

The 1950s: Affluence and the Atomic Age

- I. People of plenty
  - A. The postwar economy
    - 1. Dramatic growth of the economy
    - 2. Reasons for growth
      - a. Military spending
      - b. Automation
      - c. Consumer demand
    - 3. The GI Bill of Rights
      - a. Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944
      - b. GI Bill democratized higher education
    - 4. The baby boom and its effects
  - B. Consumer culture
    - 1. Home construction boom
      - a. Appliances
      - b. The television
    - 2. Increased purchasing
      - a. Black and white wage comparisons
      - b. Role of advertising
      - c. Credit versus saving
      - d. Shopping centers
  - C. Suburban frontier
    - 1. Urban growth
      - a. Most population growth was urban and suburban
      - b. Rise of sunbelt
      - c. Suburbia
    - 2. Reasons for suburban growth
      - a. Levittown and mass production
      - b. Low-cost loans
      - c. Automobiles and highways
      - d. Racial considerations
    - 3. The great black migration
- II. A conforming culture
  - A. Corporate life

- 1. Middle-class conformity
  - 2. Growth of big business
- B. Women's "place"
- C. Religious nation
  - 1. Americans as joiners
  - 2. Increase in church membership
  - 3. Other reasons for religious revival
    - a. Patriotism
    - b. The message of popular religion
- III. Alienation and liberation
  - A. Social criticism
    - 1. Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*
    - 2. Keats's *The Crack in the Picture Window*
    - 3. Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*
    - 4. Mills's *White Collar Society*
  - B. The stage—Miller's *Death of a Salesman*
  - C. Representative novelists
  - D. Painting
    - 1. Edward Hopper
    - 2. Jackson Pollock
  - E. The Beats
    - 1. Leading figures
    - 2. Their philosophy and works
    - 3. Their influence
- IV. Youth culture
  - A. Teens as consumers and conformists
  - B. Delinquency
  - C. Rock and roll
    - 1. Alan Freed
    - 2. Elvis Presley
    - 3. Naysayers
- V. Eisenhower's rise to the presidency
  - A. "Time for a change" from the Truman administration
  - B. Republicans in 1952
  - C. Democrats in 1952
  - D. The election of 1952

- 1. Eisenhower wins landslide victory
- 2. Victory for Republicans
  - a. In South
  - b. In New Deal Coalition
- 3. Except for presidency, Democrats fare well in 1952
- E. Eisenhower's career before 1952
- F. Eisenhower's leadership style
- VI. Eisenhower's "dynamic conservatism"
  - A. Cutbacks in New Deal programs
  - B. Endurance of the New Deal
    - 1. Extended the coverage of the Social Security Act
    - 2. Farm-related programs
    - 3. Public works
      - a. St. Lawrence Seaway
      - b. Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956
- VII. The Korean peace talks
  - A. Continuing deadlock in early 1953
  - B. Aerial bombardment and secret threats used to obtain agreement
  - C. Negotiations move quickly to armistice
- VIII. The end of McCarthyism
  - A. McCarthy still strong after 1952
  - B. Attack on the U.S. Army
  - C. Televised hearings lead to McCarthy's downfall
  - D. Eisenhower's concern for internal security
    - 1. No clemency for the Rosenbergs
    - 2. Executive order allowed firing of "security risk" government workers
  - E. The Warren Court and the Red Scare
- IX. Foreign policy in Eisenhower's first term
  - A. John Foster Dulles and foreign policy
    - 1. Dulles's worldview
    - 2. Dulles and containment
      - a. Liberation
      - b. No significant departure from containment
      - c. "Massive retaliation"
      - d. "Brinkmanship"
  - B. Indochina

- 1. European colonies in Asia
  - a. Independence for British colonies
  - b. Indonesian independence
  - c. Ho Chi Minh's efforts for Indochinese independence
- 2. First Indochina War
  - a. Conflict between Ho and Bao Dai
  - b. Increased American aid for French and Bao Dai
  - c. French defeat at Dien Bien Phu
- 3. The Geneva Accords
  - a. Proposed to unify Vietnam after elections in 1956
  - b. American response—the establishment of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)
  - c. U.S. backing for South Vietnam
- 4. Rise of Ngo Dinh Diem
  - a. Installed as Vietnamese premier by the French
  - b. Diem's corrupt and oppressive regime
  - c. Refuses to sanction elections in 1956
  - d. Viet Cong begin attacks on Diem regime
- C. Red China
  - 1. Chinese artillery begin shelling of Quemoy and Matsu
  - 2. Navy leaks word that the United States was considering destroying Red Chinese military strength
  - 3. Attacks cease
- X. The election of 1956
- XI. Foreign crises in the election year
  - A. The Middle East
    - 1. Failure of the Middle East Treaty Organization
    - 2. Suez Canal
      - a. Egyptian government orders the British out of Egypt
      - b. Israel, France, and Britain begin military attacks on Egypt
      - c. America sides with Nasser
  - B. Communist repression in Hungary
    - 1. Hungary withdraws from the Warsaw Pact
    - 2. Russian troops force Hungary back into the Communist fold and execute Imre Nagy
- XII. Sputnik
  - A. Russia launches *Sputnik 1* (October 1957)
  - B. American responses
    - 1. Americans suddenly note apparent "missile gap"

- 2. Enlarged defense spending
- 3. NASA's creation
- 4. National Defense Education Act of 1958
- XIII. Problems abroad
  - A. Lebanon
    - 1. The Eisenhower Doctrine
    - 2. Leftist coup in Iraq
    - 3. United States invades Lebanon
  - B. Renewed confrontation between Chinese Communists and Nationalists
  - C. Khrushchev's blustering over West Berlin
  - D. The U-2 summit
    - 1. Russians shoot down American U-2 spy plane
    - 2. Eisenhower's response
    - 3. Khrushchev leaves the summit meeting
  - E. Cuba
    - 1. In his fight against the dictator Batista, Castro has American support
    - 2. Castro's movement toward dictatorship
    - 3. Eisenhower's reaction
- XIV. Civil rights in the 1950s
  - A. Eisenhower's ambiguous stance
  - B. The *Brown* decision (1954)
    - 1. "◆Separate but equal' has no place"
    - 2. Reactions
      - a. Eisenhower's reluctance
      - b. Token integration
      - c. Massive resistance
  - C. Montgomery bus boycott
    - 1. Rosa Parks arrested
    - 2. Martin Luther King Jr. organizes a bus boycott
    - 3. Federal courts rule against "separate but equal"
    - 4. Southern Christian Leadership Conference formed
    - 5. Centrality of black churches in the civil rights movement
  - D. Legislation
    - 1. Civil Rights Act of 1957
    - 2. Civil Rights Act of 1960
  - E. Little Rock

- 1. Arkansas governor Orval Faubus prevents black students from registering for high school
  - 2. Eisenhower orders military protection for students
  - 3. Faubus closes the high schools in Little Rock
  - 4. By 1960, massive resistance confined to Deep South
- XV. Assessing the Eisenhower presidency
  - A. Eisenhower's achievements and shortfalls
  - B. The farewell address