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APUSH

Period 4

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CH 29 Focus Q # 6; DTP#1 (p. 789); DTP #1 (p. 795)

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6. Lyndon B Johnson’s Great Society created much change and hope for the underclass in the few years after the assassination of John Kennedy but ended up not creating much everlasting change in the United States. Many called the Great Society a hopeful experiment to improve the lives of the poor (King Beyond Vietnam, pg 1). Johnson, eager to make his mark on America, quickly started the “War on Poverty.” The creation of Medicare and Medicaid were some of the most important of the Great Society program, and its uses and continuation are visible today, as they are continuously added upon and improved. The Community Action Program was another which allowed poor people an introduction to the political system, providing opportunities never seen before. These were tied to new changes by the Office of Economic Opportunity, which provided educational, employment, and housing opportunities. The Housing Act of 1961 was among the first to remodel America’s cities to make it friendlier for the average person, and with this, LBJ increased federal education spending by over double. Another massive change to the United States was the Immigration Act of 1965, an act which drastically changed the new immigrant ethnicities, from mainly white to all over the world. All of these changes were great hopeful changes, but some didn’t pan out according to plan. With the start of the Vietnam War and the increasing influence of conservatives in Congress, funding for many of these programs was greatly cut. Funds and energy were diverted from these programs to America’s invasions in Vietnam (King Beyond Vietnam, pg 2). As Conservatives wielded a powerful presence in Congress, Lyndon Johnson was forced to make concessions to continue and attempt to win the Vietnam War, and the first cuts were to the controversial “Great Society” Programs. The Community Action Program was defunded into uselessness, and so were the Office of Economic Opportunity and its goals. As the public saw the new ineffectiveness of these programs, they began to rally against them, and ushered in a new powerful conservative presence with the election of Nixon.

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1. After almost 4 centuries of subjugation and legal oppression, the rights of African Americans were once again the topic of significant debate during the Civil Rights Movement. Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders preached to the American people about the injustices on them. Many preachers and religious people moved from their domain into the political to change the conditions for people during this time (King Beyond Vietnam, pg 1). With the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the SNCC, and a significant portion of Black Americans and their supporters willing to fight for their rights, American society was greatly changed in the 1960s. After the Birmingham violence, the March on Washington, and the wholehearted support of John F Kennedy, Black Americans won the passage of the Voting Rights Act and the desegregation of America. Originally, historians believed that the collective efforts of African Americans starting from the end of the Second World War, such as protesting and challenging segregation far before the Civil Rights Movement, was very influential in motivating and mobilizing Black Americans. Others said that the growing pressure on northern, more urban radical activists to create change provided much attention. The Civil Rights movement was deeply tied to the lower classes, poor, and the Kennedy-supporting “underclass” (King Beyond Vietnam, pg 2). Pressure from other prongs of America also came, in order to become equal to the Soviet Union, which had no racist segregation. Another interpretation of the Civil Rights movement was that it was spurred on by the Brown V Board of Education decision. This was definitely the start of the end of De Jure segregation, and many say that it jumpstarted the Civil Rights movement. It did rise in influence greatly after it, but the Civil Rights movement had been alive and well before the decision as well, and likely influence it. After centuries of legally being second-class citizens however, the Civil Rights Movement did make huge changes in finally ending segregation and making progress in ending De Jure and De Facto Segregation.

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1. The debate over the causes of the Vietnam War has changed its arguments many times over the last 60 years. The anti-Communist hysteria and policy of containment at the time of the war led to most people and soldiers believing that America was helping save its Southern Vietnamese ally from northern, Communist invaders. However, the election dictated by the Geneva Conference did not occur, due to Ngo Dinh Diem ‘s belief that he would overwhelmingly lose. The people wanted the northern government, and were not being saved by the Americans, but were invaded. This was the later beliefs of scholars, that America was imperializing new countries with its post-WW2 power and influence. This could also tie in with America’s reasons to occupy so many countries after the war. The Marshall Plan, the Occupation of Japan, interventions, and invasions of South American counties, such as the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the Korean War are all facets of this theory. Other, later, scholars believed that a unfounded confidence in America’s success led to the belief that there was no way to lose in Vietnam. Americans, with a booming economy, and the overwhelming advantage after the World War, were eager to win another war. Unfortunately, when the war became unpopular among the youth and civil rights movement (King Beyond Vietnam, pg 2), they weren’t able to end it as quickly. Another belief was that America’s foreign policy system, dominated by a fear of Communism and the Soviet Union and one which was focused on containment and pushing back the ideology. This seems rooted in the facts of the pressure faced by Lyndon B Johnson into intervening in Vietnam. He was greatly eager to prove his worth over John Kennedy and make his mark. Congress was also eager to push in, and overwhelmingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving great power and authority to the president to escalate the conflicts in Vietnam. Unfortunately, Johnson was unable to end it as quickly as he started it, and as the public changed against the war with the Civil Rights movement (King Beyond Vietnam, pg 2), his popularity dropped.

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