America in the Age of Civil Rights

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AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT
Following World War II, the United States experienced a struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil rights.
Objectives

• Define or describe the following terms:
  – Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955)
  – Civil Rights Act of 1965
  – Affirmative Action Program
  – Women’s Liberation Movement
  – American Indian Movement
Objectives

• Summarize the struggle for racial and gender equality that occurred in the United States in the postwar period

• Summarize the extension of civil rights that occurred in the United States in the postwar period
The Civil Rights Movement Emerges

• African Americans, Mexican Americans, American Indians and women all participated in the effort to achieve victory in World War II

• Following the war, political action movements began to achieve the same freedoms, rights, and opportunities for these groups that other Americans already enjoyed
The Civil Rights Movement Emerges

• The Reconstruction Era had held out promise to African Americans of equality with other citizens.

• After the Reconstruction Era ended, African Americans lost the right to vote in the South, and “Jim Crow” laws segregated blacks in many areas of public life.
The Impact of WWII and the Cold War

• The efforts of African Americans in World War II played an important role in leading President Truman to order the desegregation of the armed forces in 1948.

• Truman also ended discriminatory hiring practices in the federal government.
The Impact of WWII and the Cold War

• In 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African-American major league baseball player, when he was hired by the Brooklyn Dodgers.

• The Cold War made American leaders sensitive to criticisms that the U.S. was undemocratic, since it claimed to be the champion of the “free world”.

• Racism and discrimination hurt America’s image abroad.
The Impact of African-American Organizations

- The NAACP and Urban League were both founded in the first decade of the 20th century to promote equality for African Americans.
- The NAACP developed a strategy for achieving school desegregation by starting a series of court challenges to state laws that enforced segregation.
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)

• In 1896, African Americans had challenged segregation in the South
  – Homer Plessy, a mixed-race man, sat in a “white only” train car
  – When he was challenged by the train’s conductor, he was arrested for violating a Louisiana state law
  – In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of laws that separated whites and blacks, as long as the facilities were “separate but equal”
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)

- In 1953, the NAACP argued a case before the Supreme Court involving Linda Brown, an African-American student denied admission to an all-white public school near her home.

- The NAACP’s lawyers, led by Thurgood Marshall, claimed that segregated public schools denied African-American children the “equal protection” of the law under the Fourteenth Amendment.
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)

- They argued that the education received by African-American students was inferior, because it contained a hidden message that African-American students were not good enough to be schooled with white students.
- A unanimous Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional.
- The “separate-but-equal” doctrine had no place in public education.
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)

• The Court left the enforcement of the decision to the lower federal courts, which were instructed to see that local school districts carried out the desegregation order.

• With this decision, the Supreme Court overturned its decision in Plessy v. Ferguson, which had allowed racial segregation under the guise of “separate but equal.”
Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)

- Although it took many years before the decision was fully implemented, *Brown v. Board of Education* was the first step to racial equality in America.
- The decision showed that the Supreme Court was willing to become involved in a divisive social issue.
- Finally, the case illustrated how changing social, political, and economic conditions can affect Supreme Court decisions.
The Movement Gains Strength

• Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a young Atlanta minister who emerged as the leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-1950s

• Dr. King believed in non-violence as the best way to change the attitudes of racists
The Movement Gains Strength

- King carried out his resistance through civil disobedience
  - If the government passed an unjust law, King and others would oppose it with boycotts, picketing, sit-ins, marches, and demonstrations
Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955 – 1956)

- Rosa Parks, an African-American woman, refused to sit in the back of a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama.
- King went to Alabama and led the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
- Dr. King and his followers also conducted sit-ins at “whites only” lunch counters.
- In 1963, he was arrested in Birmingham, Alabama.
Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955 – 1956)

- While in jail, King wrote a letter which explained why African Americans could no longer wait for their rights.

Rosa Parks’ refusal to give up her seat on a bus is seen as a key point in the Civil Rights Movement.
“I Have A Dream” Speech

• In 1963, King delivered his famous “I Have A Dream” speech at the Lincoln Memorial as part of the March on Washington.
“I Have A Dream” Speech

• King spoke to a crowd of almost 250,000 people, and to millions of others watching on television

• The speech stirred the nation’s conscience by focusing attention on the problems faced by African Americans who were being deprived of their civil rights

• Speech
The Civil Rights Act of 1964

• In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson pushed through Congress a law that prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion or ethnic origin in hotels, restaurants, and places of employment doing business with the federal government.
• It also banned discrimination in employment.
• The act cut off federal aid to school districts with segregated schools.
The Civil Rights Act of 1964

• No longer could African Americans and other minorities be denied service based on the color of their skin
• The act barred discrimination by labor unions
• It also created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, with the power to file lawsuits on behalf of aggrieved workers
The Voting Rights Act of 1965

• Most African Americans in the South were still denied the right to vote through
  – poll taxes
  – literacy tests
  – fear of attack

• In 1965, Dr. King organized a march in Selma, Alabama, demanding the vote for African Americans
The Voting Rights Act of 1965

• When demonstrators were attacked along the march route, President Johnson introduced a Voting Rights Bill that ended poll taxes and suspended literacy tests if used to prevent people from voting.
Affirmative Action (1965)

• In 1965, President Johnson signed an order requiring employers and institutions with federal contracts to raise the number of minority and female employees to correct imbalances caused by past discrimination.

