to a renewal of the women's movement in the 1960s. **Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique*** (1963) gave the movement a new direction by encouraging middle-class women to seek fulfillment in professional careers rather than confining themselves to the roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. In 1966, Friedan helped to found the **National Organization for Women (NOW)**, which adopted the activist tactics of other civil rights movements to secure equal treatment of women. By this time, Congress had already enacted two antidiscriminatory laws: the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These measures prohibited discrimination in employment and compensation on the basis of gender.



Campaign for the ERA. Feminists' greatest legislative victory was achieved in 1972 when Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). This proposed constitutional amendment stated: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." Although NOW and other groups campaigned hard for the ratification of the ERA, it **just missed acceptance by the required 38 states**. It was defeated in the 1970s in part because of a growing conservative reaction to radical feminists.

Achievements. Even without the ERA, the women's movement accomplished fundamental changes in employment and hiring practices. In increasing numbers, women moved into professions previously dominated by men: business, law, medicine, and politics. Although a majority of professionals in the 1990s were still men, American society of the late 20th century was gradually becoming less and less of a "man's world."