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TRANSLATION THEORY AND PRACTICE FACULTY

# *Self-work*

“THE PROGRESSIVE ERA of the  
USA”

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## **THE PROGRESSIVE ERA**

During the period known as the Progressive Era (1890s to about 1920) the U.S. government became increasingly activist in both domestic and foreign policy. Progressive, that is, reform-minded, political leaders sought to extend their vision of a just and rational order to all areas of society and some, indeed, to all reaches of the globe.

### **America Looks Outward**

During the 1890s, U.S. foreign policy became aggressively activist. As American industrial productivity grew, many reformers urged the need for foreign markets. Others held that the United States had a mission to carry Anglo-Saxon culture to all of humankind, to spread law and order and American civilization. In 1895 the United States intervened bluntly in the **VENEZUELA BOUNDARY DISPUTE** between Venezuela and imperial Britain, warning that, under the Monroe Doctrine, American force might be used if Venezuela were not treated equitably. A Cuban revolution against Spain, begun in 1895, finally led to the **SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR** (1898), undertaken to free Cuba. From that war the United States emerged with a protectorate over Cuba and an island empire consisting of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam. The United States also annexed the Hawaiian Islands in 1898, completing a bridge to the markets of the Far East. In 1900 the American government announced the **OPEN DOOR POLICY**, pledging to support continued Chinese independence as well as equal access for all nations to China's markets.

William McKinley's assassination brought Theodore **ROOSEVELT** to the presidency in 1901. A proud patriot, he sought to make the United States a great power in the world. In 1903 he aided Panama in becoming independent of Colombia, then secured from Panama the right for the United States to build and control a canal through the isthmus. In 1904, in the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, he asserted the right of the United States to intervene in the internal affairs of Western Hemisphere nations to prevent "chronic wrongdoing." The following year his good offices helped end the Russo-Japanese War. Having much strengthened the navy, Roosevelt sent (1907) the Great White Fleet on a spectacular round-the-world cruise to display American power.

### **Progressivism at Home**

Meanwhile, the Progressive Era was also underway in domestic politics. City governments were transformed, becoming relatively honest and efficient; social workers labored to improve slum housing, health, and education; and in many

states reform movements democratized, purified, and humanized government. Under Roosevelt the national government strengthened or created regulatory agencies that exerted increasing influence over business enterprise: the Hepburn Act (1906) reinforced the Interstate Commerce Commission; the Forest Service, under Gifford PINCHOT from 1898 to 1910, guided lumbering companies in the conservation of--and more rational and efficient exploitation of--woodland resources; the Pure Food and Drug Act (1906; see PURE FOOD AND DRUG LAWS) attempted to protect consumers from fraudulent labeling and adulteration of products. Beginning in 1902, Roosevelt also used the Justice Department and lawsuits (or the threat of them) to mount a revived assault on monopoly under the Sherman Anti-Trust Law. William Howard TAFT, his successor as president (1909-13), drew back in his policies, continuing only the antitrust campaign. He approved passage of the 16TH AMENDMENT (the income tax amendment, 1913), however; in time it would transform the federal government by giving it access to enormous revenues.

Republicans were split in the election of 1912. The regular nomination went to Taft, and a short-lived PROGRESSIVE PARTY was formed to run Theodore Roosevelt. Democrat Woodrow WILSON (1913-21) was therefore able to win the presidency. Attacking corporate power, he won a drastic lowering of the tariff (1913) and establishment of a Tariff Commission (1916); creation of the FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM (1913) to supervise banking and currency; a broadened antimonopoly program under the CLAYTON ANTI-TRUST ACT (1914); control over the hours of labor on the railroads (Adamson Act, 1916); and creation of a body to ensure fair and open competition in business (Fair Trade Commission, 1914).

During the Progressive Era, southern governments imposed a wide range of JIM CROW LAWS on black people, using the rationale that such legalization of segregation resulted in a more orderly, systematic electoral system and society. Many of the steps that had been taken toward racial equality during the Reconstruction period were thus reversed. The federal government upheld the principle of racial segregation in the U.S. Supreme Court case PLESSY V. FERGUSON (1896), as long as blacks were provided with "separate but equal" facilities. In the face of the rigidly segregated society that confronted them, blacks themselves were divided concerning the appropriate course of action. Since 1895, Booker T. WASHINGTON had urged that blacks should not actively agitate for equality, but should acquire craft skills, work industriously, and convince whites of their abilities. W. E. B. DU BOIS insisted instead (in *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903) that black people ceaselessly protest Jim Crow laws, demand education in the highest professions as well as in crafts, and work for complete social integration. In 1910 the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE (NAACP) was founded to advance these ideals.