• The program had the effect of increasing participation of African Americans in college and the professions.
Rising African-American Militancy

• Despite the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, many African Americans believed the faster changes were needed.

• Some of these African Americans, known as militants, disagreed with King’s policy of non-violence.
Urban Violence (1965 – 1968)

- Starting in 1965, African-American anger over racism erupted in a series of riots that shook Northern cities three summers in a row.
- The climax of these disturbances occurred in the spring of 1968 after Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis.
- In cities across the nation, rioters smashed windows, overturned cars and started fires.
Urban Violence (1965 – 1968)

• A commission appointed by President Johnson blamed the violence on the lack of job opportunities, urban poverty, and racism.
The Black Power Movement

- This movement marked a turning point in black-white relations in the nation
- Some saw the movement as a positive and proactive force aimed at helping blacks achieve full equality
- Others saw it as a wedge that sought to separate whites and blacks

1968 Olympics: black power salute
The Black Power Movement

• Search for a new identity
  – In the late 1960s, many African Americans began to search for the roots of their cultural identity
  – They rejected imitating whites or being absorbed into American culture, believing that they should be proud of themselves and that “Black is Beautiful”
  – They developed distinctive styles like Afro haircuts and fashions based on African culture
The Black Power Movement

• Malcom X, a leading black Muslim, questioned King’s policy of non-violent resistance

• Malcom X believed that African Americans should meet violence with violence and should not depend on the goodness of white people

• He urged African Americans to obtain control of their own businesses and communities

• He was assassinated by rival Black Muslims in 1965
The Black Power Movement

• New groups challenged the leadership of non-violent organizations like the NAACP
  – The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) barred white participation
  – Black Muslims believed African Americans should form their own black state
  – Black Panthers demanded that reparations be given to the black community
The Emergence of New African-American Groups

- During this period, several new groups began to emerge alongside traditional ones.
  - Some were militant, while others demonstrated and sought changes to long-standing court policies.
The Emergence of New African-American Groups

- NAACP
  - Leaders:
    - W.E.B. Du Bois
    - Thurgood Marshall
  - Major Goals:
    - To achieve equality, especially through the use of legal court challenges
The Emergence of New African-American Groups

- National Urban League
  - Leader: Whitney Young
  - Major Goals: To end economic and social abuses of urban African Americans
The Emergence of New African-American Groups

• Black Muslims
  – Leader: Elijah Mohammed
  – Major Goals:
    ▪ To spread Islam, achieve black self-sufficiency, and form a separate Black nation
The Emergence of New African-American Groups

• Southern Christian Leadership Conference
  – Leaders:
    ▪ Dr. Martin Luther King
    ▪ Ralph Abernathy
  – Major Goals:
    ▪ To end segregation through civil disobedience and non-violent protests
The Emergence of New African-American Groups

- Black Panthers
  - Leader: Huey Newton
  - Major Goals:
    - To help poor blacks and halt police abuse, and obtain reparations from “White America”
The Emergence of New African-American Groups

- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
  - Leaders:
    - Stokely Carmichael
    - H. Rap Brown
  - Major Goals:
    - Register African-American voters in the South, use freedom riders to challenge segregation laws, achieve self-reliance in the black community
The Women’s Liberation Movement

• Despite having achieved the right to vote with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, women’s progress towards gaining equality had been slow.
The Women’s Liberation Movement

• The term Women’s Liberation Movement is often used synonymously with the terms Feminist Movement or radical feminism.
  – Both have sometimes have been characterized as a threat to men.
  – However, they are primarily focused on how society can eliminate unfair gender roles.
The Women’s Liberation Movement is Born

• Many women were dissatisfied in their role as mothers and housewives

• In the 1960s, there were no women bus drivers, welders, firefighters, news anchors, CEOs, or Supreme Court Justices

• Women sought careers and the ability to earn as much as men did
The Women’s Liberation Movement is Born

• Unlike the earlier movement that had focused on voting rights, the Women’s Liberation Movement sought to achieve full equality in the workplace and in society at large.

• Movement leaders such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem applied similar methods used in the Civil Rights Movement.
The Women’s Liberation Movement is Born

- In 1963, Friedan wrote *The Feminine Mystique*
  - Her book challenged the belief that suburban housewives were happy keeping their homes clean and preparing dinner for their families
  - She wrote that women were as capable as men and should be permitted to compete for the same job
The Women’s Liberation Movement is Born

- Her book became an overnight sensation, while creating a social revolution
- She dispelled the idea that all women wanted to live as happy homemakers
- Her book is credited with spurring a wave of feminism in the United States
National Organization for Women

• In 1966, Friedan helped form the National Organization for Women (NOW), which became the chief voice of the Women’s Liberation Movement

• NOW does electoral and lobbying work, bringing lawsuits, and organizes mass marches, rallies, and pickets

• NOW helped organize support for the Equal Rights Amendment
In 1995, NOW organized a mass demonstration to focus on the issue of violence against women.

