AP US History

Chapter 28 - The Affluent Society

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Key Concepts

What are this chapter's key concepts?

- **8.1.I.D** - Decolonization after the war → nationalist movements in Asia/Africa/Middle East → new alliances formed on both sides of Cold War; some nonaligned
- **8.1.II.C** - Debates continued over practicality of nuclear arsenal, power of executive branch, military-industrial complex
- **8.2.I.A** - Post-WWII, ↑ civil rights movement combatting racial discrimination w/ law, direct action, nonviolent protest
- **8.2.I.B** - Three branches of fed. govt. enforced army desegration, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Civil Rights Act of 1964 to promote racial equality
- **8.2.I.C** - Resistance → ↓ desegregation w/ social and political unrest; civil rights activists debated effectiveness of nonviolence
- **8.2.II.C** - Poverty remained prominent despite overall affluence
- **8.3.I.A** - Private sector, fed. spending, baby boom, tech. dev. → ↑ econ.
- **8.3.I.B** - Higher education oppos. new tech. → social mobility, migration of middle class to suburbs, many others to South/West; Sun Belt became more prominent
- **8.3.II.A** - Mass culture more homogeneous → challenges to conformity

The "Economic Miracle"

In the 1950s and the early 1960s, government spending, an increased birth rate, and suburban growth for the middle class were all sources of economic growth. As a result of government spending and migration, the West grew rapidly as an economic force. The U.S. economic structure changed, too, favoring Keynesian economics, or the belief that the government could regulate the economy by changing the flow of money through spending and taxes rather than by regulating private industry. Labor became more consolidated, too; these new corporations resented strikes, making many concessions to unions to prevent them from occurring. The merger of the AFL and the CIO led to an overall resurgence of unions as a force, though membership remained relatively stagnant and corruption within unions became prominent.

How did the U.S. economy expand rapidly?

- 1945-1960: ↑ GDP, ↓ unemployment, stable inflation
- Govt. spending continued throughout period after Depression w/ public school funding, veterans' benefits, welfare, road development, mil. spending
  - Korean War greatly stimulated growth; period after saw relative decline in growth due to reduced armaments
- Birth rate increased significantly in **baby boom** w/ population ↑ by 20%
  - Led to ↑ consumer demand, econ. growth
- Suburbs expanded → growth in private cars, housing industry, road construction
- Econ. grew 10x as fast as pop. w/ avg. American having signif. more purchasing power; highest standard of living in world

Government spending in schools, veterans, welfare, roads, and especially military paired with an increased birth rate leading to growing consumer demand and the expansion of suburbs leading to booms in road development and the housing industry meant that the GDP increased, unemployment decreased, and the economy grew rapidly, contributing to an improved standard of living.

What were the primary sources of economic expansion?

How did the West expand as an economic force?

- Pre-war, West had assisted Eastern industry, supplying agricultural goods / raw materials
- By 1960s, some parts had become prosperous in their own right
  - Govt. spending during war → expanded infrastructure (dams/highways/power), military growth
  - Automobile expansion → need for oil → TX/CO oil fields grew w/ cities in Dallas/Houston/Denver
  - State govts. focused on education w/ UT and UC systems
  - Warm, dry climates attracted many

Primarily as a result of WWII, the West transformed from a force reliant on the East for demand into an independently prosperous region. Government spending during the war, automobile expansion, university deveopment, as well as climate, allowed the region to develop and the population to surge.

How did the economic structure of the U.S. change?

- Discovery of power of U.S. economy → increased confidence in capitalism
- Belief that Keynesian econ. allowed govt. to regulate without disrupting private sector became more prominent
  - **John Maynard Keynes** had emphasized in 1920s that govt. could vary flow of spending, taxation, and overall currency output to prevent recession and inflation
  - Confirmed by successful govt. policies during Great Depression
  - "New economics" officially accepted in 1963 w/ Kennedy's proposed tax cut; Lyndon B. Johnson finally passed, w/ result confirming theory
- Poverty reformers believed new way forward not redistribution but instead continued growth for all of society to raise standard of living uniformly

Keynesian economic beliefs - the belief that the government could regulate the economy without intervention in the private sector but instead by varying the flow of spending and taxation - took a greater foothold in U.S. policy in the 1960s with Kennedy and Johnson's support. Furthermore, the idea of redistribution became superceded by the belief that all of society should expand.

