

**THE 1950'S: LIVING IN A SCHIZOPHRENIC WORLD  
THE COLD WAR AND RACIAL CONFLICT VS. PEACE AND  
PROSPERITY**

By  
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This unit will encompass two to three school weeks of lessons, including activities listed in Part III, and major analytical questions based on the title of the unit. It will be studied by C.A.S. (Center for Advanced Studies) United States History students which my colleagues and I teach. It is incumbent upon me in the first section, the Narrative Section, to enumerate the objectives and the strategies which I will use. In this section, it will become evident why I chose that title. In writing about my life as a teenager in the 1950's, it will become evident that there is a relationship to the title and a number of the major essay questions, which the students will answer throughout the study of the topics in the unit. Therefore, I will begin this narrative with my teenage years during the 1950's.

**THE NARRATIVE:**

Having grown up as a middle class Jewish teenager in the 1950's, I remember clearly the effects on me of five major events as well as the influence of three of my close relatives. In the early fifties, my uncle, an intellectual left-winger, would constantly explain to me why he was pro-Soviet. My aunt, also on my father's side, was generally known for her strong unionist bent, and organized department store strikes, when such an activity was considered absolutely nuts. However, it was my older brother, Ben, who dragged me to integrated swimming pools as the one at Highland Park and convinced me to go to Labor Zionist youth group activities (instead of joining B'nai Brith Youth where most young Jewish boys and girls socialized). He also convinced me to go along with him to help integrate the skating rink in East Liberty. He went to New York in 1956, but by that time I was already a hooked leftist, although as most middle class teenagers, I had watched all the TV programs of the early 1950's, was knowledgeable about the typical popular songs such as Shaboom, and loved to participate in all the regular sporting events in my neighborhood. When I attended Peabody High School in 1953, I took pride in being on the J.V. basketball team which was integrated, but at the same time, I had to watch major fights between Italians, African-Americans, and some Jewish boys as well. In general, I felt the tension between the good middle class life, and that unique pattern of my family's radicalism and the tensions which surrounded me. Without knowing it, I was somewhat schizo.

It is important that I relate some of the anecdotes which did create in me the Weltanschung which was never to be abandoned. Those events reflect the reality of the times. I distinctly remember the riot at Highland Park which occurred right after the swimming pool was integrated in 1951.

I heard a middle-aged man tell two younger white young men, "Let's get those niggers." Of course, he never jumped in to help them. One person died in that riot. I also remember getting a D.A.R. award for which I was recommended by my very

conservative Republican American History teacher at Peabody High School. A few years later, I panicked when my mother wanted to frame it. It was much too conservative for the radical image I had of myself. That was in 1953. In 1955 and 1956, I was reading Freedom Road, The American, and My Glorious Brothers by Howard Fast, a writer and avowed Communist Party member who also had written Spartacus the well-known book about a slave rebellion in Greece. All of his books dealt with freedom of speech and the civil rights of racial and religious groups. One day in 1957, I went to Pittsburgh's Carnegie Library's main branch and could not find any one of his books on the shelves. I learned from the library aide that it was probably because he was a Communist. I believe that until then I had never understood the affects of McCarthyism. It now hit me personally and did upset me. Of course, McCarthyism would more than upset the Hollywood Ten and many others (over 1,000 men and women were whittled down by his name calling and false accusations, either because of guilt by association, or just plain unwillingness to cooperate with the "Red Scare" hunters of the 1950's.) I then graduated high school, feeling that I knew something about America's major political issues of the decade. However, I was still ostensibly sheltered from the wider intellectual inquiry, and I knew very little about the "politics of the left."

In February 1957, I began to study at the University of Pittsburgh and often sat and talked about the Soviet Union, revolution, and socialism in America. This usually occurred in the Tuck Shop, a university cafeteria that was frequented by Stalinists, Trotskyists, and other avant-guard young men and women. Some moderate socialists of the Y.P.S.L (Young People's Socialist League) also sat there on occasion. A United States History professor did get me involved with that "moderate" group for a short period of time. Later in the 1960's, someone called me from that group and asked me to house two African-American college students who had come north after the Freedom Rides to speak at the Pitt's Student Union. The next day, our next door neighbor, a Jewish woman in her early fifties, opened her conversation with my mother by asking, "Is your son a Communist?"

In those days, I also listened to some of the Young Republican leaders at school and tried to grasp how they could not understand the importance of the Civil Rights Movement's goals as they arose in Little Rock, and later in Greensboro and Birmingham.