NOW was able to bring about many important changes for women.

They achieved victories in regard to basic rights, domestic issues and their ability to get better job opportunities for women in the workplace.
Impact of the Women’s Liberation Movement

- Feminists sought greater freedom and a fuller social and economic life
- Education
  - Affirmative Action programs promoted the hiring of more women professors
  - Colleges offered courses on women’s history and contributions
  - More women were admitted into military academies, law schools, and medical schools
Impact of the Women’s Liberation Movement

• Employment
  – Equal job opportunities for women were introduced, along with maternity leave, and federal aid for child care
  – A new law required women to be paid equally with men if they did equal work
  – Working wives also urged that men and women should share household chores
Impact of the Women’s Liberation Movement

• Sexist Language
  – The title Ms. Replaced Miss and Mrs., which revealed a women’s marital status
  – Women fought against sexist language (such as policeman, fireman), and ads that used women as sex objects
  – Men who treated women as inferiors were called “male chauvinists”
Impact of the Women’s Liberation Movement

• Focus On Women’s Problems

—Women lobbied for more funds for research on women’s diseases such as ovarian and breast cancer, and on the social problems of women, such as rape and domestic violence.
One of the major setbacks of the feminists was their failure to get the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) passed. This amendment would have guaranteed women equal rights with men. Opponents of the amendment argued that women already had equal rights because of the 14th amendment. In 1972, the amendment failed to gain the required number of states for ratification.
Title IX (1972)

- A major landmark in women’s education rights was reached with the passage of Title IX, part of the Educational Amendments Act (1972)
- Title IX banned sex discrimination in educational institutions
- It guaranteed girls in school the same opportunities as boys
Title IX (1972)

- Lawmakers created a powerful incentive for schools to provide gender equality to keep from losing federal aid
- Title IX had a major impact on American society
- It helped women to pursue higher degrees, compete in sports, and enter jobs and educational fields that had previously been dominated by men
Title IX (1972)

• Before Title IX, the number of women attending colleges was significantly lower than men
• Today, more women than men are in college

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

~ Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
Title IX (1972)

- Girls playing varsity high school sports:
  - 1972: 4%
  - Now: 40%

- Medical degrees earned by women:
  - 1972: 9%
  - Now: 43%

- Law degrees earned by women:
  - 1972: 7%
  - Now: 47%
The Chicano Movement

- Mexican Americans also struggled for equal rights
- Like African Americans, Mexican Americans, known as Chicanos, had often faced discrimination, racism, and exploitation
- Many Chicanos were barred from restaurants, swimming pools, and hospitals
- They also faced restrictions in voting, office holding, and employment
The Chicano Movement

• In the 1960s, a Chicano Movement emerged: its main focus was on such issues as farm workers’ voting and political rights
• A major leader of the Chicano Movement was Cesar Chávez, an organizer of farm workers in California
• Migrant workers often performed work planting or harvesting grapes and strawberries
The Chicano Movement

• The workers traveled from farm to farm as the need for work arose
• Chávez started a group that supported farm workers’ rights and demanded higher wages and better working conditions
• He used strikes and fasts to achieve his goal
• He organized nation-wide consumer boycotts of farm products, asking people to support migrant farm workers by refusing to buy certain crops such as grapes
The Chicano Movement

• Chávez also took part in hunger strikes, refusing to eat until violence against strikers ended and state legislators passed laws to improve the lives of farm workers

• Dolores Huerta and Chávez formed the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers (UFW)
The American Indian Movement

• American Indians also grew restless in the 1960s
• Back in 1953, the federal government had transferred its responsibility for American Indians still living on reservations to state governments
• Lacking sufficient funds, many states were unable to provide the same level of services provided by the federal government
• The new policy was largely a failure
The American Indian Movement

• In 1963, the federal government reversed its policy and began encouraging a tribal life on the reservations

• The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination against Native Americans

• Nevertheless, many American Indians still felt they were being mistreated
The American Indian Movement

- Under the slogan “Red Power,” they formed groups such as the American Indian Movement (AIM) to mobilize public opinion in their favor.
- American Indians sought greater respect for their heritage.
- They introduced the term “Native American” and protested against textbooks, television shows and movies that showed anti-American Indian bias.
The American Indian Movement

• AIM repeatedly brought lawsuits against the federal government for the protection of the rights of Native Americans guaranteed by
  – Treaties
  – Sovereignty
  – Laws
  – The U.S. Constitution
The American Indian Movement

• They dramatized the poor treatment of American Indians by temporarily occupying government monuments
  – In 1969, they took over Alcatraz Island in California
The American Indian Movement

• In 1973, members of the movement took over Wounded Knee in South Dakota to protest conditions on their reservation.
• They chose Wounded Knee since it was where 150 Native Americans were killed by federal troops in 1890.