

“The Economic Miracle”

- in 1950s - 1960s, much boom in economic growth (even greater than that of 1920s). Was also better-balanced, but wasn't quite universal.

Sources of Economic Growth

- 1945 → 1960
 - GNP grew 250% (\$200 bil → \$500+ bil)
 - Unemployment remained @ 5% or lower
 - Inflation is ~ 3%/year or less
- Gov spending stimulated growth via funding of schools, housing, veterans' benefits, welfare, interstate highway program (started 1956), military spending
 - 1st ½ of 1950s, economic growth ~4.7%/year (mil spend @ highest b/c Korean War)
 - 2nd ½ mil spend decline, and annual growth rate @2.25%
- National birth rate up 20%
 - pop increase (1950, 150 mil → 1960, 179 mil)
 - this baby boom means increase consumer demand + economic growth
- suburbs
 - pop increase 47% in 1950s
 - # of privately owned cars doubled
 - more housing industry; road + highway construction
- average american in 1960 had 20% more purchasing power than in 1945, and then more than 2x than in 1920s
- by 1960, per capita income over \$1800 (\$500 more than 1945) - highest standard of living than any other society by that time

The Rise of the Modern West

- American West much profit - increase pop, city, economy
- by 1960s, had most populous + important industrial & cultural centers
- Many increase b/c of government funds
- increase automobile use → increase petroleum use / oil industries
- also increase b/c climate - Cali, Nevada, AZ much immigrants from East b/c of warm, dry climate. LA pop increase over 50% between 1940 & 1960.

The New Economics

- Power of US economic system causes confident tone of political life in 1950s (b/c previous to that/during Depression, politics questioned if capitalism viable).
- Keynesian economics
 - make possible for gov to regulate + stabilize economy w/o intruding private sector
 - 1920s - John Maynard Keynes argued that vary flow of gov spending & taxes & managing currency supply, gov can stimulate economy, cure recession, dampen inflation.
- 1963 - John Kennedy proposes new tax cut to stimulate economic growth (passed 1964) - this seems to increase private demand, therefore stimulate economic growth + reduce unemployment
- Economy expands so much that Americans think growth is boundless.
- Mid 1950s - those concerned w/ poverty think solution is not redistribution but economic growth. (rise quality of life)

Capital & Labor

- Over 4000 corporate mergers in 1950s, → small number of large organizations control most economic activity. V. true of industries that benefit from gov defense spending

- fed gov awarded military contracts to a few large corps in WWII
 - 1959 - ½ of all defense contracts go to twenty firms
 - so by end of decade, half net corporate income is only a little over 500 firms (0.1% of total # of corps)
- Consolidation in agriculture
 - increase mechanization, decrease workforce
 - also means fewer can actually buy/equip modern farm
 - most of productive land has been purchased by financial institutions + corporations
- Corporations don't want strikes to interfere, so make concessions to unions
 - 1948 - General Motors b/c of United Automobile Workers gives automatic cost of living increase attached to consumer price index. Then 1955, continue wages during layoffs.
 - By 1950s, factory wages in all industries increased substantially
 - "postwar contract" - workers have much wage increase + benefits, so workers don't raise other problems
- mid 1950s American Federation of Labor & Congress of Industrial Organizations merge into the AFL-CIO, led by George Meany. Uncomfortable relations between groups tho - AFL dominates everything. Eventually tensions decrease.
- but corruption in some places
 - 1957 - Teamsters Union - their pres charged w/ misappropriation of union funds. Next pres convicted w/ tax evasion 1967.
 - United Mine Workers - scandals happen.
- Unorganized workers - few advances.
 - Union membership ~16 mil in 1950s b/c shift in workforce + obstacles
 - Taft-Hartley + state "right to work" laws made it more difficult to sustain unions
 - So most drives fail for 30 years after WWII.