I personally continued to read books such as Growing Up Absurd, On The Road, The Power Elite, and Howl, and I participated in picketing such places as Woolworth's. However, by my third year, I decided to quit school. This was partly due to the fact that I did not understand why my goals should be materialistic (At that time, "The Business of America was Business"); and I did not yet have a goal in terms of a profession. Soon after that, I drove to California and worked as a sports coordinator for a family, which was helping migrant workers and their children at a government-sponsored camp. Of course, I was a volunteer. The husband had been a conscientious objector in W.W.II, and he never really could get a decent permanent job in his field. I would meet many more people in the 1960's who sought ways to avoid the draft. Vietnam only reached my consciousness when I became a student teacher in April of 1963, and my supervising teacher said that we were already in what would become a major war for America in that

decade. Although he had been a high-ranking Marine officer in Korea, no one believed in him in 1961.

After being outside of the university atmosphere for almost three years, I was astounded when I returned in 1963 to find that there were major anti-war rumblings and very powerful civil rights forces at work. Soon I would be sitting on the rugs at the Student Union listening to one speech after another condemning the war in Vietnam. In this particular discussion of the 1950's-1963, the unit could be well-enhanced by discussing 1963 as the final real political date of the Fifties decade, especially when one takes into account the demonstrations in Birmingham, and the attack by the chairman of the FCC on the three major networks. The attack was on the socially sterile and anti-intellectual programming of the networks.

In the next section of the Narrative, it is incumbent on me to explain to some extent how the major essay questions which C.A.S. students need to answer are vitally connected to the above background information which I have provided so far. After that will be accomplished, there will be more historical narrative and other personal anecdotes, which will create a clear picture of how the 1950's set the stage for the 1960's.

The incidents, the comments of the people whom I met or had known in the 1950's, and my own reading had a profound effect on my life. Therefore, when I teach this unit, it is important to ask the correct question about American society as it was then. (I am wondering now how young eyes and ears heard and saw two distinctly different societies.) The first major question will be: "Was the 1950's a decade of contrast between peace and prosperity, manifested by positive family life; and the racial tensions, violence, and fear of godless communism?" It was apparent to me then that there was a basic conservative consensus, and that my leanings to the left were part of a minority cultural approach to our society. (Even my Jewish cousins on my mother's side considered me to be "a different type.") In general, things were going well for the majority in this country, my people were relatively well assimilated, and there was a consensus which was anti-Communist and not ready to shake the boat in regard to major integrative efforts on the racial scene. However, there were a small number of groups, including women's, for example, who were pro-peace (W.I.P.F.L.); but as many other liberals, they feared the suspicions of their colleagues during the hysterical period of McCarthyism. There were also a small number of African-Americans struggling to achieve what they deserved. Walking beside both groups were the liberal young members of the generation which would eventually lead the 1960's into that rebellious "yippie" culture of rebellion. Historians believe that it was that roaring tide of young idealists which would change this country's perspective about war and peace and civil rights of all varieties, and even about how to relate to ones fellow human beings.

In this unit, I will insist on my students reading carefully the text book but also reading the two chapters in Zinn's, The People's History of the United States which completely proclaims and details the opposite historical views presented by Bailey and Kennedy in The American Pageant. They will also read at least one chapter in Interpretations to help analyze the causes of the Cold War.

They will study carefully and answer at least thirty questions from Halberstam's films, *The Fifties*. (These are in the Activities Section.) Those questions depict both extremes of that decade, the tension, fear, and the conflicts, well-covered over by the consumerism, the bright world of entertainment, and even that martini-drinking household with luxurious indoor physical and psychological protections against a nuclear attack. Of course, they will see Teller's and Oppenheimer's conflict over developing the "H" bomb as well. It was in some ways a reflection of many internal conflicts during the Cold War.

With this background as a starting point, my curriculum unit could also introduce the second major question: Who was responsible for creating the tensions of the Cold War as it was manifested by such events as the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962? Was it the U.S.A. or the USSR? Students need to analyze how American society had a one-sided view (We now refer to it as the Orthodox interpretation) of that Cold War and who was at fault for its exacerbation, as well as, how Americans related to the Civil Rights Movement and its passive resistance or more activist methods. What our Government's approach was as it related to both these major issues will become an extension of the second major question. Did Americans seek the simple answers, which were gleaned from TV shows and the happiness of the popular songs such as "Singing in the Rain", while they were fearing the communist menace and civil rights activism which could create violence? Although the House Un-American Activities Committee was digging out the conspiracies of the alleged communists and the Red Scare was upon us, it is interesting to note that authors such as Howard Zinn claims that the 1950's was already a period of dissent, but that TV did not relay the Protest Movement to us nearly as much as the 1960's TV news programs did. Did Bobby Dylan's and Pete Seeger's songs do that? My students will listen to some of their music which I can provide on new tapes with a ready-made curriculum outline to assist us. Of course, my students will have to read about the three interpretations of the Cold War to better understand that there are major differences in the perceptions of the Realists, the Revisionists, and the Orthodox as to who created the Cold War.