## **Intervention and World War**

President Taft continued to stress the economic aspects of Roosevelt's interventionist spirit. Under Taft's foreign policy (called dollar diplomacy) U.S. firms were encouraged to increase investments in countries bordering the Caribbean in the hope that the American economic presence would ensure political stability there. President Wilson went a step further, seeking not simply to maintain order, but to advance democracy and self-rule. In 1915 he sent troops into Haiti to put an end to the chaos of revolution--and to protect U.S. investments there--and in 1916 he did the same in the Dominican Republic; the two countries were made virtual protectorates of the United States. With Nicaragua he achieved the same end by diplomacy. In hope of tumbling the Mexican dictator Victoriano Huerta, Wilson at first denied him diplomatic recognition, then in April 1914 sent troops to occupy the Mexican port city of Veracruz and keep from Huerta its import revenues. The Mexicans were deeply offended, and in November 1914, Wilson withdrew American forces. The bloody civil war that racked Mexico until 1920 sent the first large migration of Mexicans, perhaps a million people, into the United States (see CHICANO).

After the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Wilson sought vainly to bring peace. In early 1917, however, Germany's unrestricted use of submarine attacks against neutral as well as Allied shipping inflamed American opinion for war (see LUSITANIA). Wilson decided that if the United States was to have any hope of influencing world affairs, it was imperative that it enter the war and fight to protect democracy against what he called German autocracy.

America's entry into the war (April 1917) was the climax of the Progressive Era: Wilson's aim was the extension of democracy and the creation of a just world order. In January 1918 he issued his FOURTEEN POINTS as a proposed basis for peace: freedom of the seas and removal of all barriers to trade; an end to secret diplomacy; general disarmament; self-government for the submerged nationalities in the German and Austro- Hungarian empires; and a league of nations. The addition of more than a million American troops to the Allied armies turned the balance against the Germans in 1918, and an armistice on November 11 ended the war. At the PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE, however, Wilson failed in much of his program, for the other Allies were not interested in a "peace without victory." The British would not agree to freedom of the seas; tariffs did not tumble; self-determination was often violated; key negotiations were kept secret; but in the end Wilson obtained his greatest objective, establishment of the League of Nations to provide collective security against future aggression. Many at home, however, preferred to return to America's traditional isolation from world affairs. When Wilson tried imperiously to force the Senate to accept the entire treaty, he failed. The United States never became a member of the League of Nations.

**THE UNITED STATES TURNS INWARD: THE 1920S AND 1930S**

After its participation in the conflagration then known as the Great War, the American nation was ready to turn inward and concentrate on domestic affairs (a "return to normalcy," as 1920 presidential candidate Warren Harding called it). Private concerns preoccupied most Americans during the 1920s until the Great Depression of the next decade, when increasing numbers turned, in their collective misfortune, to government for solutions to economic problems that challenged the very basis of U.S. capitalistic society.

### **The 1920s: Decade of Optimism**

By the 1920s innovative forces thrusting into American life were creating a new way of living. The automobile and the hard-surfaced road produced mobility and a blurring of the traditional rural-urban split. The radio and motion pictures inaugurated a national culture, one built on new, urban values. The 19TH AMENDMENT (1920) gave women the vote in national politics and symbolized their persistence in efforts to break out of old patterns of domesticity. The war had accelerated their entrance into business, industry, and the professions and their adoption of practices, such as drinking and smoking, traditionally considered masculine. So, too, young people turned to new leaders and values and sought unorthodox dress, recreations, and morals.

