

WELCOME TO America in the 1950s

Young Frank Sinatra



Optional video clip: Little Richard





QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

How do we define an era? Which/whose story determines how we remember the past?

Note the variation in how different textbooks have titled chapters about the same period, the 1950s:

The Fearful 50's

Peace and Prosperity

Realizing the American Dream

Complacency and Contentment

Anxiety and Alienation

Culture of Conformity

**How do you characterize the 1950s
based on your reading?**

**Consider: What kind of information
might shape how envision the
period?**

If you had been a high school student in the 1950, you would been shown a series of educational films at school, created to portray what life could or should be like in the 1950s. Topics from ranged from dating to the Cold War.

These give us unique insight into what the 1950s were like (or what they wanted them to be like)!

Examples of 1950s educational films on kazanashistory.weebly.com

- [Duck and Cover](#)
- [How Quiet Helps at School \(1953\)](#)
- [How to Say No: Moral Maturity](#)
- [How Much Affection? \(1957\)](#)
- [What to Do on a Date \(1950\)](#)
- [Mind Your Manners \(1953\)](#)
- [Are You Popular? \(1947\)](#)
- [Habit Patterns](#)
- [1949: How to Be Well Groomed](#)
- [The Show Off \(1954\)](#)
- [The Procrastinator \(1952\)](#)
- [Appreciating Our Parents \(1950\)](#)
- [Snap Out of it! Emotional Balance \(1951\)](#)
- [Going Steady \(1951\)](#)
- [How Do You Know its Love? \(1950\)](#)
- [The Trouble with Women \(1959\)](#)
- [A date with your family! \(Dinner in a 1950s home\)](#)
- [Obligations \(1950\)](#)
- [A Word to the Wives](#)
- [The Outsider \(1951\)](#)

WHAT DID CHARACTERIZE THE '50s?

Main events and changes of the decade



BABIES!



A COLD WAR



ECONOMIC BOOM



SUBURBIA



**ROCK & ROLL & A NEW
"TEENAGE" CULTURE**



NEW TECHNOLOGY



CIVIL RIGHTS



America at this moment stands at the summit of the world"

-British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, 1945

ORDER OF TOPICS REVIEWED

Table of Contents

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

**Repairing the Post-War World & the beginning of the
Cold War**

McCarthyism at Home

The Korean War Abroad

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS:

Booming Economy

Innovation

Suburbia

The Baby Boom

Teenage Life

Alienation in the 1950s



Post War

Anxiety and Suspicion

The Cold War

Review – The situation in 1945

With the end of WWII, America found itself as the richest and most powerful country in the world. But almost as soon as the “hot war” was over, it was replaced by a tense and perilous “cold war.” This was not just a struggle among nations, but between the political ideologies and economics of a free-market system vs. communism. It would last for 50 years and at times get very warm.

GREAT REVIEW
THE COLD WAR - PART 1: From World War to Cold War



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpYCplyBknl&list=PL0DB141613D47D333&index=2>

Post War World

What challenges were facing the world post-WWII?



Review – The situation in 1945



Review – The situation in 1945



Review – The situation in 1945



Review – The situation in 1945



Review – The situation in 1945

REVIEW

The end of the war produced a particularly difficult situation. Nazi power over Europe had been destroyed, but what should replace it?

In many countries **there was no proper government.**
Decisions had to be made about the future of these countries.

Inevitably American and Soviet leaders had very different views on the best type of government for the countries of the new Europe.

Hitler had predicted the conflict between these two shortly before his death:

“AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE GERMAN REICH, AND UNTIL THERE IS RISE IN NATIONALISM IN ASIA, AFRICA, OR LATIN AMERICA, THERE WILL ONLY BE TWO POWERS IN THE WORLD: THE UNITED STATES AND SOVIET RUSSIA. THROUGH THE LAWS OF HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION, THESE GIANTS ARE DESTINED TO STRUGGLE WITH EACH OTHER EITHER THROUGH WAR, OR THROUGH RIVALRY IN ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL IDEAS.”

- HITLER’S POLITICAL TESTAMENT, APRIL 1945

Review – The situation in 1945

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES - INTRODUCTION

“Just who was to blame for the Cold War depends on how you look at it.

From the Soviet perspective, America was too powerful to be trusted. It hadn't suffered nearly as much during WWII. The USSR was determined to surround itself with countries that would not be a threat to it in future wars.

From the U.S. point of view, the Soviet Union was uncooperative, failed to honor agreements, and was determined to aggressively spread communism and all that came with it abroad.

Americans would find themselves in the next phase of history committed to combatting communism at home and abroad, with threats both real and imagined.” – Steve Wiegand

Review – The situation in 1945

SOVIET PERSPECTIVE - FURTHER EXPLANATION

The Soviet leaders felt that their country had made by far the most important contribution to the winning of the war.

As a result, Soviet leaders believed their country had a right to shape the future of Europe.

The British and the Americans had helped, but Stalin believed, with some justification, that the Soviet Union had cut the heart out of the German army. 10 million Germans, who represented 80 percent of German losses, died on the Eastern Front. They also argued that they had suffered much more than the other allies during the war. About 15 million Soviet soldiers and civilians had been killed by the Germans. In addition, many people had died because of shortages of food and the other harsh conditions of wartime.

Stalin was determined that this should never be allowed to happen again.

Review – The situation in 1945

SOVIET PERSPECTIVE - FURTHER EXPLANATION

How could the Soviet Union ensure that the devastation of the Second World War was not repeated?

In 1914 and 1941 Germany had attacked Russia through **Poland**. In 1945 Stalin thought that sooner or later there could be yet another attack through Poland.

To stop this he was determined to control Poland and other East European states.

Why did he care about the other Eastern European states? Before the Second World War these countries had been independent. Almost all of them had been governed by right-wing, anti-communist leaders. In Moscow it seemed quite likely that if the countries of Eastern Europe were again allowed to be independent or hold free elections to choose their form of government, the states would again become anti-Soviet.

Review – The situation in 1945

SOVIET PERSPECTIVE - FURTHER EXPLANATION

Also troubling to the Soviet Union was that the USA was by far the wealthiest country in the world in 1945.

The Soviet government was convinced that American business leaders were planning to spread their power and increase their profits by buying up companies in other countries and selling American goods wherever they could. They feared that in this way the USA could build up a new kind of world empire. American troops would not need to conquer new lands: American capitalism would do it instead.

As good communists it was the job of the Soviet leaders to try to stop American capitalism from spreading, even if it meant using force to set up a group of friendly communist countries.

Review – The situation in 1945

AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE - FURTHER EXPLANATION

The USA was well-placed to play a leading role in world affairs after 1945.

It was in excellent economic condition, unlike almost every other powerful country, and its citizens experienced the highest living standard in the world. They strongly believed that capitalism and free-trade was the way forward for all other countries.

At the start of 1946, **there was a strong feeling that Americans should take a tough line with the USSR.** This hard line approach was greatly influenced by recent memories. **Isolationism had ended in disaster for the world. They were now decisively committed to a new approach to foreign policy: no more appeasement of dictators.** They had seen the tragedy that could be ushered in by that kind of patience (as had happened with Hitler in the 1930s) and by economic crisis. In their view, both had to be actively fought against and they worried that Stalin could not be trusted.