The contrasts between Paul Robeson and Howard Fast and the W.A.S.P.ish mothers depicted on our popular TV shows are so great that we begin to wonder if young people such as myself would have easily been shielded from the racial and political tensions of the 1950's had it not been for the books and music available to us and our families' involvement in those small dissenting groups.

If the 1960's was a decade of the left and the 1950's of the right, then the question becomes: "could there have been a protest movement of the 1960's without the political reactions or lack of them of our government, as well as the cultural cover-ups of the 1950's which tried to shield my generation from the truth?" Ultimately, this will have to be answered along with the other two major questions which I will ask my students to answer in the Evaluation exercises. The answers to these essay questions provide some of the major objectives for this unit, for they relate directly to the major issues of the decade and to how to discover the truth about it. Historiography will come into play

throughout the unit, and many of the activities which can be integrated into it will also develop skills in that area. Those activities which will include reading, viewing TV documentaries and movies, listening to songs, analyzing interpretive readings, presenting individual and group reports, and answering major evaluative questions will be presented in Part III, the lesson plans and activities of this curriculum.

In the next section, I will describe where so many conflicts and underlying tensions existed and were covered up or downplayed by the American government, and the American leadership through TV or other areas of entertainment. Included in this realm would be advertising which did an excellent job to promote goods, candidates, and revolutions.

In the 1950's, the good times were rolling. However, those magical years of peace and domestic tranquility can be perceived as a thin veil behind which was hidden America's internal tensions and its fear of an outside enemy's ability to conquer it. In the post-W.W.II era, American middle class families were the predominant recipients of a boosted economy which between 1945-1960 had a GNP growing at the rate of 250 percent. Additionally, there were 1.65 million housing starts in 1955, a figure that remained above 1.5 million for the rest of the decade. By 1962, 62 percent of American families owned their own homes in contrast to 43 percent in 1940. The fact that the home owners and renters had numerous new gadgets to assist the domesticated housewife, and that the families were able to watch together middle class family programs on televisions which were being purchased at a rate of 16,000 a day helped to insulate the family from external threats of the "communist menace," as well as the malaise of familial discontent. In the 1960's, that discontent did characterize the children who had grown up in middle class families. Although moves to Levittown type suburbs developed a distinct pattern of segregation, a lack of any social diversity while at the same time the new conformity within individual family components was setting in (contrary to the psychological wishes of McCarthyites who sought to destroy the concept of Bolshevik bureaucratic collectivism and conformism); the media was able to encourage the women of that decade to be individualistic within their own sphere of the good mother and the good wife. (Phillip Wylie's "momism" was certainly appropriate in regard to this trend.) The husband was educated to be purely and simply the breadwinner, a good parent and sometimes a bumbling, well-meaning family man. In the 1950's, Americans were seeking to fulfill the rural mindset, based on their need to reconstruct the mythical frontier farmhouse, one inhabited with mom and plenty of apple pie. Thus, the new suburban culture created the heavy steel lid which was firmly placed on that potential boiling pot, and that new steel cover would prevent Stalinism from piercing our shield and gaining access to our minds. As it can be statistically related to students of our American History courses, eighty-five percent of the new homes were built in those suburbs where the stable nuclear families could seek capitalist privacy and the veneer of togetherness (Was the TV invented as a sociological tool?).

The consumer revolutionaries, (the Ad Men), the psychologists, sociologists, and the entertainment geniuses of the world of TV and Hollywood had the right formulae to provide the support for the Fifties as the time of Peace and Prosperity.

Even more importantly, we were establishing the middle class Fortress of America to both socially and culturally protect the predominately white Protestant majority against the danger of diversity, racial conflict, and class warfare which "our enemies" could use to bore from within.

