**GCSE HISTORY; UNIT 1 America 1920-1973 ; Post-war America**

**STUDY GUIDE**



**NAME;**

**American Society and the economy after 1945**

**Prosperity and Consumerism:** Rapid economic growth provided a comfortable lifestyle for many Americans. USA producing ½ the world’s goods – benefitted from World war Two.

***‘The American Dream’:*** By 1960 living standard of the average American = 3 x that of the average British person.

* New suburbs - the car - spending rather than saving was the norm
* Hire purchase allowed buying of luxuries - modern conveniences in most homes

Compared to 1920s, wealth was spread further down social scale but still some excluded.

**Popular culture**: Dominated by TV, radio and cinema. Films made at this time reflect the confidence and optimism of the time.

1. Teenagers: Had more leisure time and spending money than before…..spend on own styles and culture. By 1950s some rebellion (reflected and encouraged in movies: James Dean/ Marlon Brando.
2. Rock ‘n’ Roll: Reflected teenage rebellion. Singers like Elvis Presley shocked parents, loved by fans
3. TV: 1948: 0.4% households owned a TV, by 1958: 83%. Dominated by commercial stations and advertising encouraged yet more spending. Most programmes entertaining (soap operas, quiz shows) but national news channels also developing.

**POSITIVES FOR THE USA:**

* American GNP grew from $318 billion in 1950 to $488 billion by 1960. Average incomes were double those of the 1920s.
* For the majority of Americans, the 1950s were a prosperous decade.
* Higher wages bought material comforts.
* By 1960, 60% of Americans owned their own homes, 75% owned cars and 87% owned at least one TV
* Between 1954-1950 five million houses were built
* Wages rose, hours fell. Real wages grew
* There was a shift from blue to white collared work
* Over the 1950s, the number of industrial workers fell from 39% to 36% of the workforce, where clerical workers rose from 40% to 46%
* New types of music, rock and roll, and the rise of the teenager created a huge market for goods
* Credit cards were introduced
* Leisure activities grew, sports were televised
* Communications developed – people were more mobile
* TV had a huge impact on popular culture

***Q1. Use the information on the previous page to add branches onto the diagram, then colour-code them SOCIAL and ECONOMIC;***

**THE USA AFTER WW2 - POSITIVES**

**McCarthyism**

The Red Scare of the 1920s had not gone away. By the late 1940s US fear of communism continued and there was a sense that the American values of democracy and freedom were under threat. In the post war world, the USSR had strengthened the grip of communism to all of Eastern Europe and in 1949 China fell to communism.

**House Committee of Un-American Activities** (HCUA) est. by Congress to investigate communist involvement in government, education and film industry. Fears peaked 1950 (Korean War).

Senator Joe McCarthy started campaign against possible communists – ‘Reds under the beds’ – claimed many working secretly in govt. People called to ‘prove’ their loyalty. Some put on trial (reminiscent of witch-hunts of 17th century).

Eventually McCarthy investigated and exposed as bully with little to back up his accusations. But had helped create anti-communist hysteria. Had important supporters e.g. J Edgar Hoover (FBI) who kept files on 1million suspects.

Throughout 1952 and 1953 McCarthy extended his own investigations and turned his committee into a weapon to increase his own personal power and terrify others/ His methods mainly involved false accusations and bullying. He targeted high-profile figures and accused anyone who criticised him of being a Communist.

**The ‘witch hunts’**

McCarthy claimed that General George Marshall, the American general most admired by Winston Churchill and the author of the Marshall Plan which gave US economic aid to Europe after the Second World War), was at the centre of a gigantic conspiracy against the USA. President Eisenhower did virtually nothing to protect his great friend Marshall from these accusations because he didn’t want to clash with McCarthy.

Thousands of others found their lives and careers ruined by the witch hunt. False accusations led to their being ‘blacklisted’ which meant that they could not work. Over 100 university lecturers were fired as their universities came under pressure from McCarthy. The HUAC ‘blacklisted’ 324 Hollywood personalities. Studio bosses such as Walt Disney, Jack Warner and Louis Mayer supported the HUAC and refused to employ anyone who was suspected of having Communist sympathies. They also did their bit to raise the temperature further by producing science-fiction films such as Invasion of the Body Snatchers, which fed the hysteria by introducing the threat of alien invaders- which was clearly supposed to represent the Communist threat to the USA.

When he started attacking powerful men within the Armed Forces, he was accused of making stories up and was ridiculed in court.