Traditional WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant) America fought the new ways. The adoption of PROHIBITION in 1919 (with ratification of the 18TH AMENDMENT) had been a victory of Yankee moral values over those of immigrants, but now many of the great cities practically ignored the measure. The Russian Revolution of 1917 sent a Red Scare shivering through the country in 1919-20; suspicion centered on labor unions as alleged instruments of Moscow. The KU KLUX KLAN, stronger in the northern Republican countryside than in the South, attacked the so-called New Negro, who returned from the fighting in France with a new sense of personal dignity (the HARLEM RENAISSANCE expressed this spirit through the arts), and the millions of Roman Catholics and Jews who had been flooding into the country since the 1890s. The Immigration Law of 1924 established a quota system that discriminated against all groups except northern and western Europeans. In 1925 the spectacular SCOPES TRIAL in Dayton, Tenn., convicted a high school science teacher of presenting Darwinian theories of evolution, which fundamentalist Protestants bitterly opposed.

New ideas, however, continued to inundate the country, and optimism remained high. The U.S. population delighted in the "miracles" that new inventions had brought them--electric lights, airplanes, new communication systems. The solo flight to Paris of Charles LINDBERGH in 1927 seemed to capture the spirit of the age. The business community was praised for its values and productivity. Henry Ford (see FORD family) and his system of cheap mass production of automobiles for people of modest incomes was regarded as symbolic of the new era.

Three Republican presidents occupied the White House during the 1920s. Warren HARDING, a conservative, was swept into office by a landslide victory in 1920. He proved an inept president, and his administration was racked by scandals, including that of TEAPOT DOME. Calvin COOLIDGE, who succeeded to the office on Harding's death (1923), worshiped business as much as he detested government. Herbert HOOVER, an engineer, brought to the presidency (1929-33) a deep faith in the essential soundness of capitalism, which to him represented the fullest expression of individualism. In 1920 the U.S. census showed, for the first time, that a majority of Americans lived in cities of 2,500 people or more.

### **The 1930s: Decade of Depression**

The stock market crash of October 1929 initiated a long economic decline that accelerated into a world catastrophe, the DEPRESSION OF THE 1930s. By 1933, 14 million Americans were unemployed, industrial production was down to one-third of its 1929 level, and national income had dropped by more than half. In the presence of deep national despair, Democratic challenger Franklin D. ROOSEVELT easily defeated Hoover in the 1932 presidential election. After his inauguration, the NEW DEAL exploded in a whirlwind of legislation.

A new era commenced in American history, one in which a social democratic order similar to that of Western European countries appeared. The federal government under Roosevelt (and the presidency itself) experienced a vast expansion in its authority, especially over the economy. Roosevelt had a strong sense of community; he distrusted unchecked individualism and sympathized with suffering people. He nourished, however, no brooding rancor against the U.S. system. He sought to save capitalism, not supplant it.

Recovery was Roosevelt's first task. In the First New Deal (1933-35) he attempted to muster a spirit of emergency and rally all interests behind a common effort in which something was provided for everyone. Excessive competition and production were blamed for the collapse. Therefore, business proprietors and farmers were allowed to cooperate in establishing prices that would provide them with a profitable return and induce an upward turn (under the NATIONAL RECOVERY ADMINISTRATION and the AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ADMINISTRATION). By 1935, however, 10 million were still unemployed, the economy seemed lodged at a new plateau, and the U.S. Supreme Court was ruling such agencies unconstitutional.

The Second New Deal (1935-38) was more antibusiness and proconsumer. Roosevelt turned to vastly increased relief spending (under the WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION) to pump up consumer buying power. In 1933 he had decided to take the nation off the gold standard, except in international trade. Setting the price at which the government would buy gold at \$35 an ounce,

he induced so massive a flow of gold into the country that its basic stock of precious metal increased by one-third by 1940 (expanding by much more the currency available in the economy). This monetary policy and the spending to aid the unemployed succeeded in moving the economy toward recovery before 1940, when the impact of war-induced buying from Europe accelerated such movement.

The impact of the New Deal was perhaps strongest and most lasting in its basic reform measures, which profoundly altered the American system. Farm prices were supported and farm plantings centrally planned; the money supply became a federal, not private, responsibility under a strengthened Federal Reserve Board; and stock exchanges were put under regulation of the SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION. The FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION insured bank deposits, and banking practices were closely supervised under the Banking Act of 1933; the NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT made relations between employers and employees a matter of public concern and control; and under the direction of agencies such as the TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY government facilities supplied electrical power to entire regions, providing a standard for private utilities. Private utility monopolies were broken apart and placed under public regulation; antitrust efforts were reenergized; and economic recessions, then and afterward, were monitored by the federal government, which was ready to increase public spending to provide employment and ward off the onset of another depression.