It is now clear that the African-Americans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans were not represented on TV family shows, nor were they able to share the economic gains and privileges of the white middle class families. In the mid-1950's, a full 25 percent or forty million Americans were poor. According to one analysis, that poverty was searing, since there were not yet any food stamps nor housing programs as protective devices for the poor. It is no wonder that Michael Harrington had at least four or five categories to write about in The Other America. A third of America's children were also poor, and sixty percent over the age of sixty-five had incomes below \$1,000. This was calculated as considerably below the average middle class incomes of \$3,000-\$10,000. The minority groups did not fit the TV image of White Anglo Saxon middle class families, since their incomes were directly related to the have-nots of our society. At that time the white and predominately Protestant upper and middle classes could not say that the problem was due to the single parent family, since the other statistic claimed that "the poverty rate of two-parent black families was more than fifty percent, approximately the same as one-parent black ones." The relocation and termination policies were used against Native Americans in order to force them to give up their treaty rights, and migrant workers were treated as slaves in their "Pastures of Plenty." It was there that their children died from the poison of DDT or were run over by tractors. In the early 1960's, I worked for a few days with migrant workers in Stockton, California; and then I volunteered in a migrant workers' government sponsored camp, playing with the children or reading to them at the library, which had been opened up by an elderly left-wing pacifist couple. The living and working conditions of the migrant families were appalling. Years later, it was very easy for me to become involved in lettuce boycotts which Chavez's union organized.

Drinking and tranquilizers could dull the senses of any white middle class husband or wife who found life meaningless in our suburbs, and there were a few rebels. However, in the main, the literature of Reisman and Erikson pointed to the terms of "tasks" and "maturity" for the males, the code words of conformity. Even when they could find their way out of such traps, the Gray Flannel Dissidents chose not to do so. In Barbara Ehrenreich's The Hearts of Men, this conformity is well documented.

So both men and women were doomed to conformity, while paradoxically, our anti-Communist individualistic society preferred the inner-directed, non-conformist to battle the "Red Menace."

On the other hand, African- Americans faced legally sanctioned segregation and pervasive brutality in the South, while in the North they were excluded by restrictive

covenants and redlining from many benefits of the economic expansion that their labor helped sustain. They did not have the resources to escape poverty and oppression and reach "maturity" until the Civil Rights Movement began its struggle. During the late 1950's and early 1960's, the Movement only started the drive to draw the poorest of its people into that struggle. Even then, they were unable to share in the fruits of their own wartime productivity and the economic boom which followed. The 1950's was also the decade to bring millions of babies into the new world, and as one Jewish woman so aptly put it, "After the Holocaust, we felt obligated to have lots of babies. But it was easy because everyone was doing it – non-Jews too."

Although the expanding job and educational opportunities, bolstered by the GI Bill of Rights, and the increasing availability of birth control devices might well have led young people to delay marriage a number of years and to have fewer children, there was a surge in family life and "a reaffirmation of domesticity that rested on distinct roles for men and women."

The fact that the white children of that decade grew up in affluence and had opportunities themselves for education and economic betterment during the 1960's helped to create the anti-war, liberal civil rights movement supporters, and the distinctly feminist revolutions of the 1960's and 1970's. The 1960's could not be understood without comprehending the 1950's, since that decade created the atmosphere and the call to action which has influenced the American way of life until the present. However, the same possibilities had presented themselves twenty years earlier after World War II, and that generation chose to escape from the past and shelter itself literally and figuratively within the shell-like tranquillity of the Fifties.

Our government chose that very same tranquility at home and security abroad, using nuclear security to contain our enemies and a conservative approach to handle the domestic issues, especially the racial tensions and conflicts.

In the foreign sphere, we read the intention of the Kremlin as one which sought world domination and even as early as 1947, we began to see the tell-tale signs and convinced ourselves that we had to act in Greece, Turkey, Eastern Europe, and of course against China after the Maoist Revolution. Our reaction in general was expressed by Kennan's containment position as written up in his famous Mr. X article. In actual foreign policy terms, it was fulfilled by the establishment of the Truman Doctrine, NATO, the Marshall Plan and N.S.C.68. As Melvyn Leffler explained, most of our containment policies at first were aimed at the European theatre, but that was only because we had not yet seen a major threat in Southeast Asia. When that occurred in the 1950's, we would mobilize the necessary resources and threaten to eliminate the Asian Communist enemy by attacking it directly. Even President Nixon's Kitchen Debate with Khrushchev was our way of saying that we could contain the Soviet threat at home or abroad.

Our women were more satisfied because of the technological advances and their own ability to satisfy themselves and be our domestic shields, while at the same time still

retaining their womanly attributes in comparison to the hard-pressed Soviet working woman who could neither compete outside nor inside the home.

Of course, in none of these debates or issues on the home front or in regard to foreign policy were any weaknesses to be revealed. We would use McCarthyism to take care of any dangers lurking within, and we would even execute real or imagined spies, as the Rosenbergs. We would keep our racial problems out of the public eye as long as we could, and we would not allow our black citizens to reveal too much aggression, since the Soviet propaganda machine could use it to develop the means to divide our people, and break the mould of the patriotic American, so well "organized" by our own propaganda machine, and protected by the House Un-American Activities Committee members. ("The Front" is definitely a film to show our students to help describe those phenomena.) In the hearts of our leaders was the fear that our weaknesses could be exploited by our enemies to tear away that curtain which was hung after World War II. Although Churchill spoke of an Iron Curtain from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, we had hung quite a thick one by ourselves, stretching from New York to San Francisco.