***Q2. Fill in the profile below, research for extra information on the Internet;***

|  |
| --- |
| **JOSEPH McCARTHY** |
| BACKGROUND/EARLY LIFE |
| WHAT DID HE SAY ABOUT THE COMMUNIST THREAT TO AMERICA? |
| HOW DID THIS AFFECT THE USA? (McCARTHYISM) |
| **HOW HAD THE *INTERNATIONAL SITUATION* HELPED TO ENCOURAGE McCARTHYISM?** |

**Racial Tensions and development of the Civil Rights Movement**

Racial prejudice common between wars and continued after World War Two despite black contribution to war effort.

**Segregation laws**

* Many Southern states continued to enforce segregation or ‘Jim Crow’ laws –separate public facilities for blacks and whites
* Blacks had right to vote but often didn’t as they were intimidated from registering to vote – violence/ literacy tests etc.
* Judiciary was white and juries all white – very hard for blacks to achieve justice.
* Discrimination in employment e.g. white teachers earned 30% more than black teachers in South.
* Best universities closed to blacks.

**Struggle for Equal Education**

For decades it was legal for blacks and whites to be educated separately and supposedly equally, but usually black schools poorly funded.

1954: NAACP challenged the legality of separate education in a case that was heard by the Supreme Court – Brown vs Board of Education. The SC ruled against separate education (said it was not possible for separate education to be equal it created sense of inferiority in black students). SC ordered South to integrate schools but there was fierce resistance for years,

***Little Rock Arkansas 1957***

IN 1957 the SC ordered Gov. Faubus of Arkansas to let 9 black students attend a white high school in Little Rock. Faubus ordered state troops to help prevent the black students entering the school. Mobs met the 9 students as they tried to attend school. Pres. Eisenhower had to send federal troops to protect the students and enable them to attend school.

**Martin Luther King and peaceful protest**

**Montgomery bus boycott (1955-56):** Rosa Parks, CR activist, wanted to challenge segregation laws on Montgomery buses. Arrested for not giving up her seat to white person. Activists formed MIA (Montgomery Improvement Association) which organised bus boycott (MLK as leader). Bus company lost 65% income. Significant intimidation of protesters. Dec 56: SC declared Montgomery bus laws illegal. Victory for non-violent direct action.

**Direct Action 1956-64**

* Southern Christian Leadership Conference **(SCLC)** established by MLK
* Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating committee **(SNCC)** est. by students
* Congress for Racial Equality **(CORE)** est. by James Farmer
1. **Sit-ins:** 1960 Greeensboro, N Carolina, Students staged a sit-in at a Woolworth’s lunch counter (white only). SNCC spread the tactic to other towns. By end of 1960 lunch counters desegregated in 126 cities.
2. **Freedom Rides 1961:** CORE organised white and black activists to ride buses sat next to each other – as many states not obeying orders to desegregate buses. When buses arrived in South, often met by violent mobs and police did little to help activists. JFK had to step in to insist State Governor Patterson of Alabama, protested the riders.
3. **March on Washington 1963:** MLK and other organisations staged a march of 200,000 blacks and 50,000 whites on Washington. Aim = to put pressure on JFK to pass a civil rights bill to end all public segregation. MLK gave his famous ‘I have a Dream’ speech – huge public impact.

**Civil Rights Act 1964;** JFK became increasingly committed to tackling civil rights inequality as a result of the many protests. Before he was killed he started to push through Congress a civil rights bill. The new President Johnson made sure that the bill became law in July 1964.

***The Civil Rights Act effectively outlawed segregation in public places.***

Attention then shifted to ensure black people had **equal rights to vote.**

Selma 1965: Voting rights march organised by MLK. 15,000 black population old enough to vote. Only 335 registered to vote! Marchers brutally attacked (as expected) by police. Media called it ‘Bloody Sunday’. MLK cut short march (to anger of some more radical activists) but helped convince President to push through…….

**The Voting Rights Act 1965**

Ended all tests and discrimination against people trying to register to voter (e.g. outlawed literacy tests). Effect was immediate and black voters started to have an impact on electing black officials.

**Civil Rights Act 1968**

Made it illegal to rent or sell houses on the grounds of race, religion, national origin or sex.

**Malcolm X and the Black Power movement**

Not all blacks were supportive of non-violent direct action. Black nationalists felt a more confrontational response was justified and that equality was not the aim, but separation was.