Review – The situation in 1945
AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE – FURTHER EXPLANATION

"America will have to take the responsibility for world collaboration or we shall have to bear the responsibilities for another world conflict." - FDR to Congress, 1945

Practice Question: Fascism and communism do not possess identical beliefs, but they do hold a few important ideas in common. Which of the following **accurately describe** similarities and differences between fascism and communism? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY:**

- a. Historically, when either aim has been put into practice both philosophies have ultimately ended up using the tactic of totalitarianism (with all power resting in the hands of a single militaristic leader).
- b. Both fascists and communists wanted an end to imperial takeover and sought self-determination for oppressed countries.
- c. They both believe in destroying the will of the individual in favor of the will of "the people." In other words, fascists wanted a unified society that put group goals over individual goals and so did the communists.
- d. Fascists pushed for an identity rooted in extreme nationalism which often relied on racial identity. Racial philosophy was not ever an official part of communist ideology; instead, communism emphasized equality for a global classless society.
- e. Fascists were NOT concerned with eliminating private property or class distinctions (which was the principal aim of communists). For this reason, fascists kept wealthy supporters on their side because they were anti-communist.

Life in Stalin's Russia



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scCalaTGO2M>

Roots of the Cold War: SOVIET SITUATION & PERSPECTIVE

IMPORTANT REMINDERS (FEEL FREE TO ADD MORE TO YOUR NOTES THAN WHAT IS HERE THOUGH!)

USSR:

- **Bitter because:**
 - **After WWI: West had worked against Communist Revolution (1918-21)**
 - **1930s: USA trusted Nazi's more than Communists**
 - **WWII: Soviets felt they had sacrificed more.** *USSR lost 20 million!*
 - **Post-War: Worried USA trying to spread capitalist influence.**
- **Moving forward:**
 - **Committed to protecting themselves from foreign invasion**
 - Disagreed with west about what to do with Germany & bordering countries post-war

Roots of the Cold War: AMERICAN SITUATION & PERSPECTIVE

IMPORTANT REMINDERS (FEEL FREE TO ADD MORE TO YOUR NOTES THAN WHAT IS HERE THOUGH!)

USA:

- **Emerges as strongest nation**
 - not destroyed by war at home, not in debt like others, **world's richest country**
- **Nuclear "monopoly"**
- **Bitter because:**
 - **Isolationism & appeasement of dictators had ended in disaster** for world in 1930s
- **Moving forward:**
 - Now decisively **committed to new approach to foreign policy: NO MORE APPEASEMENT!**
 - Every communist action would meet an American reaction

Roots of the Cold War: Reasons for Tension & Distrust

- **USA & USSR = extremely different beliefs**
Remember: ONLY reason hostility had been suspended before was their common enemy during WWII
- **Once the war was over, each was convinced the world should follow their example**



A British cartoon from 1941.

What happens next?

After Germany was defeated, the U.S.-Soviet struggle immediately influenced the chain of events. The biggest conflict was over future security.

Both superpowers wanted arrangements in Europe that made it more likely for their worldview to dominate.

The U.S. promoted capitalism and variations on democracy. The Soviet Union promoted communism, which, in practice also meant totalitarianism.

A good chunk of Western Europe was solidly in the American camp, but the bigger question was Germany and parts of Eastern Europe.

Planning for the Post-War Future

- Leaders of **Britain, US, and Soviet Union** met twice in 1945 (*Yalta & Potsdam*)
- **Agreed on the following:**
 - Germany (and its capital city) would be **divided into zones**
 - **Liberated countries would be allowed to hold FREE ELECTIONS** to choose the government they wanted
 - A new **United Nations** organization would **replace League of Nations**
 - Agreed to **compromise** on **Soviet desire for "Sphere of Influence"**

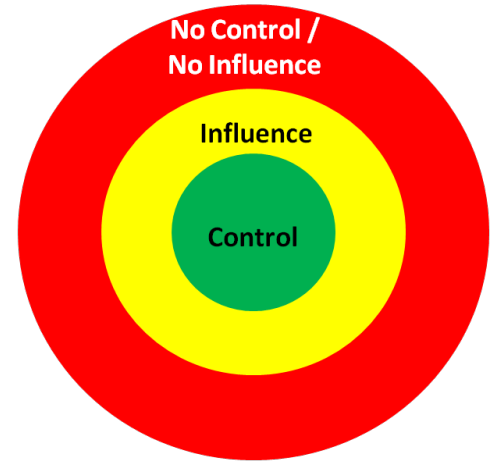


"All democratic and anti-Nazi parties shall have the right to take part and put forward candidates"

What is a Sphere of Influence?

Definition: A country or area in which another country has power to affect developments although it doesn't hold formal authority.

Stalin wanted this because of the losses they had suffered during WWI and WWII.



STALIN'S WORDS:

"THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN. THE GERMANS MADE THEIR INVASION OF THE USSR THROUGH FINLAND, POLAND, AND ROMANIA. THE GERMANS WERE ABLE TO MAKE THEIR INVASION THROUGH THESE COUNTRIES BECAUSE, AT THE TIME, GOVERNMENTS HOSTILE TO THE SOVIET UNION EXISTED IN THESE COUNTRIES. WHAT CAN THERE BE SURPRISING ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET UNION, ANXIOUS FOR ITS FUTURE SAFETY, IS TRYING TO SEE TO IT THAT GOVERNMENTS LOYAL TO THEIR ATTITUDE TO THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD EXIST IN THESE COUNTRIES?"

Tension & Distrust Behind the Scenes...

- Problems: **Tension & distrust** persisted

“Perhaps you think that just because we are the allies of the English we have forgotten who they are and who Churchill is. There is nothing they like better than to trick their allies.”

– *Stalin speaking to a fellow Communist*

"The Soviet Union has become a danger to the free world. A new front must be created against her onward sweep. This front should be as far east as possible. A settlement must be reached on all major issues between West and East in Europe before the armies of democracy melt."

- Winston Churchill to FDR right after Yalta

Problems with the Agreements

- **False expectations/different interpretations of agreements existed on both sides**
- **Compromise (over places like Poland) = not possible**

“The agreements tried to achieve compromise over the future of Poland. In fact, compromise was not possible. Either Poland was democratic or it was friendly towards the USSR. Leading figures in Polish society were anti-Russian. Stalin knew that he could only make sure Poland was friendly by destroying free speech.”

– Historian Tony McAleavy

What happens next...

- Stalin's armies **occupied Eastern European**
- **Began setting up Pro-Soviet, communist governments (giving local communists leading positions)**
 - **Opposition parties were undermined and elections were rigged**
- **Outcome:**
 - **By 1946, dominates all eastern Europe**
 - Installed pro-Soviet puppet governments in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Czechoslovakia



“ At Yalta it had been agreed that the existing government of Poland was to be reconstructed Anyone with common sense would see that this means the present communist government was to form the basis of the new government. No other understanding of the Yalta agreement is possible. The Russians should not be treated as fools.” - Stalin

“The British went to war on account of Poland. They can never feel this war will have ended rightly unless Poland has a fair deal in the sense of independence and freedom, on the basis of friendship w/ Russia. It was on this that I thought we agreed at Yalta.” – Churchill

The Iron Curtain

What is it?

- A phrase used to describe the division between the capitalist west countries and the communist east countries.