Although America had flexed its own muscles in the late 1940's and during the early 1950's with the "A" Bomb and soon after the "H" bomb, we still saw the danger of Soviet Communism as more of a threat to our peace at home than our aggressiveness as a threat to their ideology and national security.

The arguments which our students will need to study are: "Can we blame either the U.S.A. or the Soviet Union for the Cold War?" Does that question originate with the questions of: "Would Stalin's totalitarianism at home necessarily lead to a "totalitarian" foreign policy?" and "Were the twin development of America's anti-Communist foreign policy and the excesses of McCarthyism to contain communism at home unavoidable?" We now know that American politicians began to view "anti-communism" as functional, and used it against any independence of thought or against any social movement which could threaten their political power base. It is no wonder then that the industrial and financial monopolies and liberal politicians who needed the white lower and middle class southern and northern voters to side with them decried the leftist leanings of such unions as the Longshoremen's and the initial willingness of black moderates in the South to boycott, to be beaten, and to be jailed.

The literature develops the thesis, without too much difficulty, that Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement were hindered by McCarthyism because the goals of the moderate leaders who used passive resistance in the fifties were for the economic betterment of blacks in the South. Those kind of issues could not even be discussed because those leaders were too "red." Those issues themselves displayed our divisiveness at a time when the Pledge of Allegiance claimed that we were: "One Nation Under God Indivisible With Liberty And Justice For All."

Although the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950's was essentially patriotic, it had to prove that it was committed and resilient enough in order to draw continual violence by racists before the White House and the country as a whole would not only be embarrassed by it, but even accept its legitimacy. Only then could it garner financial

assistance from white liberals and political support from national politicians who initially had feared for their political lives. In other words, the moderate religious and liberal white leadership and even the black church leaders in the South had to see that the black masses were participating in a moral battle of social justice, before they could free themselves from the stigma of an isolated black radical leadership which the McCarthyites had been able to exploit. Our students should learn that TV had to show the reality before the above changes occurred, and before the justice Department would act.

However, even before that, King and his followers had to draw to the movement the reluctant older generation of black workers and some of the moderate leaders who had only watched with trepidation and from the sidelines those first local activities of the S.C.L.C.

The social movement had its own bind, took the opportunity that arose to use its capacity, and developed the solidarity which most successful social movements eventually do. This curriculum can be used to teach our students the social movement formula developed by F. Lamond Tunis as it relates to the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950's.

It was in this schizophrenic world that I was growing up. I was watching the white middle class TV shows, imbibing the religious fervor of my father's "shul", which had a very large membership (I did not then know that the Christian churches' memberships were also growing by leaps and bounds), and feeling quite safe as I walked with my friends to the movies in East Liberty every Friday or Saturday evening. However, I was also already rebelling against something which I was still too young, at age thirteen, to even grasp. (At age twelve, I had viewed the race riot at the Highland Park swimming pool.)

The hypocrisy of those times of peace and prosperity was becoming evident to me. By the age of thirteen, I had seen poverty, racial violence, and was clear about the fact that there had been attacks on American citizens whom I did not know personally. I did know that they were not viewed favorably because they had held different views than the majority did about peace and security issues. In the early fifties, we had a boarder who my father told me had been pro-Wallace, a Progressive. All I knew about him was that he was a soda salesman. Only a few years later, did I learn that Wallace had been called a "pinko"; and even though he had been, or because he had been, a protege of Eleanor Roosevelt, he had been fired by Truman.

It would be at least five more years before I began to read more about these issues and understand the social, political, and cultural diversity of America. I also began to see the lack of progress during the Civil Rights Movement's first struggles; but for me the worst blow was to come in 1957. It was then that I could not find my favorite author's books on the shelves of the Carnegie Library. I had already read Howard Fast's Freedom Road, My Glorious Brothers and The American.

If I had not understood how my country embarrassed and irritated me and my "liberal" feelings previously, now at the age of eighteen, I realized what a shocking affect that curtain which the government had hung over our country's democratic system had on me and others who had similar backgrounds.

As many young people would do, I became politically active in the Peace Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the Migrant Workers' battles, and even in 1968, the first Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers strike, one which preceded serious discussions of the term collective bargaining by public school teachers in most major American cities.