How did labor structure change during the 1950s?

- More and more corporate mergers → smaller number of corporations dominated than ever before
  - Promoted by defense spending: govt. mainly provided armament contracts to largest population
  - Mechanized agriculture → agri. workforce, family farms declined w/ corporations owning more and more farms
- Corporations reluctant to support strikes → concessions to unions
  - *ex*: 1948 saw Walter Reuther of U.S. Automobile Workers obtain contract from GM to allow standard of living to match consumer price index; promised wages evem during layoffs
  - Labor unions formed **postwar contract** w/ steel, auto., other unionized industries seeing increase in wages/benefits; unions agreed to ignore other issues, limiting strikes
- Econ. success of 1950s → reunification of labor movement w/ AFL and CIO (**Congress of Industrial Organization**) merging to form **AFL-CIO**
  - Led by **George Meany**; some tensions w/ CIO correctly fearing dominance of AFL w/in merger and AFL fearing radical past of CIO
- Corruption accompanied econ. growth
  - **Teamsters Union** under congressional investigation due to misappropriation of funds under David Beck; successor, Jimmy Hoffa, eventually convicted of tax evasion
  - United Mine Workers under John Lewis faced many scandals; successor convicted of complicity in murder of rival
- Unorganized labor made little progress w/ union membership stable due to transition from blue-collar to white-collar, obstacles to organization like Taft-Hartley Act

During the 1950s, corporations grew further consolidated; comcomitant to this was increased concessions to unions to prevent strikes from occurring. The merger of the AFL and the CIO further developed the labor union; however, corruption grew simultaneously. Furthermore, unorganized labor made relatively little progress with stable union membership.

The Explosion of Science and Technology

How did science and technology develop rapidly during the 1950s?

In the 1950s, several medical breakthroughs were made, with antibiotics like sulfa drugs and penicillin and vaccines for smallpox, typhoid fever, tetanus, and, most notably, polio (created by Jonas Salk). Pesticides greatly assisted agriculture, notably DDT. The electronic development industry skyrocketed after the creation of the transistor, ultimately allowing for the creation of an advanced computer capable of doing more than simple math. As part of the Cold War, weapons technology developed, too, with the first dropping of the H-Bomb encouraging long-range missile tests; furthermore, the space race against the USSR led to major strides in space travel, with NASA putting a person on the moon and developing the space shuttle.

What were the most significant medical breakthroughs?

- Medical science saw rapid development w/ antibacterial drugs to fight infections
- Antibiotics originated w/ **Louis Pasteur** in 1870s; revealed viruses could be defeated by regular bacteria
  - Using antibacterial devices to combat disease began in 1930s w/ **sulfa drugs** from **sulfanilamide** for streptococcal blood infections developed at rapid rate; treated major cause of death
- 1928: **Alexander Fleming** discovered properties penicillin; discovered to target bacterial disease at Oxford in 1941
  - U.S. labs developed penicillin for mass production; soon widely available to doctors/hospitals
  - New antibiotics developed $\rightarrow$ bacterial illnesses among most successfully treated
- Immunization w/ smallpox vaccine developed by **Edward Jenner**; typhoid vaccine by **Almorth Wright**; tetanus vaccine widespread during/before WWI
  - Viruses difficult to prevent $\rightarrow$ slow progress against vaccines; studies began only in 1930s w/ discovery that viruses could be grown in cultures
  - Gradually created virus unable to stimulate disease but capable of triggering antibodies
  - Yellow fever, influenza viruses appeared in first half of 20th century
  - Polio vaccine by **Jonas Salk** extremely effective
    - Polio killed/crippled thousands of children/adults
    - Became free to public after 1955; oral vaccine by Albert Sabin after 1960
- Death rate overall decreased, particularly among younger children

Antibacterial drugs became particularly effective in medical science, starting with sulfa drugs to combat blood infection; penicillin was another major, but slow-developing, breakthrough. Treating viral diseases through immunizations developed far more slowly; it started with the smallpox vaccine, but the polio vaccine was a major breakthrough, which was offered free to the public by the government and saved thousands of children and adults from death.

How did pesticides impact agriculture in the 1950s?