“...An iron curtain has descended. Behind that line lie all the states of central and eastern Europe. The Communist parties have been raised far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. This is certainly not the liberated Europe we fought to build. Nor is it one which allows permanent peace.” - Churchill

IMPORTANT



End of Friendship – Start of Cold War

- **New American President: Harry Truman**
 - Tougher approach than FDR
 - Saw Soviet actions as prep for a Soviet take over of Europe
- **Surface level cooperation was now replaced with visible suspicion and accusation.**

“Molotov left [saying] ‘I have never been talked to like that before in my life.’ To which Truman said ‘Carry out your agreements and you won’t get talked to like that.’”

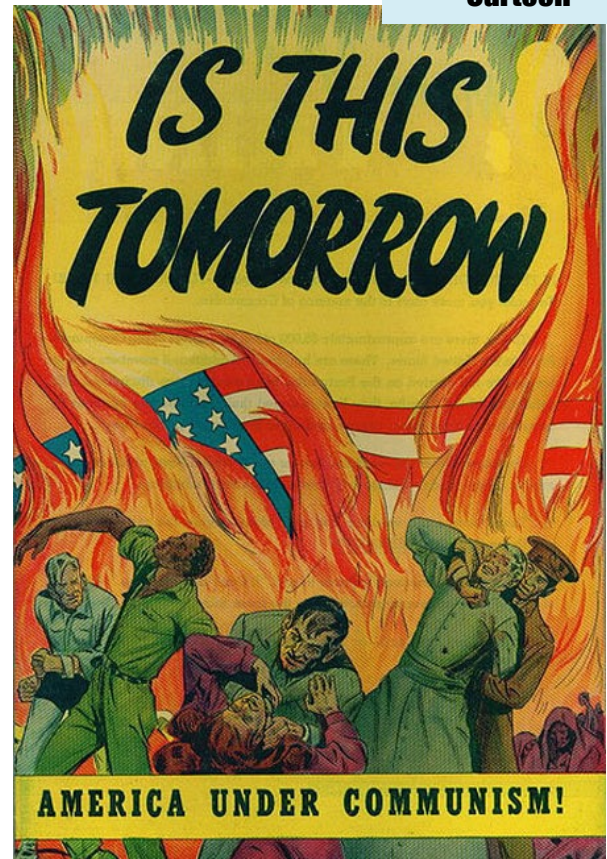
“We’ve got to teach the Russians how to behave.” - Truman



A propaganda war developed

American
Cartoon

Russian Cartoon



"In USSR There Are Many New Schools, In USA Schools Are Getting Closed All the Time" (1950s)

Response to Post-War Situation: American Intervention

The most pressing matter was the devastation and chaos caused by WWII.

- Many countries in western Europe were **in economic crisis, on the brink of collapse, and in need of help.**

"Millions of people in the cities are slowly starving. **Without further prompt and substantial aid from the US, economic and political dislocation will overwhelm Europe.**"

IMPORTANT

- American reporting on conditions in Europe in 1946.

US didn't want same thing to happen that had happened after WWI

- **They worried that economic chaos → takeover of radical leaders**

Response to Post-War Situation: American Intervention

- **General Decision:**
 - USA would build its OWN "sphere of influence"
 - Every communist action would meet an American reaction
 - Example: Greece - US supports British troops who support anticommunist
 - **BIG IDEA: America would offer support (in the form of \$\$\$\$\$, equipment, advice) to any country under threat of Communist take-over.**

The Beginning of American Containment

- Result: **New era in USA's attitude towards world politics**
- Became known as **CONTAINMENT** = USA would use wealth to **stop communism from spreading further**

Containment through the Truman Doctrine & Marshall Plan

Truman Doctrine:

**American commitment to
“assist victims of
aggression and
intimidation throughout
the world.”**

Truman announced his 'doctrine' in a speech to the US Congress on 12 March 1947.

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections and the suppression of personal freedom.

I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must help free peoples to work out their own destiny in their own way.

IMPORTANT

Ideological justification **IMPORTANT**

“THE WORLD WAS NOW DIVIDED BETWEEN TWO WAYS OF LIFE — NOT JUST COMMUNISM VS. CAPITALISM, BUT DEMOCRACY VS. AUTHORITARIANISM. ACCORDING TO TRUMAN, IT WAS NECESSARY TO SHOW THE WORLD THAT WE HAVE SOMETHING POSITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE TO OFFER, AND NOT JUST ANTI-COMMUNISM.

TO SUCCEED AS AN ALTERNATIVE, THE AMERICAN IDEOLOGY COULD NOT SIMPLY SHOW THAT COMMUNISM SUPPRESSED FREEDOM. IT WOULD ALSO HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT CAPITALISM COULD SUSTAIN IT.”

– *HISTORIAN JOHN LEWIS GADDIS*

From Truman Doctrine to Marshall Plan

“The function of government, as the USA saw it, was to facilitate freedom. That might require regulating the economy to an extent, but never, as in the Soviet Union, commanding it in all respects.

People could still be trusted to own property, markets could be trusted to allocate resources, and the results could be trusted to advance everyone’s interests. Leaders would lead only by consent; laws would be applied equally; free press would provide transparency and therefore accountability. The underlying basis of government would be hope, not fear. None of these conditions existed within the U.S.S.R, its satellites, or the occupied territories it administered.

All of this talk, however, would mean little without PERFORMANCE. This is where the Marshall Plan came in.” – *HISTORIAN JOHN LEWIS GADDIS*

IMPORTANT

Marshall Plan - 1947

“Our policy is directed against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos.” – Marshall

Plan for **MASSIVE ECONOMIC AID TO EUROPE**

- \$17 Billion to rebuild Europe
- Enormously generous but also motivated by American self-interest

*Based on belief that Communism succeeds **only when people faced poverty and hardship***

Marshall Plan - Further Explanation

How would it work?

- **Voluntary program** (countries would apply for aid)
 - Provide substantial assistance BUT involve the recipients from the start in determining how it would be used.
 - Only requirement would be that countries receiving it work together and that old antagonisms fade (like between France and Germany)
 - **The goal: restore self-confidence, prosperity, and social peace by democratic means**
 - This included reviving German and Japanese economies, thereby securing the future of capitalism in those and surrounding regions, and transforming those the governments into DEMOCRACIES.

Note: At the time, sounded wildly improbable.

The culture of democracy had not taken root in those countries.

IMPORTANT

Marshall Plan – Did it work?

- **Great success followed**
 - **\$13 billion provided**
 - **Lowered import taxes and trade increased**
 - **By 1952, officially ended!**
 - **Western European countries & Japan well on road to great economic prosperity**
 - **Even though these regions became successful competitors (in some regards) of the USA, it was also useful to the USA - it now had created many wealthy trade partners!**



Soviet Response to the Marshall Plan

- **Why didn't the Soviet Union just do the same thing?**
 - It couldn't. The Soviet Union was in NO position to compete.
 - It did force them to join **Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance)**. This was never effective as the USSR had too little resources to offer and all decisions were made to benefit the USSR at the expense of the other countries.
 - “Nor were they as flexible, as comfortable with tossing out hierarchy, or as seemingly “naïve” as the Americans to throw out “theory” the way Americans did when they embraced spontaneity.”
 - *Note: Americans were happy to work with more moderate socialists... American attitude for a time became: “results are more important than ideological consistency.”*

**NOT IN
YOUR NOTES**

Despite it's success, not all Americans loved the idea of giving American taxpayer money to people abroad.





Dorman Smith in The Phoenix Gazette, NEA
"He's finally getting the hang of it."