Ironically, Howard Fast himself wrote in The Naked God, published in 1957, "Whatever the Communist Party once was, today it is a prison for man's best and boldest dreams.1 Fast,197) He was referring to how it did not allow writers to express themselves freely while being Communist Party members in the United States and of course not in the Soviet Union itself. I had not yet read other books such as The God That Failed and so I was only aware of the lack of freedoms and equal rights within our own country in the 1950's. Therefore, in order to give a balanced view to students, one must review Stalinism and the trials of that regime. One must also describe Communism's internal censorship and other totalitarian methods during the 1950's. By the end of the decade, there was a general frustration and an ideological vacuum which would not be filled so easily even during the Kennedy era. Many young people who believed in democracy and freedom would face many more difficult challenges in the 1960's, but they had already received a very good education with which to face them. It is up to us as teachers of American History to pass on that education.

## **ACTIVITY SECTION AND LESSON PLANS FOR THE UNIT FOR C.A.S. 11th GRADE STUDENTS**

In this Activity and Lesson Plans section, I have included a Study Guide with some specific dates and events for the students to use as they read. We will discuss the text book readings in conjunction with that Study Guide, and we will also review the answers to the film questions related to Part I and Part II of the Fifties on the third day of the unit. I will hand out on Day I a specific reading assignment in the Interpretations Book, mentioned in the Narrative section. The students will need to write an essay on the three historical views of scholars in regard to the cause of the Cold War. They will present and discuss their essays on Day III. On Day II, Professor Firestone will speak on the Cold War, specifically analyzing how it began and who were the movers in both the U.S.S. R. and the United States. The three interpretations include the Orthodox, the Revisionist, and the Realist approaches. We will discuss that issue as part of our initial study of the Cold War. I will use my personal anecdotes where appropriate during the first three days. On Days IV, V, and most likely VI, we will begin to analyze the political and social events of the 1950's as well as the impact of American culture in order to enable the students to develop enough of a perspective to answer the three major essay questions. Of course, economic issues will be raised, since the study guide also points to policy on agriculture and union issues. America's years of plenty are also a major part of one of the images. The second and third handouts will include the ups and downs of the relationship between the United States and the USSR (on a graph) and the trouble spots during the Cold War.

On Days VII and VIII, the students will prepare for two group activities. One will be a 1950's dinner which will be hosted by one American leader such as President Truman or Eisenhower and at which the invited guests such as Martin Luther King Jr. George Kennan, Senator McCarthy, Supreme Court justice Warren, Rosa Parks, will express their views on one or two major issues. (These will be related to the three major questions.) There will be two different groups for this activity, and each group will have its dinner presentation for 30 minutes. We will finish this activity on Days IX and X. The other group activity which will include three to four students in a group with the goal to create a presentation depicting the culture and the atmosphere in the 1950's. As these students have done before for other time periods, they will use song, dance, poetry, oral reports, visual aides, such as signs or models, and any other methods to depict the 1950's culture.

These presentations will be finished on Day XII. The next set of activities will include a few special reports and more discussion and analysis of the major questions. The major issues will be summarized by a final review and then an evaluation of the unit which will be one essay test and one multiple-choice test (Days XIII and XIV).

## **STUDY GUIDE FOR C.A.S. UNITED STATES HISTORY STUDENTS: THE COLD WAR AND MAJOR DOMESTIC ISSUES OF THE 1950's**

1. **TRUMAN'S FAIR DEAL:** This included minimal success with raising the minimum wage, public housing, and Social Security Act 1950 (Bailey, 899900). Do not forget the Taft Hartley Law in 1947 during Truman's Watch. (See Bailey and Kennedy, 10th Edition, pp. 876-877.)
2. **COLD WAR:** Yalta Agreement, the UN established, Cold War Interpretations, the Truman Doctrine, I.M.F., the Marshall Plan, Recognition of Israel, USSR's Warsaw Pact in 1955 after the establishment of NATO, the European Union, the National Security Council, N.S.C. 68, the CIA, the Defense Department, the Berlin Blockade, Kennan's article on Containment, and of course Churchill's term the Iron Curtain stretching from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic. Meanwhile in Asia: Civil War in China and the Nationalists retreat to Formosa, the Reconstruction of Japan, and the Korean War ended in 1953 with 38th parallel intact and prisoner exchanges (signed at Panmunjoun.) In 1951, the Chinese under Mao threatened Formosa, and we sent the 7th fleet there. 13% of our GNP was used for defense by 1953. See how we were coordinating NATO by 1955 to which W. Germany had been added.
3. **COLD WAR PART II: 1952 - 1956,** Ike with Dulles had decided to lower the military budget. We would use the nuclear threat, but after 1956 began to see it was very expensive so turned to using CIA coups and/or conventional weapons. In the 1950's, we also backed or overthrew democratic (We said pro-Communist) regimes or regimes which hindered our earning power. For example, we were active in Guatemala and Iran, but also we backed Batista in Cuba and Jimenez in Venezuela. Nixon praised the former dictator publicly. Trouble spots in which we did get involved in were: the Middle East via the Suez crisis in 1956; but at the same time, we did not help to further the Hungarian Revolution. Poland and Czechoslovakia were completely Soviet-controlled, as was Rumania, which never had free elections. In 1953, Stalin died which helped end the Korean War and in 1956, Khrushchev condemned Stalinism, which helped us in some way to cooperate with him temporarily. In 1957, the Russians launched Sputnik and we countered with N.D.E.A. In 1957, we also had and used the Eisenhower Doctrine to contain Communism in Middle East. We used it with 14,000 troops in Lebanon. In 1958, the USSR and Ike discussed the banning of nuclear tests, but inspection ran into snags.