For the majority of the population, New Deal legislation defined minimum standards of living: the Fair Labor Standards Act set MINIMUM WAGE and maximum hour limitations and included a prohibition on child labor in interstate commerce; the Social Security Act (see SOCIAL SECURITY) made provisions for old-age and disability pensions, unemployment insurance, monthly payments to mothers living alone with dependent children, and direct assistance to the blind and crippled.

In addition, the New Deal helped make it possible for organized unions to gain higher wages; in 1938 the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was formed; members were organized by industry rather than by craft. The New Deal also provided a sense of confidence that in a time of disaster the federal government would take positive action.

Meanwhile, totalitarian movements abroad were inducing world crisis. Congress, mirroring public opinion, had grown disenchanted with the U.S. entry into World War I. This spirit of isolationism led to the passage (1935-37) of a series of neutrality acts. They required an arms embargo that would deny the sale of munitions to belligerents during a time of international war and prohibited loans to belligerents and the travel of Americans on ships owned by belligerents. Congress thus hoped to prevent involvements like those of 1914-17.

## **A WORLD POWER**

The spirit of isolationism eroded steadily as Americans watched the aggressive moves of Adolf Hitler and his allies. President Roosevelt and the American people finally concluded that the United States could not survive as a nation, nor could Western civilization endure, if Hitler and fascism gained dominance over Europe. During the world war that followed, the American nation rose to the status of a major world power, a position that was not abandoned but confirmed in the cold-war years of the late 1940s and the 1950s.

### **Total War: 1941-45**

In September 1940, Congress established the first peacetime draft in American history, and 6 months later it authorized Roosevelt to transfer munitions to Great Britain, now standing practically alone against Hitler, by a procedure called LEND- LEASE. On Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese reacted to stiffening American diplomacy against its expansion into Southeast Asia by attacking the U.S. fleet at PEARL HARBOR in the Hawaiian Islands. This thrust was aimed at immobilizing American power long enough to allow the establishment of a wide imperial Japanese perimeter including all of the western Pacific and China, henceforth to be defended against all comers. Japan, however, in one stroke had succeeded in scuttling American isolationist sentiment, forcing the United States into World War II, and unifying the American people as never before in total war.

The first American military decision was to concentrate on defeating Hitler while fighting a holding action in the Pacific. The next was to form an alliance with Great Britain so close that even military commands were jointly staffed. The year 1942 was devoted to halting, after many defeats, the outward spread of Japanese power and to keeping Hitler's forces from overwhelming America's British and Soviet allies. Large shipments of munitions went to both allies. In November an American force invaded North Africa; it joined the British in defeating the German armies in that region by May 1943.

In 2 months the Allies were fighting the Germans in Sicily and Italy; at the same time U.S. forces in the Pacific were pushing in toward the Japanese home islands by means of an island- hopping offensive. On the long Russian front, German armies were being defeated and pushed back toward their borders. In June 1944 a huge Allied force landed on the French coast, an invasion preceded by 2 years of intense day-and-night bombing of Germany by British and American aircraft. By August 1944, Paris was recaptured. Hitler's empire was crumbling; clouds of bombers were raining destruction on German cities; and on Apr. 30, 1945, with the Soviet troops just a few miles from Berlin, Hitler committed suicide. Peace in Europe followed shortly.

The Pacific war continued, the Japanese home islands being rendered practically defenseless by July 1945. American aerial attacks burned out city after city. In April, Harry S. TRUMAN had succeeded to the presidency on Roosevelt's death. Now, advised that the alternative would be an invasion in which multitudes would perish, including many thousands of young Americans, he authorized use of the recently tested atomic bomb. On Aug. 6, the city of Hiroshima was obliterated; on Aug. 9, the same fate came to Nagasaki. Within a week, a cease-fire (which later research suggests was reachable without atomic attack) was achieved.