Europe in Ruins and the Marshall Plan



Watched during class

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VdXTw4q6y8&t=1281s>

Optional but helpful additional review!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMXjsVLOznc&t=1s>

Optional but helpful additional review!



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMXjsVLOznc&feature=emb_logo

Battle of the Ideologies – Did it work?

“Both of the ideologies were meant to offer hope. One of them however had come to depend for its functioning upon the creation of fear. The other had no need to do so.”

Where were these ideological differences most recognizable?

A Truly Divided Germany

The influence of the Marshall Plan was the first step in creating a truly divided Germany.

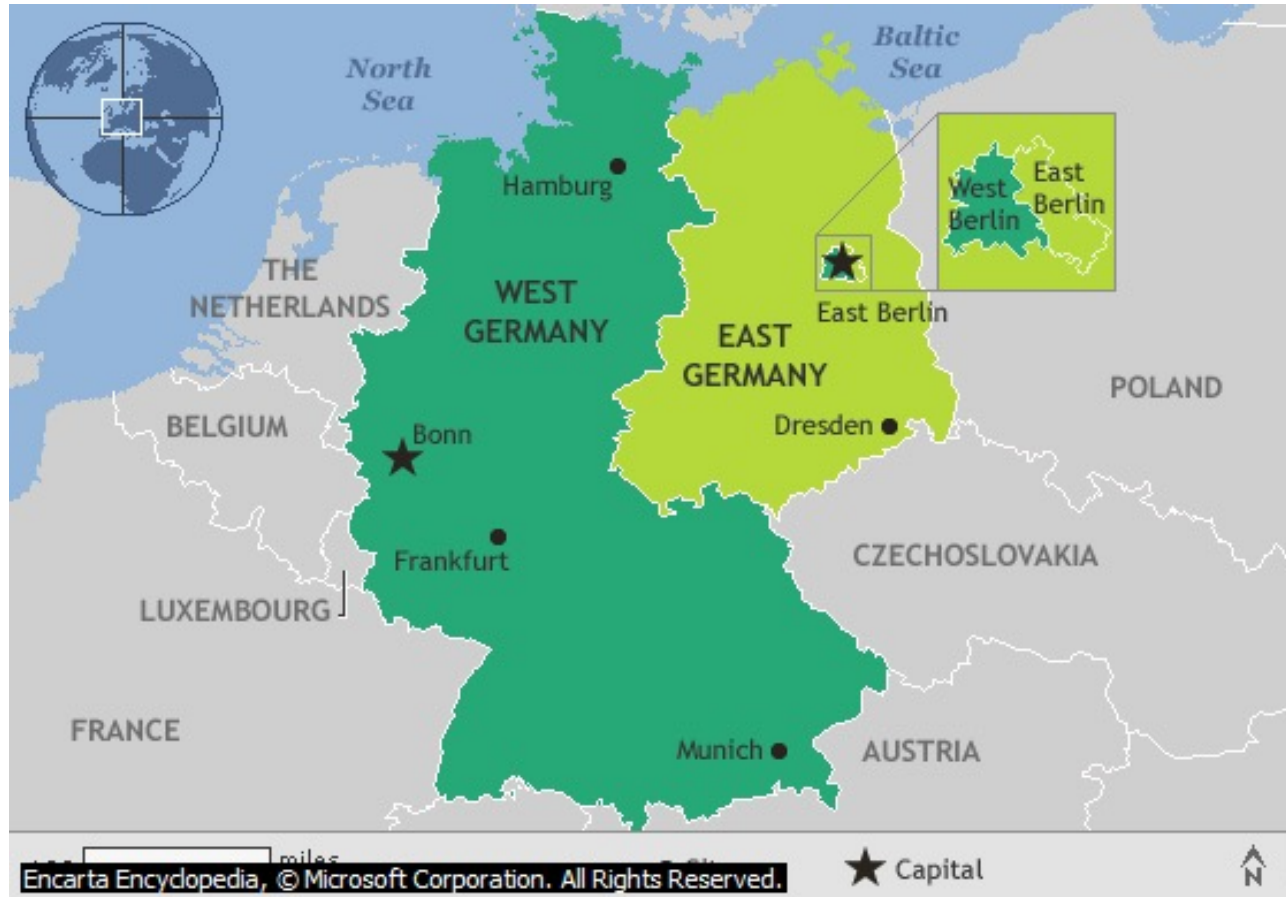
Who combined their zones in Germany?

Britain, France, and USA
(creating Western Germany and West Berlin)

Western Germany & West Berlin **began functioning as a separate country from eastern sector** *(at first just economically).*



Remember: West Berlin, even though it was stuck in the Eastern Zone, functioned separately as well from Eastern Germany & East Berlin (as if it were connected to West Germany).



WHERE WE LEFT OFF...

The agendas of the Soviet Union and its Western Allies soon began to diverge as WWII came to a close, particularly over the future of Germany.

The Soviet Union wanted to punish Germany economically, forcing the country to pay war reparations and contribute its industrial technology to help postwar Soviet recovery.

On the other hand, the Allies saw Germany's economic recovery as crucial to preserving it as a democratic buffer against the spread of communism from Eastern Europe, over which Stalin had consolidated Soviet influence.

- History Channel

WHERE WE LEFT OFF...

The Marshall Plan, an economic extension of the Truman Doctrine, was aimed to help Germany and other European nations rebuild after the ravages of war, foster positive relations among participating states with the United States and make them less vulnerable to the attraction of communism.

Implemented in April 1948, the Marshall Plan directly opposed Stalin's vision of the postwar world: He had hoped the United States would withdraw from Europe entirely, leaving the USSR as the dominant influence in the region.

- History Channel

The Berlin Blockade & Airlift



THE BERLIN BLOCKADE & AIRLIFT - 1948

First major 'conflict' of Cold War



- **West German & West Berlin are improving but Russia had wanted to keep Germany weak**
 - **Stalin is also worried that strong west Berlin will open them up to another German attack**
 - **Doesn't want East Germans to see West Berlin looking more prosperous/better off. In the East, the Soviet Union was extracting resources rather than aid.**
- **Stalin cuts off supplies and blockade West Berlin in protest of Western actions.**

**What did the Soviet Union have to say about what they were doing?
Not much...**

**June 23, 1948:
"The transport division of the Soviet Military Administration is compelled to halt all the passenger and freight traffic to and from Berlin at 06.00 hours because of technical difficulties."**

The Berlin Airlift

- **2 million in West Berlin - would starve if roads remained blocked**
- **How to react? Do nothing? Send tanks? or....**
 - **Decision: Supply the city by aircraft**
- **Determined not to let Stalin take West Berlin, the USA and British:**
 - **flew nearly 200,000 missions**
 - **1,000 arrivals and departures every day**
 - **1.5 million tons of food, fuel, and equipment sent**



Watched during class:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2d7eOF8-4gw>

Significance of the Blockade

- **Stalin gives up in 1949, and Germany remained split in two. This event only intensified the Cold War.**
- **Berlin = Became symbol of western struggle with communist East**
- **East/ West Germany remain split in two**
 - **West Germany = Federal Republic of Germany.**
 - **East Germany = German Democratic Republic.**
- **Military alliances (NATO vs. Warsaw Pact)**
 - **NATO = defensive alliance against USSR. Set up in 1949 by the Western Allies. Dominated by USA.**
 - **Warsaw Pact set up 1955 by Russia**
- **Nuclear Arms Race begins**