In 1958, Khrushchev told the U.S., the Brits, and the French to get out of Berlin in 6 months, but we held on and he backed off. In 1959, there was a meeting at Camp David after Khrushchev spoke to the UN and suggested complete disarmament, but soon after the Soviet Union shot down our U.2 spy plane and the idea cooled off. The next conference became a shambles; and we entered the 1960's on a low plain in our relationship with Soviets.

4. CIVIL RIGHTS: The Smith Act of 1940 and the McCarran Internal Security Act as well the Yates Case, McCarthy's work, Nixon's role, and the Alger Hiss case.
5. THE AMERICAN DOMESTIC SCENE: This includes TV, advertising, the dream homes in the suburbs; but it also includes the literature of Kerouac, Reisman, Mailer, and Galbraith. The Eisenhower anti-New Deal is in full swing, but he does build interstate highways, and Benson who hates T.V.A. does pay for farmers' surplus. The Republicans pass the Landrum Griffin anti-Labor Act, allegedly to curtail gangsterism in the unions.
6. CIVIL RIGHTS PART II: There is the King-led Civil Rights Movement and the N.A.A.C.P. with lawyers to fight the White Primary and Jim Crow, but the sit-ins and S.N.C.C. will be around in the 1960's to radicalize the Movement. The latter will become more active by 1963, and soon our government will try to control the Movement, including King's nonviolent one. This is true by 1963 and more so after King's anti-Vietnam position is made public. Even the March on Washington was allegedly "supervised" by the Federal government; and we know Hoover investigated Martin Luther King Jr. (including wire-taping his home.) Soon, S.D.S. will begin its attacks on the Vietnam War and other protest issues. Do not forget the Warren Court, Brown vs. the Board of Education, and of course Eisenhower's reactions. Also remember Little Rock and of course the Freedom Rides, Mississippi Burning, and the shootings of African-Americans by police and soldiers who never were found guilty. Rosa Parks and other Civil Rights heroes, both white and black did a lot to change things but suffered together. Then the 1970's found some calm. Of course the 1968 Democratic Convention was another sample of domestic violence by some of the authorities, particularly against S.D.S. youth.

## **QUESTIONS ON THE FILM "THE FIFTIES" FOR ALL C.A.S. UNITED STATES HISTORY STUDENTS**

1. Why did the producer and the narrator show images of the explosive 1960's at the beginning of the documentary on the 50's?
2. What did Robert Payne write in 1949?
3. What did he mean by that statement?
4. What was the paradox of the 1950's?
5. What did Americans think they faced while it was the "best of times?"
6. How long after Harry S. Truman took office did he decide to use our A Bomb?
7. From the end of the war until 1950, how many babies were born in the U.S.A.?
8. How did Levitt mass-produce the American Dream?
9. Did African-Americans have any chance to indulge in that dream? Was there any recourse in relation to their not receiving rights to indulge in the dream?
10. What began to scare Americans by 1949? What did American scientists believe we had to do? What encouraged that attitude?
11. What did Teller have in mind in regard to a new development?
12. How did Americans cope with Armageddon in the 1950's?
13. In which city were allegedly "dangerous" demonstrators rounded up?
14. Which movie helped us create the image that would add to our growing paranoia?
15. What was scaring U.S. citizens the most in the 1950s? What added to that fear?
16. Which profession was the first major victim of the U.A.H.C.?
17. How many careers did McCarthy destroy? How did he destroy himself?