* Nation of Islam attracted support. Powerful speaker for the movement in the early 60s was Malcolm X – critical of MLK’s methods. Demanded blacks have their own state. Malcolm X was killed in 1965.
* SNCC became more radical after 1966 under Stokely Carmichael. Wanted ‘Black Power’
* Black Panthers: 2,000 members almost like a private army. For armed struggle for equal rights. Clashed with police (9 killed 67-69).

**Race riots 1965-67**

Just after the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Act were passed, widespread race riots in northern and Western cities (never had segregation). Years of discrimination and poverty meant cities divided by race. Poor relations with (white) police….an outburst of anger. Worst rioting in Watts LA.

**Impact of Black Power?**

* Publicised disillusionment of many blacks
* Raised awareness of issues of social and economic inequality outside of the South.
* Alienated some white support (support of government)
* Gave excuse for police to crack down on activists.

**Assassination of Martin Luther King 1968**Killed. Probably by a hired killer. Achievements include CR Act and the end of segregation in the South. Black civil rights now legal. BUT racist attitudes remained……

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PEACEFUL CASE STUDIES - ACHIEVEMENTS/FAILURES** | **VIOLENT CASE STUDIES -ACHIEVEMENTS/FAILURES** |
| +- | +- |

***Q3. Which achieved more, peaceful protest or violent protest? Highlight successes and***

***failures and then fill in the table;***

1. **EISENHOWER;**

POLITICAL SOCIAL ECONOMIC

Eisenhower President 1953-61 Rise in popular culture – TV/radio GNP grew. Av income grew

Democratic Congress Leisure activities grew in popularity Half of govt spending

Congress rejected some of Ike’s Ghetto’s continued to decline on defence

Legislation Recessions

**America and the New Frontier/Great Society**

**JFK: 1961-63 Johnson 1963-1968 *Both Democrats***

1. **JFK;**

**AIMS OF NEW FRONTIER**

‘To get American moving again, wanted a domestically strong USA to fight against Communism, wanted to harness the enthusiasm of the American people, deal with civil rights issue, poverty, education, health and the economy.

“Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country”

**THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT CHANGES**

POLITICAL SOCIAL ECONOMIC

Active Conservatism against Increase in social security Increase in federal spending

Communism Minimum wage increased Tax cuts proposed

 Manpower development Trade Expansion Act cut tariffs

 and training Act 1962 Cut taxes for businesses

 Area Development Act 1961 Increase in spending on defence

 Higher Education Facilities NASA’s budget X2

 Act **Concentrated upon economic growth**

 Equal Pay Act – helped women

 Environmental Acts

1. **LBJ**

**AIMS OF GREAT SOCIETY**

GS a war on poverty and injustice. Was a devoted New Deal style Democrat.

The idea for GS came from Presidential speechmaker Richard Goodwin, influenced by Walter Lippman’s book; The Good Society. Main themes of GS; Preserve liberty, end poverty and racial injustice, balance distribution of wealth, create more individual opportunity.

**THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT CHANGES**

POLITICAL SOCIAL ECONOMIC

Civil Rights Act 1964 Education; Elementary & Sec Ed $10 billion on economic

Voting Rights Act 1965 Act - $1 billion for poor students poverty; Office Economic

granted political freedom. Higher Ed Act $650 million for Opportunity created.

Legislation rushed through scholarships. VISTA, Headstart, Job

using national grief. Housing/Urban Development $8 B Corps

Justice Dept could bring on using units, slum clearance etc. Tax cuts

suits against States. Environmental Acts. Minimum wage act.

 Medicare and Medicaid. Transportation Act.

**89th Congress *passed 60 pieces of legislation* (under LBJ - quickly passed through). But public support for reform didn’t last long. By 1966 Congress increasingly worried about degree of reform/cost.**

**JFK’s New Frontier programme tried to tackle social problems of the poor**

* Unemployment benefit extended - increases in social security
* more aid to poor areas (for housing and transport)

Johnson’s Great Society continued JFK’s work:

* The Economic Opportunity Act 1964:Training for disadvantaged youths /recruited volunteers to work in low-income areas
* Medicare and Medicaid 1965: provided medical insurance for over 65s and hospital care for the poor
* The Development Act 1964: Money provided to replace inner city slums

It was opposed by some Republicans who hated government interference and it did not solve all problems. Achievements lost as Johnson’s focus and money increasingly turned to Vietnam.