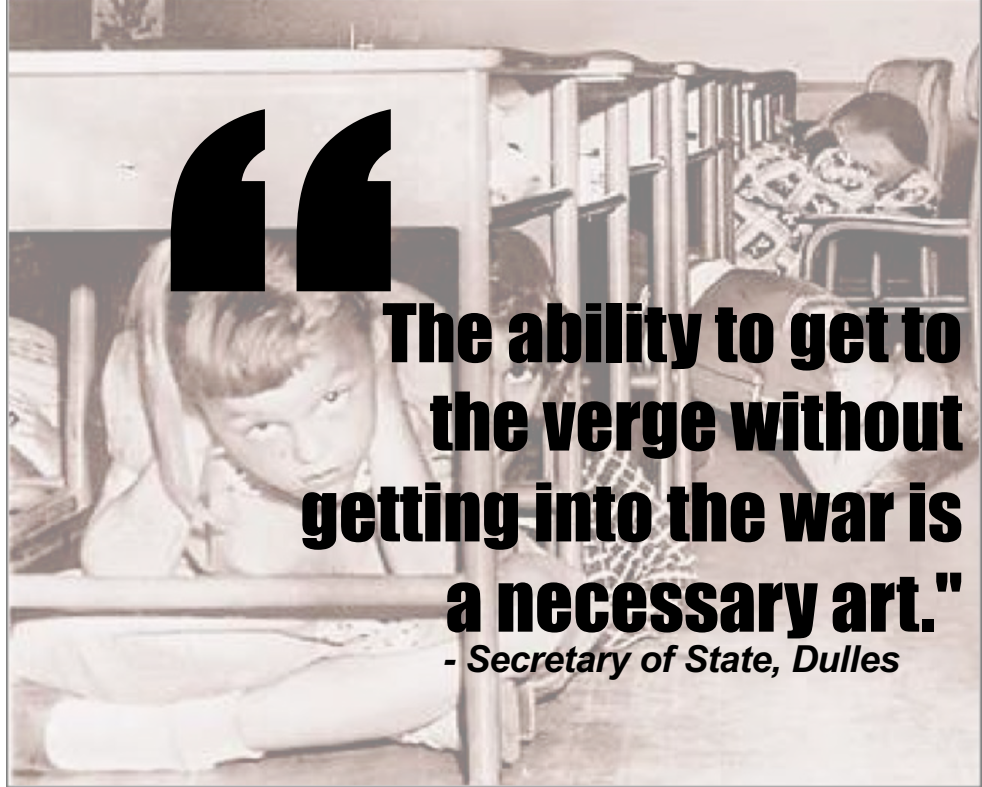
NATO Agreement:
"The parties to this treaty agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all. They agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them will assist by taking such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force."

The End of the Blockade

While Stalin had hoped the Berlin Blockade would force the Allies to abandon their efforts to create a West German state, the success of the Berlin Airlift confirmed such hopes were in vain.

By May 1949, when the Soviets lifted the blockade, the crisis in Berlin had hardened the East/West division of Germany and all of Europe, ushering in the Cold War in earnest.

The Arms Race



“

The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is a necessary art.”

- Secretary of State, Dulles

- **Under Eisenhower, US stepped up weapons development**
- **Aim = Deterrence** (make U.S. military so strong, everyone fears retaliation)
 - **Relied on brinkmanship**
- **BIG IDEA: Americans willing to use LOTS of resources to catch up/surpass USSR in weapons development**
 - **Result: Millions will become employed by military-industries**

Arms Race Timeline

NOT IN YOUR NOTES – DO NOT NEED TO WRITE DOWN

Timeline:

- **1945 = USA makes first atomic bomb**
- **1949 = USSR detonates its first bomb (ahead of schedule)**
- **1952 = USA creates first hydrogen bomb (1,000 time more powerful than the atom bomb)**
- **1953 = USSR detonates own H-Bomb**
- **1956 = USA develops U-2 spy plane to spy on Soviet weapons development**
- **1957 = USSR develops fist ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile)**
- **1961 = USSR detonates largest H-bomb ever seen**



Optional [Click here for a clip on the Hydrogen Bomb](#)



Our arms might be mighty, ready for instant action... we recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications... we must guard against the acquisition of unnecessary influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for this disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

- Eisenhower, farewell address, 1961

Did people feel safe?

IMPORTANT

- **NOT REALLY**
 - **Some leaders saw the existence of nuclear weapons as a deterrent – no one was willing to commit suicide by starting a Nuclear War.**
 - **But others realized that the world had moved into a time where they were minutes away from mass destruction**
- **Stakes so high that one suicidal leader, one poor decision, one innocent mistake could trigger catastrophe and destroy Europe, USA and USSR in minutes**
- **Was a topic of everyday conversation**
- **Most common feeling: helplessness and fear**

“Would we be the last generation to walk this planet?”

Duck and Cover



Duck and Cover



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKqXu-5jw60&t=482s>



Have you no sense of decency sir?

- Lawyer to McCarthy at hearings, 1954



Fear of Communism at Home & McCarthyism

- Had always been communist presence in the US, but after WWII, communists represented something different to the American people
- **This intensified after 1949 (China became Communist & USSR's developed nuclear ability)**
- Government programs were created to seek out threats
- Certain groups were targeted (immigrants, Hollywood, etc.)
- While there were real threats and espionage, even President Truman said **went too far**.
 - *Remember your reading: He called activities "un-American."*

IMPORTANT

McCarthyism

Definition = "the political practice of publicizing accusations of disloyalty or subversion with insufficient regard to evidence."

McCarthyism

The TED Ed logo is a red circle with the text "TED Ed" in white, positioned in the upper right corner of the illustration.A black and white illustration depicting a hearing or trial. Several men in suits are seated at a long table, each with a vintage microphone. They have various expressions of concern and skepticism. In the foreground, the profile of a man's head is shown, looking towards the panel. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century political cartoons.

WHAT IS
MCCARTHYISM?

(AND HOW DID IT HAPPEN?)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N35lugBYH04>

McCarthyism – Optional Further Explanation

- McCarthy embarked on a "witch hunt" to root out and prosecute communists and sympathizers -- using controversial techniques and making accusations with scant evidence. He used severe intimidation, and often the threat of prison, when trying to get information -- and he often had little or no solid evidence on which to base his claims. The names of many witnesses and suspects were released publicly, resulting in defamation of character and guilt by association. Careers and reputations were irreversibly damaged. And when all was said and done, there were no convictions for subversion.
- Television was ultimately McCarthy's downfall. McCarthy had been viciously interrogating suspects in public and private hearings for some time, but the American people witnessed his brutal methods firsthand when the Army-McCarthy hearings were broadcast on live TV in 1954 (the doing of President Eisenhower, who wanted the public to see McCarthy's misdeeds).
- What happened?
 - McCarthy was making accusations against Army officers for not answering questions about their political beliefs. One Lieutenant outright refused to answer McCarthy's questions. In response, McCarthy said, "Any man in the uniform of his country who refused to give information to a committee of the Senate which represents the American people, that man is not fit to wear the uniform of his country." McCarthy then went one step further when he interviewed a decorated veteran and hero in Normandy, calling him "a disgrace to the uniform he wore". **McCarthy had finally gone too far.**

Cold War “Heats Up” Abroad

**BIG IDEA TO REMEMBER:
U.S. and Soviet Union fought
through other people – ‘at arms
length’ through “proxy wars”
but they never engaged in direct
armed conflict with one another.**