- Scientists developed **pesticides** to prevent crops from destruction by insects while protecting humans from crop-carrying disease
- 1939: Paul Muller discovered **DDT**, seemingly harmless to humans but killer to insects → sent to Africa during WWII to protect soldiers from malaria
  - Used on large scale during/following the war primarily to prevent typhus/malaria outbreaks
  - Only later realized to be toxic

Pesticides developed for targeting insects; among the most effective was DDT, developed shortly before WWII. It became critical to preventing malaria and typhus outbreaks; only later was it realized to be toxic.

How did electronic technology expand after the war?

- 1940s researchers created televisions on commercial level functional over large ranges; color television created in late 1950s
- 1948: Bell Labs created first **transistor** to amplify electrical signals; effective for small-scale. making smaller radios, TVs, weapons, satellites
- **Integrated circuits** used transistors, resistors, diodes, etc. all in one device; allowed for complex electronic devices

After the war, television technology developed rapidly, converting to color by the late 1950s. The transistor, released by Bell Labs in 1948, allowed devices to be miniaturized and integrated circuits to be created, paving the way for advanced devices like the computer.

What was the earliest computer technology to develop?

- Pre-1950s: computers for mathematical tasks like breaking military codes; first commercial functions in 1950s
- **UNIVAC** created for U.S. Bureau of the Census to store alphabetical/numerical info., processing this data more rapid than predecessor (**ENIAC**)
  - Developers, Remington Rand Company, used to predict election results in 1952 for publicity → many people learned about computer for first time
- UNIVAC had little marketing success, but **IBM** found wide market in mid-1950s; soon became leader

Computers first became used for commercial purposes in the 1950s. The first commercial computer, UNIVAC, was intended for census bureau data processing; however, it failed to gain significant commercial traction. IBM began to market computers more effectively, soon dominating the market.

How did weapons technology develop in the 1950s?

- 1952: U.S. detonated first **hydrogen bomb**, notable for using fusion explosions (far more effective)
- H-Bomb development pushed for rocket/missile technology for both U.S. and USSR; U.S. relied on emigrating German scientists
  - Early research by Air Force w/ some early successes in short-range missiles
  - More experiments in early 1950s: struggled w/ long range due to difficulty of finding stable fuel
  - 1958: solid fuel paired w/ guidance system → creation of **Minuteman** type of missiles, w/ several thousand miles of travel
  - Some development in underwater missiles w/ **Polaris** fired from underwater

After the U.S. dropped the first powerful hydrogen bomb, missile and bomb research expanded; the Air Force struggled to develop a long-range missile for several years. However, the creation of the Minuteman type of missile in 1958 using solid fuel was an effective long-range device.

What characterized the growth of the space program in the U.S.?

- Space program began after USSR revealed having launched ***Sputnik***, satellite, into space in 1957
  - U.S. took as personal indication of failure → significant development of scientific education in school, research labs
  - By Jan. 1958, U.S. launched first satellite
- Creation of manned space program by new agency, **National Aeronautics and Space Administration** (NASA) w/ selection of first astronauts
  - Alan Shepard first American launched into space in **Mercury Project**; unable to fully orbit the Earth and preceded by Soviet Yuri Gagarin
  - John Glenn first to orbit the Earth in 1962
  - **Apollo program** intended to send men to moon; several setbacks w/ many deaths, but **Neil Armstrong**, Buzz Aldrin, Michael Collins travelling in orbit around moon in 1969
    - Armstrong/Aldrin sent off smaller capsule to land and walk on moon; missions followed until 1972 but government funding soon cut w/ ↓ public enthusiasm
- Goal no longer to reach distant planets; instead shifted to develop **space shuttle** for easily launching into space and arriving w/ similar ease to aircraft
  - First launched in 1982; Deadly explosion of *Challenger* put things on hold after 1986
  - Shuttle launched **Hubble Space Telescope**, deposited
- Space program impacted several other industries

After the USSR launched the first satellite into space in 1957, the space race began. The U.S. quickly launched their own satellite, then created NASA, culminating in the Apollo program, which made American Neil Armstrong the first person to set foot on the moon. After the moon landing, however, the goal shifted more toward developing a versatile space shuttle allowing for easy takeoff and landing; several successful launches have been made to this day.