The political shape of the postwar world was set at the YALTA CONFERENCE (February 1945) between Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, and Winston Churchill. Soviet occupation of Eastern European countries overrun by the Red Army was accepted, in return for a pledge to allow democratic governments to rise within them. Soviet and Allied occupation zones in Germany were established, with Berlin, deep in the Soviet zone, to be jointly administered. In return for Soviet assistance in the invasion of Japan (which was eventually not needed), it was agreed that certain possessions in the Far East and rights in Manchuria, lost to the Japanese long before, would be restored to the USSR. Soon it was clear that the kind of democratic government envisioned by the Americans was not going to be allowed in the East European countries under Soviet control. Nor, as the Soviets pointed out, was the United States ready to admit the Soviets to any role in the occupation and government of Japan, whose internal constitution and economy were rearranged to fit American desires under Gen. Douglas MACARTHUR.

### **Cold-War Years**

The breach widened steadily. Charges and countercharges were directed back and forth, the Soviets and Americans interpreting each other's actions in the worst possible light. Americans became convinced that the Soviets were thrusting out in every direction, seeking to communize not only the Soviet-occupied countries, but also Turkey, Greece, and Western Europe. In February 1946, Stalin declared in Moscow that there could never be a lasting peace with capitalism. Shortly thereafter, Churchill warned of the "iron curtain" that had descended across the middle of Europe. The COLD WAR had begun.

In March 1947, Truman asked Congress for funds to shore up Turkey and Greece, both under Soviet pressure, and announced the Truman Doctrine: that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Then the MARSHALL PLAN (named for George C. MARSHALL, U.S. chief of staff during the war and at this time secretary of state), approved by Congress in April 1948, sent \$12 billion to the devastated countries of Europe to help them rebuild and fend off the despair on which communism was believed to feed.

True to its Democratic tradition, the Truman administration stressed multilateral diplomacy; that is, the building of an international order based on joint decision making. Nationalism, it was believed, must be tamed. The United Nations received strong American support. Meanwhile, the United States continued the drive toward a lowering of world tariffs (begun in the 1930s). During the war, all recipients of Lend-Lease had been required to commit themselves to lowered tariffs. These commitments were internationally formalized in 1947 in the GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE, when 23 nations participated in an extensive mutual lowering of trade barriers. In 1948, at American initiative, the ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES was established to provide a regional multilateral consultative body in the Western Hemisphere. Within Europe, the Marshall Plan required the formation of Europe-wide organizations, leading eventually to the Common Market.

Toward the USSR, the basic American policy was that known as containment: building "situations of strength" around its vast perimeter to prevent the outward spread of communism. Angered Americans blamed the USSR for world disorder and came to regard the peace of the entire world as a U.S. responsibility. After their immense war effort, many Americans believed that the United States could accomplish whatever it desired to do. Also, having defeated one form of tyranny, fascism, and now being engaged in resisting another, Stalinist communism, the American people assumed with few questions that, since their cause was just, whatever they did in its name was right. Critics of national policy were harshly condemned.

A series of East-West crises, most dramatically the Berlin Blockade of 1948-49, led to the creation (April 1949) of the NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION. The NATO alliance sought to link the United States militarily to Western Europe (including Greece and Turkey) by making an attack against one member an attack against all. As Europe recovered its prosperity, the focus of East-West confrontation shifted to Asia, where the British, French, and Dutch empires were collapsing and the Communist revolution in China was moving toward its victory (October 1949). In June 1950 the North Korean army invaded South Korea. The United Nations Security Council (which the Soviets were then boycotting) called on UN members jointly to repel this attack. Shortly afterward, a multinational force under Gen. Douglas MacArthur was battling to turn back North Korean forces in the KOREAN WAR. As the UN army swept northward to the Manchurian border, Chinese forces flooded southward to resist them, and a long, bloody seesaw war ensued. An armistice was not signed until July 1953, following 150,000 American casualties and millions of deaths among the Koreans and Chinese.

### **Domestic Developments during the Truman Years**

In 1945, President Truman called on Congress to launch another program of domestic reform, but the nation was indifferent. It was riding a wave of affluence such as it had never dreamed of in the past. Tens of millions of people found themselves moving upward into a middle-class way of life. The cold war, and the pervasive fear of an atomic war, induced a trend toward national unity and a downplaying of social criticism. The Atomic Energy Act of 1946 nationalized nuclear power, putting it under civilian control, but no other bold departures were made. What fascinated Americans was the so-called baby boom--a huge increase in the birthrate (the population was at 150 million by 1950 and 179 million by 1960)--and the need to house new families and teach their children.