**How successful was the Great Society?**

**YES**

• Poverty declined; 1959 – 40 million, 1968 – 25 million. $8 billion for the building of 3 million housing units. $1.2 billion in subsidies for slum clearance, recreation facilities etc.

• The economy was strong - $10 billion tax cuts, low unemployment (5%), low inflation and GNP increased by 7% in 1964.

• Economic measures were successful; Head Start gave 8 million children child care places, freeing women up to work etc. The Community Action Programmes set up clinics etc. Job Corps developed training schemes for inner city youths – and grants were given to rural areas too. Transport was improved in the inner cities too.

• The Elementary and Secondary Education Act gave $1 billion for poor students. The Higher Education Act provided $650 million for scholarships – helping 11 million students.

• Environmental issues were tackled – preservation of national parks, endangered species and anti-pollution.

• Health and Safety/consumer protection was developed.

• Medical care was provided for 20% of US society – Medicaid and Medicare. $6.5 billion dollars spent on hospitals, nurses, doctors and medical tests.

**NO**

• Receivers of welfare resented federal intrusion. Middle classes resented paying for welfare of others. The GS raised expectations too high that poverty could be defeated. Many measures were rushed through too quickly – without a realisation of the scale and size of the problem.

• Money was spent on the wrong things. GS estimated to cost (not including Medical care) $1.4 billion in 1966 – rising to $6.5 billion in 1968 and $10.4 billion in 1970. But overall no more than $2 billion spent p.a. due to VIETNAM.

• There were discipline problems of the Job Corps programmes with youths

• CAP and Head Start got caught up in local politics and ethnic conflicts.

• Local school boards decided where the money was allocated and often sent cash to middle class schools rather than the poor.

• Medicare cost much more than expected; $40 billion in 1965, $125 billion in 1975 and $400 billion in 1985. Also many people had better access to health care previously under the system of charity.

• Many groups were left out by the GS – as the emphasis was upon ‘opportunity’ many social groups could not take advantage of opportunities, i.e. the old, disabled etc.

• LBJ would not change the existing system – to re-distribute wealth properly through taxation.

***Q4. Fill in the grid on the New Frontier/Great Society, using the previous information on the New Frontier and Great Society;***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **New Frontier –** **J F Kennedy** | **POLITICAL**SuccessesFailures | **SOCIAL**SuccessesFailures | **ECONOMIC**SuccessesFailures |
| **Great Society –****L B Johnson** | **POLITICAL**SuccessesFailures | **SOCIAL**SuccessesFailures | **ECONOMIC**SuccessesFailures |

**The Feminist Movement**

Women had achieved right to vote in 1920. 2 x World wars had changed the number and roles of working women but *still in 1950s the main social attitude was that a married woman’s place was in the home.*

1960s decade for change in women’s rights (alongside civil rights).

1963:’ The Feminist Mystique’ by Betty Friedan was a starting point for the feminist movement – said home was ‘like a concentration camp’ that many women wanted to break out of.

* **National Organisation for Women (NOW), 1966;** Est. by Friedan.
* Fight for equal pay: After protests **Equal Pay Act** passed in 1963. But still campaigning in 1972 as women’s pay only 72% of men’s- legislation not fully effective.
* **Roe vs Wade 1973**: Supreme Court made abortion legal, outlawing many state laws which banned abortion
* **Supreme Court Ruling 1972**: Ruled contraception should be available to unmarried couples on same basis as married couples.
* **Equal Rights Amendment 1972:** Very controversial. Passed by Congress but never ratified by the necessary number of States. Backlash from more traditional women.

***Q5. Plot the changes for women on the graph below and justify why for each one;***

**No change**

**Big change**

**1972**

**1963**

**1963**

**1966**

**1973**

**19723**

***Q6. Complete the following exam questions;***

In what ways were the **lives of American women** affected by the development of **feminist movements** in the **1960s and the early 1970s**? Explain your answer. 8 Marks.

TIPS:

* Mention NOW and Betty Friedan
* Mention the changes in American Law

**Which** of the following was the more **important reason why poverty decreased** in America during the **1950s and 1960s?**

* The economic boom
* The New Frontier/Great Society 12 Marks.

TIPS:

* 2 paragraphs and a summary
* Describe how good/affluent the economy was in America, give examples
* Describe the successes of the NF/GS
* Analyse both to show there were also failures in the economy AND in the NF/GS
* Say which was more important