The Explosion of Science and Technology

- Time selects "the American Scientist" as man of year - shows scientific interest + achievement

medical breakthroughs

- new antibacterial drugs
 - louis pasteur & jules-francois joubert discovered that 'virulent bacterial infections' can be defeated by more ordinary bacteria. Then Joseph Lister finds antiseptic solutions can help prevent infection
 - sulfa drugs - drugs from bacterial agent sulfanilamide - treats infections (1930s)
 - 1928 - alexander Fleming discovers penicillin - v. practical against disease. Leads to a wide range of antibiotics
- immunization
 - smallpox vaccine in late 1700s
 - typhoid vaccine in 1897
 - tetanus vaccination ~WWII
 - tuberculosis vaccine widespread after WWII
 - yellow fever - 1930s
 - influenza - 1945
 - salk vaccine (for polio) - 1954, polio virtually eliminated 1960s
- started growing viruses in 1930s, which meant that they figured out how to make a virus that triggers antibodies w/o contracting disease
- infant mortality + death rate of kids declines in first 25 years after WWII. average life expectancy rises + 5 (to 71).

pesticides

- DDT - seems harmless to humans/mammals (long term, does have toxic effect), v. toxic to insects

- useful b/c insects spread diseases (malaria, typhus, tropical diseases), which were common during war. (since pacific islands)

postwar electronic research

- dramatic new developments - tv broadcast 1940s, color tv 1950s/60s.
- 1948 - transistor (amplifies signals), making so miniaturization of devices is possible. Generally now being able to create complex electronic devices b/c of new developments. computer!

postwar computer technology

- prior to 1950s, computers for math tasks (useful for codebreaking)
- 1950s - commercial functions.
- Universal Automatic Computer (UNIVAC) - easily handles numbers & letters. Tape storage. Much faster (especially than ENIAC).
 - predicts results of 1952 election, which helps increase awareness of computer
- IBM in 1950 - data-processing computers in wide market.

bombs, rockets, and missiles

- 1952 - first hydrogen bomb - much more powerful than earlier bombs
- impetus to unmanned rockets + missiles for carrying to target (b/c not safe)
- struggle w/ ICBMs b/c fuel difficulties
- Minuteman - range of several thousand miles, basis of US atomic weapon arsenal
- Polaris - nuclear missile that can be launched + fired by submarines

the space program

- 1957 - soviet union launched Sputnik → mucho shock, see this as US failure b/c we're not first. Also encourages scientific education, general to speed of space exploration development. First satellite *Explorer I* in Jan 1958.
- 1958 - NASA. start sending people to space
- Apollo - many setbacks, but successfully go orbit moon & land on it.
- Popularity begins to fade, funding cuts.
- Purpose was just to make travel in near space easier + practical
- boosts development to other technologies

People of Plenty

- middle class expands + becomes more prominent

the consumer culture

- growing amount of consumer goods purchased b/c of variety, availability, advertising, consumer credit
- consumer crazes - hula hoop, *Mickey Mouse* (disneyland)

the landscape and the automobile

- 400% increase in automobiles between 1950-1980
- Federal Highway Act of 1956 gives \$25 bil for highway construction - reduce time for travel, makes trucking more economical than railroads. General decline in railroads.
- manufacturing moves cities → suburban/rural b/c cheaper land. Decline in downtowns. "edge cities"
- automobiles also make moving easier, so people now live in larger houses w/ larger lots. suburban amenities.
- increase in motels + drive-in theatres

the suburban nation

- suburbanization
- William Levitt - mass-production for a large housing - "levittown" - lower middle class
- why suburbs? larger homes, community, race

the suburban family

- gender roles are reinforced - men have a strict division between working + personal, women have isolation from workplace. More prejudice against women in paying jobs b/c men see it demeaning if wife employed; women stay at home w/ children
- *Baby & Child Care* - Dr. Benjamin Spock - child-centered approach to raising kid. Mothers help child learn + grow; child's needs more important than women's needs. Modest role of father.
- 1960 - ~1/3 of women in paying jobs

the birth of television

- tv usage rapidly grows post-WWII
- mainly emerged from radio industry - NBC, CBS, ABC. driven by advertisements.
- late 1950s - TV replaced newspapers, magazines, radios. Advertising, entertainment, televised athletics - also replaces movies.
- Programming shows white, middle-class, suburban, reinforced gender roles. Also shows stuff against this but in an unthreatening way, tho mainly just alienates those who aren't white middle-class people.