**QUESTIONS ON PART II OF THE FILM "THE FIFTIES."  
FOR ALL C.A.S. UNITED STATES HISTORY CLASSES**

1. To what did TV introduce Americans in the 1950's?
2. According to this film, about what did Americans learn in the 1950's?
3. What question did the narrator of the "Fifties" documentary ask?
4. What was the ratio of our population to the world's wealth in the 1950's?
5. In the early fifties, what did Americans fear?
6. What was left over from the New Deal period which still shook consumers?
7. In the 1950's, what connection was made in America between religion and spending money?
8. What was Motivational Research?
9. What was the average number of TVs Americans purchased per year?
10. What did T. V. do for the average American?
11. What did Vance Packard's book postulate?
12. What kind of experiments did Americans fear?
13. Describe how Rosser Reeves use TV advertisement to sell things?
14. How did he perceive himself? Was he a spiritual person? Explain.
15. How did Reeves believe he could sell Dwight Eisenhower?
16. How did he execute his strategy? To what extent did he succeed?

C.A.S. students of United States history classes will listen to two protest songs from the 1950's and 1960's. However, they will answer the first three questions before they listen to the songs. The class will also discuss those three answers before they listen to the tape. After listening quietly and writing down answers, they will discuss the rest of the questions and answers.

1. What songs have you ever heard or heard about from 1950-1980?
2. What type of groups would have composed them?
3. What type of messages did these songs deliver? (Name one.)
4. What type of music does "we shall overcome" remind you of?
5. Who were the promoters of this song in the 1960's?
6. Why did they not use it in the 1950's?
7. Do you think there were other groups who did not feel this song was radical enough? If so, which ones?
8. Write one verse for this song keeping its non-violent nature or civil disobedience nature in it.
9. The next song deals with the changing times and was written by Bob Dylan (Bobby Dylan to us 60ers). He changed his style often. He wrote "the times they are a-changin'" when songs were becoming very political. You will notice also that there are references to the bible. After J.F.K.'s assassination, Dylan would not sing it. However, the younger radical civil rights and Vietnam protesters and youthful social action groups did, and they were therefore willing to depict the generation gap by singing it. What is the mood of the song? Why was Bob Dylan angry and who was he angry at when he sang it?
10. How were the times changing when he wrote it in the 1960's? Are they not always changing? What was so different about the 1960's?
11. What metaphors does Dylan use to describe the changing times? There are at least 3.
12. When you listen to "where have all the flowers gone", done by the Kingston trio and often by Peter, Paul, and Mary, you should know it was written before the war in Vietnam became an issue. What wars were the songwriters thinking about? (Pete Seeger was the main writer, and he had been blacklisted in the 1950's by the house Un-American activities committee for his views. This was of course due to McCarthyism and the "red scare.") Have we learned anything about preventing wars since 1935 when this was written? Do you have any good examples of our learning?



Questions for all C.A.S. classes on the CBS documentary of the Vietnam War:

1. What were we doing to help the French crush the Nationalist Vietminh in the 1950's? Which nation was hindering them from receiving their independence?
2. Where did the French army lose a major battle and then decide to give up that section of the Southeast Asian Empire referred to as Indo-China?
3. Does the film describe Kennedy's not wanting us to send ground troops but to still oppose militarily the North Vietnamese's control of the south? (This was after the peace conference divided the country into two parts (at the 17th parallel.) What did Kennedy send to support the government of Diem? Why did he do so?
4. What happened to Diem? Who arranged it so that he no longer ruled?
5. What and when was the resolution passed which gave our president free rein to do whatever he wanted in Vietnam?
6. Who were the Vietcong? How did we fight them in the south?
7. Were we always successful in the south versus "Charlie"? Explain how the Vietcong fought.
8. Why did Johnson not run in the 1968 election, and who from the Republican side beat his VP, who had suffered the stigma of Vietnam as well as L.B.J.? What new policy did the new President develop?
9. What connection can you make between the policies of Eisenhower in the 1950's and Kennedy and Johnson in the 1960's in regard to Vietnam and the 'domino' theory?

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There will be a Supplemental Bibliography for Student Reports, which will include the books listed below:

Einstein, Albert, Out of My Later Years, New York, Philosophical Library, 1950.

Fromm, Erich, Escape from Freedom, New York, Discus Books, 1969.

Jowitt, Earl, The Strange Case of Alger Hiss, Garden City, New York, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1953.

There will also be three films for the students to view and answer questions which pertain to the 1950's and 1960's (For the questions, see the Study Guide pages preceding the Bibliography page)

1. "The Front"
2. "The Fifties", Part I and Part II
3. The CBS Documentary, "The Vietnam War"