Cold War “Heats Up” Abroad

Proxy War: **Korea**

- **Background:**
 - Japanese had controlled between 1904-45
 - USSR & USA liberated Korea during WWII
- **End of WWII: Korea was divided at the 38th parallel:**
 - North: Communists (led by Kim Il Sung ← the current leader’s grandfather)
 - South: anti-Communist (by Syngman Rhee - very unpopular)
- **Conflict starts: June 1950**
 - North Korea invaded South Korea
 - *America believed Russians to be behinds the attack*



Korea

- **Truman orders US troops** (led by General MacArthur in Japan) **to help South Korea**
- **Backed by UN Security Council**
- **Becomes a UN Conflict**
 - **Soldiers from Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand participated**
- **Conditions were some of the worst America had ever seen: treacherous cold, blinding snow-storms, POWS tortured**



Optional but recommended clip of Korean War POW describing his experience

[\(CLICK HERE\)](#)

Dilemma: From Containment to “Roll Back”

- When US troops reached the 38th parallel, they now faced a dilemma: **Should they go beyond containing communism and begin “rolling back” the frontiers of communism (removing it from countries where it existed)?** 
- If the US pushed on, Mao Zedong said China would join the war with full force
- Despite warning, **UN approved plan to move on**. Nature of war now changed - clear that US was trying to **remove communism from Korea entirely**.
 - **First time US had tried to liberate a communist state since WWII**

“China will not sit back with folded hands and let the Americans come to the border.” - Official statement made by Chinese government

Korea – Ending in Stalemate

- **What happened next?**
 - **Americans had underestimated the Chinese. South Koreans and Americans were forced to retreat & were pushed back across the 38th parallel into South Korea.**
- **To escalate or not?**
 - **MacArthur wanted to carry on the war, invade China, and even use nuclear weapons if necessary. Truman says no. Allies and Truman not ready for another world war. Went back to policy of “containment”**

“MacArthur’s approach would have involved America in the wrong war, in the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong enemy.” – J. Bradley

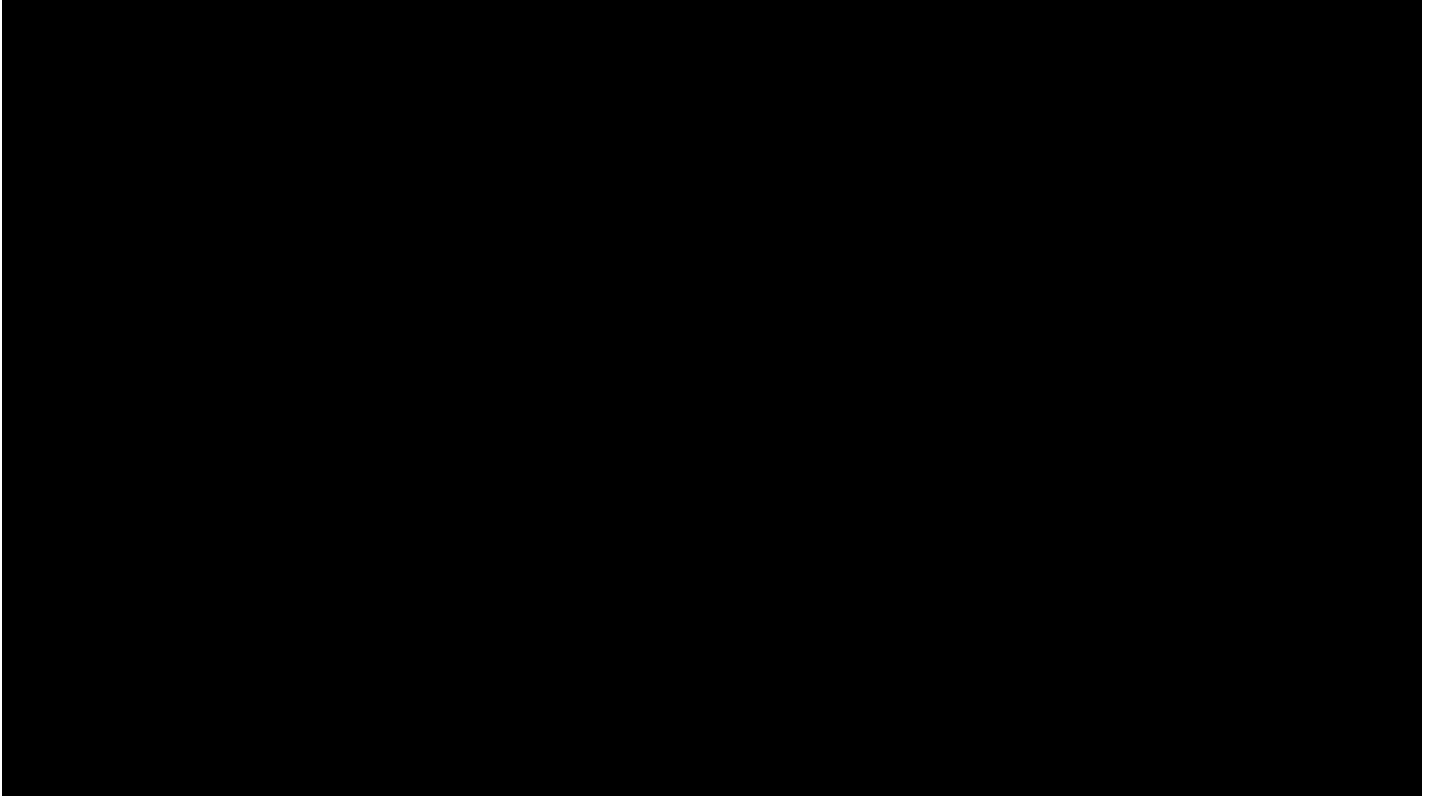
Korea – Ending in Stalemate

- **Outcome:**
 - **By 1951, the war became a stalemate.** After three years of constant fighting, the adversaries negotiated boundaries.
 - **This official cease-fire was declared in 1953, and is still in effect today.**



Optional but helpful additional review!

The Korean War: 5 Things To Remember (History Channel)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1wFrXKanC0&t=114s>

Optional but helpful additional review!

Excerpt from Inside North Korea



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGzcxG2gBIE>

Post War

Comfort and Security

The Mood of the 1950s



The Mood of the 1950s

- Wanted to **put the horrors of the war behind them & enjoy the comforts of home**
- **Eager to acquire everything denied to them by depression & war**





Post War

Had life improved?

“The Affluent Society”



As the US emerged from the war, the American Dream of having a secure job and owning a house came within reach for many Americans. Fueled by the postwar baby boom, the economy rocketed forward in the late 1940s and 1950s.

The spreading of huge organizations, the rapidity of technological change, the rise of suburbia, the standardization of life posed new challenges, but for the most part, people coped with them. That may not be very dramatic. But it is the truth about daily life as most people knew it and lived it... Life in the 1950s... was a better life then they, or almost anyone else, had ever known."

- Geoffrey Perret

IMPORTANT

Had life improved significantly?

- In the decades that followed WWII, **Americans experienced sustained uninterrupted economic growth.**
- **The average standard of living for Americans doubled in the 1950s and 1960s.**
- **The average American earned 15x that of the average worker in Western Europe.**

Your textbook says: "By the 1970s, better educated and better equipped American workers could produce nearly twice as much in an hour's labor as they had in the 1950s."

Happy Days?