travel, outdoor recreation, and environmentalism

- paid vacations are becoming a thing
- reasons for increase of travel: highways, affluence (CARS)
- national parks surge - unconventional recreational activities
- Echo Park - early 1950s, Bureau of Reclamation proposes a dam, which rouses environmental movement
- essay on nat parks being ruined published - Sierra club moves back into action.

organized society and its detractors

- increase in hierarchical structures in work | unions exist | bureaucracy is frustrating
- people think that future success needs specialized skills to work in large organizations → education changes to more science, math, foreign languages. Universities "multiversity" (specializing in a variety of fields)
- impact of bureaucracy + impersonality of society
 - *The Organization Man* - claims self-reliance is losing place to "getting along" "working as a team"
 - *The Lonely Crowd* - "inner-directed man" giving way to "other-directed man"
 - Saul Bellow's novels show difficulties of American Jewish men in urban
 - *Catcher in the Rye* shows someone who cannot feel secure or committed

the beats and the restless culture of youth

- "beats" / "beatniks" are critics of bureaucracy/middle-class society (generally authors, artists) - against conformity, meaninglessness of politics, banality pop culture-- shows restlessness of youth (also restless b/c of limitless possibilities, decline of traditional values)
- public attention to "juvenile delinquency" - crime rate didn't actually rise
- oh, teenage rebellion is more of a thing - James Dean (actor) portrays moody, alienated, self-destructive - icon of rebellion of youth at time

rock 'n' roll

- Elvis Presley - push conventions. Popular amongst young people. Music drew from black rhythm + blues traditions. more musics include Buddy Holly, Bill Haley; further influenced by country western, gospel, jazz.
- AA bands + singers include Chuck Berry, Little Richard, B. B. King, Chubby Checker, Temptations - never rival Presley for popular of white youth, but still have multiracial audience
- rise is also b/c of innovations in radio + tv programming - playing recorded music instead of live performances
- increase in record sales
- "payola" scandals - people making payments to stations to showcase artists

The “Other America”

On the Margins of the Affluent Society

- *The Other America* (Michael Harrington) chronicles poverty.
- While economic expansion significantly reduced poverty, it did not eliminate it.
 - 1960 - 1/3 of families in poverty
 - poverty is still mostly temporary for 80% - instability of employment
 - for the other 20%, there is no escape
 - ~ 1/2 of nation's elderly
 - many AAs, hispanics, NAs
 - so prosperity hasn't actually done much about poverty

rural poverty

- rural americans are still on margins of affluent society - shrinking farm population, decline in farm prices (surplus)
- not all are poor - some make a good amount of profit
- still, many are impoverished
 - sharecroppers / tenant farmers are at or below subsistence lvl
 - decline of coal economy

the inner cities

- while white families move, ghettos cannot be escaped - mucho expansion of AAs into industrial cities - general increase in non-white population of city
- “culture of poverty” ? poorly adapted? victims? bad structure? decline of jobs? lack of support? racism? lack of economic opportunity (b/c decrease in unskilled jobs)?
- “urban renewal” - tears down poorest / most degraded areas. Sometimes leads to better public housing, sometimes not (slums)

The Rise of the Civil Rights Movement

- ‘battle’ for civil rights is much more prominent in 1950s

the *brown* decision and “massive resistance”

- 17 May 1954 - *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* - rejects *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) (said that communities can provide blacks w/ separate facilities)
- seen as culmination of efforts against segregation
- b/c AA girl had to go several miles to segregated public school, even tho there was one next door.
- “separate but equal” has no place
- next year a decision (called *Brown II*) provides rules for this - schools must be desegregated (but no timetable)
- some comply quickly, others don't. - ignore ruling, circumvent it
 - south actually denounces it
- *Shuttlesworth v. Birmingham* further declares segregation laws unconstitutional
- essentially, *Brown* further goes battle over racial equality
- Eisenhower was a bit skeptical about this
- Little Rock - school - whites blockade, but then troops come in, so then blacks are allowed

the expanding movement

- 1 December 1955 - Rosa Parks arrested → challenge bus segregation → montgomery bus boycott (but economic pressure on bus company & merchants | supreme court (1956) declares segregation on public transport illegal
- Martin Luther King Jr. leads movement - passive resistance. Draws from Ghandi, Thoreau, Christianity. “respond to hate with love” - founded Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- color lines breached when AAs become powerful in professional sports
- 1957 - civil rights act - fed protection for AAs who want to register to vote - start “Second Reconstruction”

causes of the civil rights movement

- legacy of WWII (blacks had fought/been very important)
- growth of urban black middle class - they’re very aware of the obstacles placed on them
- TV is also showing the constant racism - also shows activism
- more: cold war, political mobilization of north blacks, labor unions