In the presence of rapidly rising inflation, labor unions called thousands of strikes, leading in 1948 to passage of the Taft-Hartley Act (see LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS ACT), which limited the powers of unions, declared certain of their tactics "unfair labor practices," and gave the president power to secure 80-day "cooling off periods" by court injunction. As union benefits increased nationwide, however, industrial warfare quieted. In 1948 the United Automobile Workers won automatic "cost of living" pay increases in their contracts and in 1955 the guaranteed annual wage. In 1955 merger negotiations were completed for the formation of the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS (AFL-CIO); more than 85 percent of all union members were now in one organization.

Fears that Russian communism was taking over the entire world were pervasive during the Truman years. Soviet spy rings were discovered in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. In 1948-50 a sensational trial for perjury led to the conviction of a former State Department official, Alger HISS, on the grounds that while in the department he had been part of a Communist cell and had passed secrets to the Soviets. In 1950 a Soviet spy ring was uncovered in the Los Alamos atomic installation. These events, together with the explosion (1949) of a Soviet atomic bomb and the victory (1949) of the Communists in China, prompted a widespread conviction that subversive conspiracies within the American government were leading toward Soviet triumph.

In February 1950, Republican Sen. Joseph R. MCCARTHY of Wisconsin began a 4-year national crisis, during which he insisted repeatedly that he had direct evidence of such conspiracies in the federal government, even in the army. The entire country seemed swept up in a hysteria in which anyone left of center was attacked as a subversive. A program to root out alleged security risks in the national government led to a massive collapse in morale in its departments; it destroyed the State Department's corps of experts on Far Eastern and Soviet affairs. The Truman administration's practice of foreign policy was brought practically to a halt. In 1952, Dwight D. EISENHOWER, nationally revered supreme commander in Europe during World War II, was elected president (1953-61) on the Republican ticket, but soon McCarthy was attacking him as well for

running a "weak, immoral, and cowardly" foreign policy. In 1954 a long and dramatic series of congressional hearings, the first to be nationally televised, destroyed McCarthy's credibility. He was censured by the Senate, and a measure of national stability returned.

### **The Eisenhower Years**

Eisenhower declared himself uninterested in repealing the New Deal, but he was socially and economically conservative and his presidency saw the enactment of few reforms. His appointment of Earl WARREN as chief justice of the Supreme Court, however, led to a Court that suddenly seized so bold and active a role in national life that many called it revolutionary. During Warren's long tenure (1953-69), the Court swept away the legal basis for racial discrimination; ruled that every person must be represented equally in state legislatures and in the U.S. House of Representatives; changed criminal-justice procedures by ensuring crucial rights to the accused; broadened the artist's right to publish works shocking to the general public; and in major ways limited the government's ability to penalize individuals for their beliefs or associations.

No decision of the Warren Court was more historic than that in BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA, KANSAS (1954), which ruled unanimously that racial segregation in the public schools was unconstitutional. This great decision--followed by others that struck down segregation in all public facilities and in elections and marriage laws--sparked a revolution in race- relations law. The separate-but-equal principle was cast aside, and the Second Reconstruction could get underway. Now black Americans could charge that the statutory discrimination that tied them down and kept them in a secondary caste was illegal, a fact that added enormous moral weight to their cause. Resistance by southern whites to desegregated public education would make the advance of that cause frustratingly slow, however. By 1965 black children had been admitted to white schools in fewer than 25 percent of southern school districts. The fight for racial equality was not limited to the South, for by 1960 only 60 percent of black Americans remained there; 73 percent of them also lived in cities: they were no longer simply a scattered, powerless rural labor force in the South.

In 1957 the Soviet government launched its first orbiting satellite, Sputnik, and a national controversy erupted. Why are we so far behind in the crucial area of rocketry? Americans asked. Many critics replied that weaknesses in public education, especially in science and technology, were the root cause. In 1958, Congress enacted the first general education law since the Morrill Act of 1862--the NATIONAL DEFENSE EDUCATION ACT. It authorized \$1 billion for education from primary level through university graduate training, inaugurating a national policy that became permanent thereafter and that resulted in the spending of huge sums and the transformation of American public education.