"Of course, not everything was as rosy as it seemed. Beneath the pristine exterior, a small group of critics and nonconformists pointed out the flaws in a suburbia they believed had no soul, a government they believed was growing dangerously powerful, and a lifestyle they believed was fundamentally repressed. And much of America was still segregated.

Nevertheless, the notion of the 1950s as happy days lived on. Perhaps when measured against the Great Depression of the 1930s, the world war of the 1940s, the strife of the 1960s, and the malaise of the 1970s, the 1950s were indeed fabulous."

Source: <http://www.ushistory.org/us/53f.asp>

Evidence of Economic Boom

- **US industry = strongest in world**
- **GNP = \$212 bil in 1945, \$504 bil in 1960**
- **Per capita income (avg. annual income) = \$2,219 (up from \$1,223)**
- **Major corporate expansion**
 - *Many converted wartime businesses into civilian production.*
- **A few large firms dominated each industry**
 - *ex: General Motors, General Electric, Chrysler, Ford*



What was the key to prosperity?


**Increasing productivity
was the key to prosperity.**

Technological Advancements

make it a very special picnic with...

TUPPERWARE®

...the Perfect Picnic Partner



Seals Airtight
Unbreakable
Lightweight
Colorful
Spillproof
Flexible
Compact
Child-Safe

Research and development, which was hugely funded by the government during the war, helped create a variety of new products such as the computer that could be used in the civilian economy.

High demand (consumers with \$ in their pockets) led to strong inspiration for invention!

Common aim = save the consumer time and \$

- *ex: lawn mower, dishwasher, television, computer, Tupperware*

Television



- **By 1955: watched 4-5 hours a day!**
- **TV advertising soared**
- **\$170 million in 1950 to nearly \$2 billion in 1960**
- **TV Guide magazine = best selling magazine**
- **1954 - first frozen "TV dinners"**

- **New era of mass media led by television emerged**
 - **In 1948, only 9% of homes had T.V**
 - **In 1950, 55% of homes had T.V.**
 - **By 1960, 90% of American homes had T.V.**
- **SIGNIFICANCE: Had a tremendous cultural influence on creating a shared sense of values & ideals**

IMPORTANT



TELEVISION

What were they watching?

Optional but
**STRONGLY STRONGLY
RECOMMENDED CLIP!**



I LOVE LUCY

GUNSMOKE

**American
bandstand**

**FATHER KNOWS
BEST**

**LEAVE IT TO
BEAVER**

Advances in Medicine



- **Vaccines!**
 - *For polio (which had killed or paralyzed 20,000 American children each year!)*
- **Antibiotics**
- **New surgical techniques!**
 - **First transplants, first heart surgery**

Optional: [Click here for a clip about penicillin](#)

Changes in the Workforce

- **More held “white-collar” jobs** (clerical, management, or professional jobs)
 - **Why?**
 - **Blue-collar work (manual labor) become more often automated**
 - **Sales, advertising, insurance & communications fields boomed**
 - **Many more w/ college degree**

Changes in the Workforce

- **New confidence w/ working conditions**
- **Soon, enjoyed highest living standard in the world**
- **60% live in "middle class"**
- **Consumerism/materialism became the symbol of success**

IMPORTANT

THE BABY BOOM



- **1946-64 → 70 million babies!!!!**
 - **one baby every 7 seconds**
- **represents the largest generation in US history**

WHY SO MANY BABIES?

IMPORTANT



**CONFIDENCE IN
ECONOMY**

**DECREASING
MARRIAGE AGE**

LARGE FAMILY IDEAL

**MEN RETURN FROM
WAR**

**ADVANCES IN
MEDICINE**

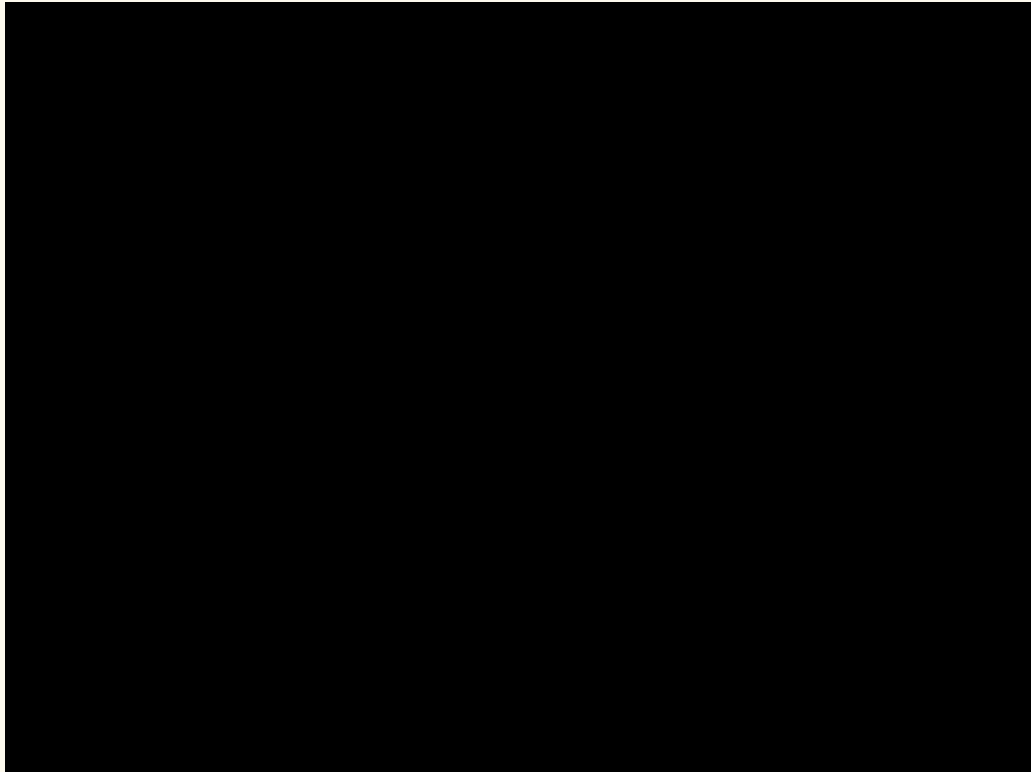
SUBURBIA



- **GI Bill made it easy to purchase new homes** (along with providing easy loans for college)
- **For the first time, many could afford to buy their own home!**
 - *By 1960, almost 60% of American families owned their own homes*
- **Mass production techniques were used to build homes**
 - **Example: Levittown, NY** had 17,000 homes (used assembly line methods)
- 13 million new homes were built in the decade, **85% of them were in the suburbs**
- **Response? Most were grateful, but some criticized the conformity**

IMPORTANT

Optional BUT VERY
STRONGLY STRONGLY
RECOMMENDED CLIP!





Socially, these communities have neither history, tradition, nor established structure... Everybody lives in a 'good neighborhood'; there is ... 'no wrong side of the tracks.'"

**- Harry Henderson, "The Mass Produced Suburbs,"
Harper's, 1953**

CAR CULTURE



- **Became more dependent on automobile**
 - New models each year!
 - Sales increased by 50%!
 - 8 mil new cars each year!
- **Interstate Highway built**
- **Led to the creation of new businesses**
 - Gasoline companies introduced the idea of "credit cards"

1950s Family



- **Strict roles for father, mother, and children (strict gender roles as well)**
- **This was reinforced through advertisements, television, education** (*see website for a long list of educational films YOU would have watched in school had you been a teenager in the 1950s!*)

1950s Family

- **Side note on gender roles:**

Note irony: More women were in the workplace even more than ever before, yet popular culture glorified the traditional feminine roles of homemaker.