Eisenhower Republicanism

- Eisenhower is inexperienced, but very popular + politically successful

“what was good for . . . general motors”

- business community staffs admin, but has a social + political outlook
- had reconciled selves w/ Keynesian welfare state from New Deal - maintains social order, increase mass purchase power, stabilizing labor relations
- appoints wealthy corporate lawyers + business execs to cabinet - pres of GM nominated for secdef b/c “what was good for our country was good for GM, and vice versa”
- wants to limit fed activity + encourage private sector
- private development of nat resource
- limits fed support for farm price
- removed limited wage + price controls of Truman
- opposes new social service programs
- reduce fed expenditure to balance budget - actually ends with a billion surplus

the survival of the welfare state

- does not dismantle welfare policies of New Deal
- extends social security, unemployment compensation, increases legal min wage
- fed highway act 1956 - built more interstate highways - largest public works project in US history - funded through “trust fund” (taxes)
- when reelected, Demo keep control of Congress - increased more in 1958 recession

the decline of McCarthyism

- anticommunist crusade not really discouraged in early years of admin
- 1954 - much more public opposition to anticommunist crusade
- end of Senator Joseph McCarthy
 - had a bit of impunity at first
 - but then attacked Secretary of Army
 - Congress organizes special investigation (Army-McCarthy hearings) - these are first nationally televised hearings. Hurt McCarthy a lot
 - congress votes to condemn him for “conduct unbecoming a senator”

Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Cold War

- US & soviet union have been competing over nuclear threat, but are also turning attention to third world countries

dulles and “massive retaliation”

- secstate is John Foster Dulles - v. against communism - denounced Truman as being too pacifist, encourages active “liberation” - when in power, defers to moderate views of president
- “massive retaliation” (announced 1954) - use massive power (nuclear weapons) against communism - also economics is a reason for this (?)

frances, america, and vietnam

- 1953 - hostilities concerning Korea end
- US had been drawn into problems w/ Vietnam
 - french were surrounded in seige in North Viet, so only US intervention can help
 - Eisenhower does *not* intervene - claims Congress + US allies will not support this

cold war crises

- foreign policy is mainly containment
- crises in middle east are cropping up
 - Israel proclaims independence 14 May 1948 - Truman recognizes it the next day
 - then there's Arab-Israeli wars
 - US wants to be friendly w/ Middle East b/c oil, so alarmed when Iran is resisting Western corporations → US gets a friendly person in power (i think . . . not really sure what's going on here)
 - Egypt - Dulles withdraws offers to help b/c w/ building b/c Egypt friendly w/ Soviet Union - Egypt retaliates by seizing Canal from Brits
 - 29 Oct 1956 - Israel attacks Egypt; B + F drive Egypt from canal - US afraid of another WW, so join in UN in denouncing it, which helps F + B to withdraw, persuade Israel to Egypt truce
- 1954 - Eisenhower ends a potential communist regime in Guatemala
- Cuba
 - leader is in place b/c of US
 - US controls almost all of island's natural resources
 - US organized crime groups control Havana hotel/nightlife
 - 1957 - resistance to guy in power is strong; Fidel Castro sets up new gov 1 Jan 1959
 - Castro v. against US involvement, then starts accepting Soviet Union relations

europe and the soviet union

- must end communist expansion in europe! !!!!!!
- meeting in Geneva 1955 - does not resolve / agree
- Soviet Union relations keep deteriorating b/c Hungarian REvolution (1956) in which Hungary demands democratic reforms - US not intervene

the u-2 crisis

- Krushchev (soviet premier + communist party chief) want NATO to abandon West Berlin - US etc. refuse, so he & Eisenhower must discuss personally
- before conference, Soviet Union announces having shot down American U-2 over Russian territory - pilot in captivity - conference does not happen
- so Eisenhower's increased US/Russia tensions; restrained military intervention; generally v. cautious