Eisenhower's foreign policy, under Secretary of State John Foster DULLES, was more nationalist and unilateral than Truman's. American-dominated alliances ringed the Soviet and Chinese perimeters. Little consultation with Western European allies preceded major American initiatives, and in consequence the United States and Western Europe began drifting apart. Persistent recessions in the American economy hobbled the national growth rate while the Soviet and Western European economies surged dramatically. An aggressive Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet premier, trumpeted that communism would bury capitalism and boasted of Moscow's powerful intercontinental missiles while encouraging so-called wars of liberation in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

## THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1960: NEW CHALLENGES TO THE AMERICAN SYSTEM

During the 1960s and 1970s cold-war concerns gave way as attention focused on social and cultural rebellions at home. Involvement in a long and indecisive war in Asia and scandals that reached into the White House eroded the confidence of many Americans in their country's values and system of government. The United States survived such challenges, however, and emerged from the 1970s subdued but intact.

### **The Exuberant Kennedy Years**

The Democratic senator John F. KENNEDY, asserting that he wanted to "get the country moving again," won the presidency in a narrow victory over Vice-President Richard M. NIXON in 1960. The charismatic Kennedy stimulated a startling burst of national enthusiasm and aroused high hopes among the young and the disadvantaged. Within 3 years his Peace Corps (see ACTION) sent about 10,000 Americans (mostly young people) abroad to work in 46 countries. Kennedy's ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS proposed a 10-year plan to transform the economies of the Latin American nations (partially successful, it sunk out of sight during the Vietnam War). He also proposed massive tariff cuts between the increasingly protectionist European Common Market and the world at large. (The so-called Kennedy Round of tariff negotiations concluded in 1967 with the largest and widest tariff cuts in modern history.) In June 1961, Kennedy pulled together the disparate, disorganized space effort by giving it a common goal: placing an American on the moon. Responding enthusiastically, Congress poured out billions of dollars to finance the project. (After the APOLLO PROGRAM succeeded, on July 20, 1969, in landing astronauts on the moon, the space effort remained in motion, if at a reduced pace.)

Kennedy blundered into a major defeat within 3 months of entering the White House. He kept in motion a plan sponsored by the CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) and begun by the Eisenhower administration to land an invasion

force in Cuba, which under Fidel Castro had become a Communist state and a Soviet state. The BAY OF PIGS INVASION failed, utterly and completely. The force was quickly smashed when it struggled onto the beaches of the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. During the succeeding 2 years, Kennedy labored to break the rigid cold-war relationship with the USSR. In October 1962, however, he discovered that the Soviets were rapidly building missile emplacements in Cuba. Surrounding the island with a naval blockade, he induced the Soviets to desist, and the sites were eventually dismantled. The relieved world discovered that, when pushed to the crisis point, the two major powers could stop short of nuclear war. This CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS effectively ended the cold war.

The atomic bomb now seemed defused, and Moscow seemed ready to negotiate on crucial issues (perhaps, it was suggested 15 years later, to give the Soviets time to build a far more powerful armaments system). A new and more relaxed relationship developed slowly into the U.S.-Soviet DETENTE that emerged in the late 1960s and persisted through the 1970s. A test-ban treaty, the Moscow Agreement (see ARMS CONTROL), signed in October 1963 symbolized the opening of the new relationship. Three of the world's nuclear powers (Great Britain, the United States, and the USSR--the fourth, France, did not sign) agreed to end the detonation of atomic explosions in the atmosphere.

In this new environment of security, American culture, long restrained by the sense of team spirit and conformity that the crises of depression, war, and cold war had induced, broke loose into multiplying swift changes. People now began talking excitedly of "doing their own thing." The media were filled with discussions of the rapidly changing styles of dress and behavior among the young; of the "new woman" (or the "liberated woman," as she became known); of new sexual practices and attitudes and new styles of living. The sense of community faded. Romanticism shaped the new mood, with its emphasis on instinct and impulse rather than reason, ecstatic release rather than restraint, individualism and self-gratification rather than group discipline.