IMPORTANT

- **Advice books/magazines urged women to:**
 - 1) leave workforce
 - 2) embrace role as wife & mother
- **Dissatisfaction will lead to women's rights movement 1960s**



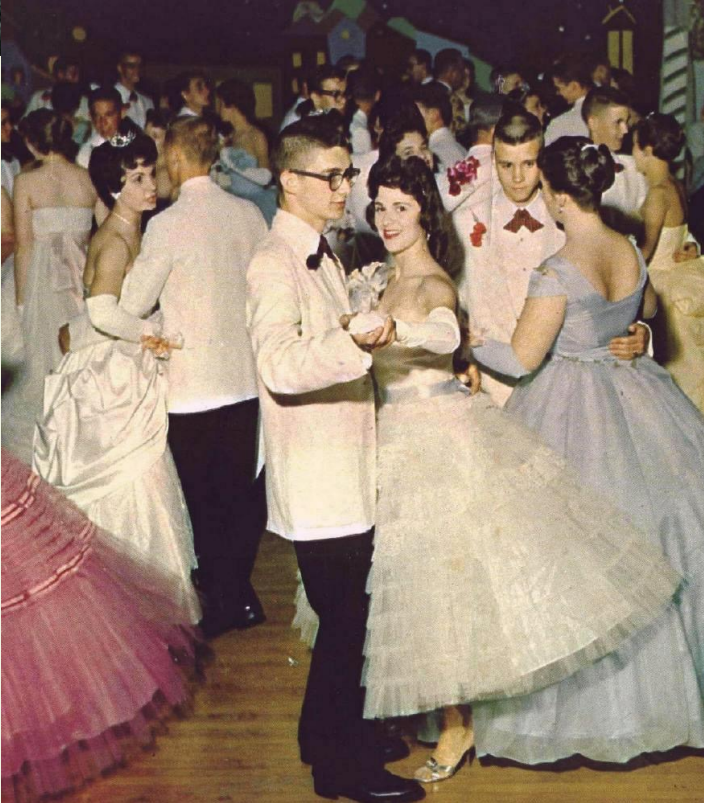
[Click here](#) for more interesting 1950s ads that demonstrate just how strong these gender roles were!

Post War

**Youth
in the
1950s**



TEENAGERS



- **Often called the "silent generation" - expressed little interest in problems/crises of the world**
- **More leisure time than before**
- **Expected to stay in school**
- **Greater sense of conformity**
- **Marriage often just after high school**

Challenging Conformity

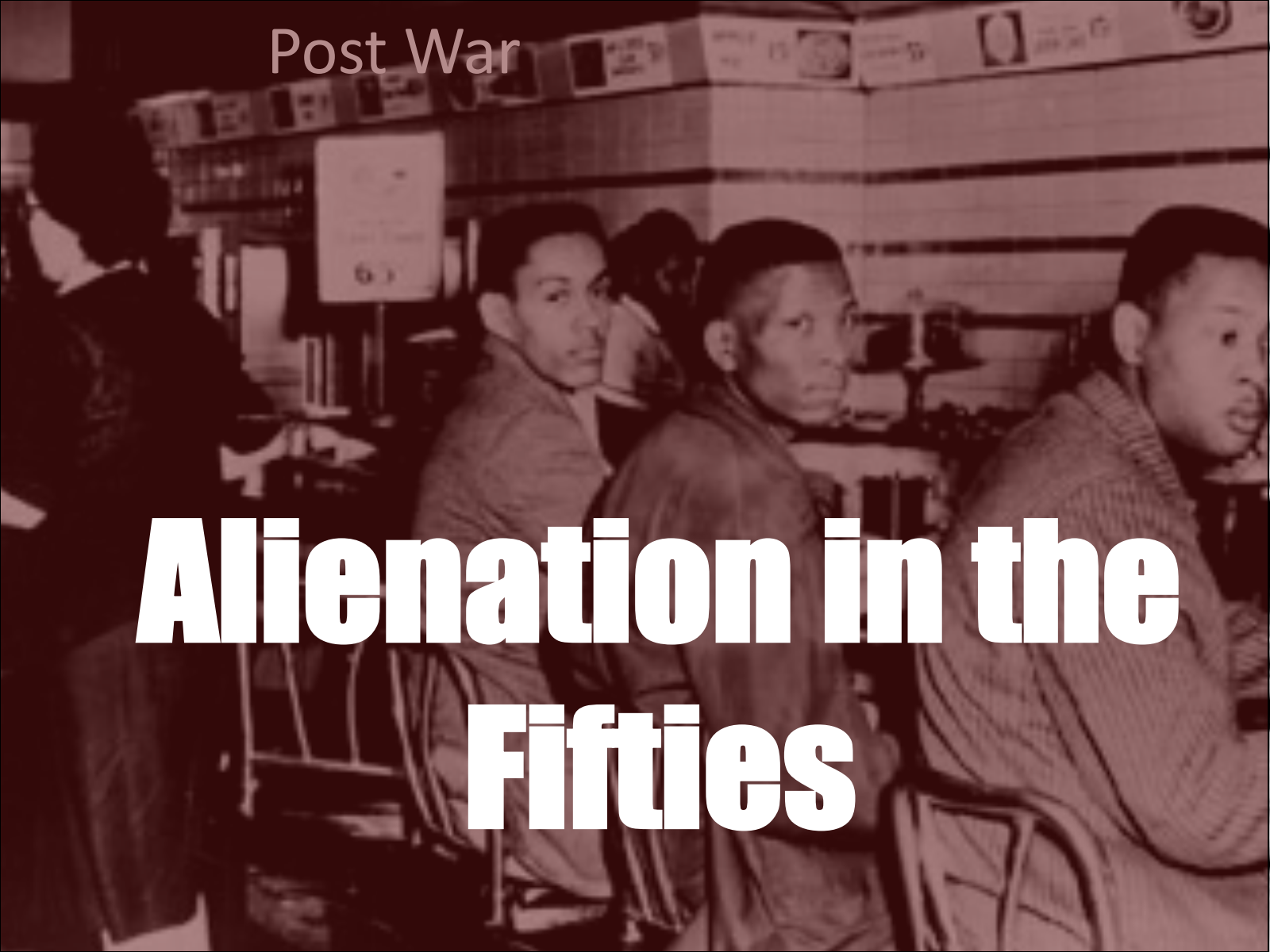


- **Beginning of rock-and-roll**
 - Many feared it would cause a rise in immorality
 - Feared it would lead to desegregation
- **"Beatniks"** = members of the beat generation challenged "traditional patterns of respectability"

IMPORTANT

Post War

Alienation in the Fifties



HAPPY DAYS, BUT NOT FOR ALL

- As noted, on average Americans were earning 15x more than those in Europe, conveniences (which had previously only been available to the rich) were now accessible to many...
- **BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER...**
 - **Poverty rates for black Americans were 2x that of white Americans**
 - **Remember that racism existed in the form of:**
 - **Disenfranchisement**
 - **economic discrimination**
 - **housing discrimination**
 - **education restrictions**
 - **violence**
 - **targeting of veterans and limitations of the GI Bill**
- **THUS: The demand for equality will grow in the 1950s!**