### **Assassination and Cultural Rebellion**

The excitement of Kennedy's presidency and his calls to youth to serve the nation had inspired the young, both black and white. His assassination in November 1963 shocked and dismayed Americans of all ages, and the psychological links he had fashioned between "the system" and young people began to dissolve. His successor, Lyndon B. JOHNSON, later shouldering the onus of an unpopular war, was unable to build a reservoir of trust among the young. As the large demographic group that had constituted the "baby boom" of the post-World War II years reached college age, it became the "wild generation" of student radicals and "hippies" who rebelled against political and cultural authority.

Styles of life changed swiftly. Effective oral contraceptives, Playboy magazine, and crucial Supreme Court decisions helped make the United States, long one of the world's most prudish nations in sexual matters, one of its most liberated. The drug culture mushroomed. Communal living groups of "dropouts" who rejected mass culture received widespread attention. People more than 30 years old reacted angrily against the flamboyant youth (always a small minority of the young generation) who flouted traditional standards, glorified self-indulgence, and scorned discipline.

In the second half of the 1960s this generation gap widened as many of the young (along with large numbers of older people) questioned U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Peaceful protests led to violent confrontations, and differences concerning styles of life blurred with disagreements about the degree of allegiance that individuals owed to the American system. In 1968 the assassinations of the Rev. Martin Luther KING, Jr., and President Kennedy's brother Robert F. KENNEDY seemed to confirm suspicions that dark currents of violence underlay many elements in American society.

### **Race Relations during the 1960s and 1970s**

Race relations was one area with great potential for violence, although many black leaders stressed nonviolence. Since the mid-1950s, King and others had been leading disciplined mass protests of black Americans in the South against segregation, emphasizing appeals to the conscience of the white majority. The appeals of these leaders and judicial rulings on the illegality of segregationist practices were vital parts of the Second Reconstruction, which transformed the role and status of black Americans, energizing every other cultural movement as well. At the same time, southern white resistance to the ending of segregation, with its attendant violence, stimulated a northern-dominated Congress to enact (1957) the first civil rights law since 1875, creating the Commission on Civil Rights and prohibiting interference with the right to vote (blacks were still massively disenfranchised in many southern states). A second enactment (1960) provided federal referees to aid blacks in registering for and voting in federal elections. In 1962, President Kennedy dispatched troops to force the University of Mississippi (a state institution) to admit James Meredith, a black student. At the same time, he forbade racial or religious discrimination in federally financed housing.

Kennedy then asked Congress to enact a law to guarantee equal access to all public accommodations, forbid discrimination in any state program receiving federal aid, and outlaw discrimination in employment and voting. After Kennedy's death, President Johnson prodded Congress into enacting (August 1965) a voting-rights bill that eliminated all qualifying tests for registration that had as their objective limiting the right to vote to whites. Thereafter, massive voter registration drives in the South sent the proportion of registered blacks spurting upward from less than 30 to over 53 percent in 1966.

The civil rights phase of the black revolution had reached its legislative and judicial summit. Then, from 1964 to 1968, more than a hundred American cities were swept by RACE RIOTS, which included dynamitings, guerrilla warfare, and huge conflagrations, as the anger of the northern black community at its relatively low income, high unemployment, and social exclusion exploded. At this violent expression of hopelessness the northern white community drew back rapidly from its reformist stance on the race issue (the so-called white backlash). In 1968, swinging rightward in its politics, the nation chose as president Richard M. Nixon, who was not in favor of using federal power to aid the disadvantaged. Individual advancement, he believed, had to come by individual effort.

Nonetheless, fundamental changes continued in relations between white and black. Although the economic disparity in income did not disappear--indeed, it widened, as unemployment within black ghettos and among black youths remained at a high level in the 1970s--white-dominated American culture opened itself significantly toward black people. Entrance requirements for schools and colleges were changed; hundreds of communities sought to work out equitable arrangements to end de facto segregation in the schools (usually with limited success, and to the accompaniment of a white flight to different school districts); graduate programs searched for black applicants; and integration in jobs and in the professions expanded. Blacks moved into the mainstream of the party system, for the voting-rights enactments transformed national politics. The daily impact of television helped make blacks, seen in shows and commercial advertisements, seem an integral part of a pluralistic nation.

Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans were also becoming more prominent in American life. Reaching the level of 9 million by the 1960s, Spanish-surnamed Americans had become the second largest ethnic minority; they, too, were asserting their right to equitable treatment in politics, in culture, and in economic affairs.