



Ch. 10 - Troubled Affluence

Learning Intentions

In this section, you should understand:

- How and why desegregation occurred.
- The role of Martin Luther King.
- Case Study: The Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-56.
- The causes and effects of urban poverty (the war on poverty).
- The spread of drugs and crime.

Racial Conflict

Background

The **American Constitution** (1791) said that '*all Men were created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights*'. But the Constitution allowed **slavery**, which was not abolished until the **American Civil War** in the **1860s**. Even after the abolition of slavery, black America did not have civil, political and social equality. An important episode in American history is the struggle of black Americans to achieve these rights.

Jim Crow Laws

Once the Civil War was over, whites in the **southern states** used their power to make the blacks second-class citizens. They did this by passing **Jim Crow laws**, which introduced the **segregation** of blacks and whites. The laws stated that blacks and whites had to use **separate** public facilities such as toilets, benches and schools. They were supported by a Supreme Court ruling in the 1890s that upheld separate but equal treatment.

Blacks were also banned from voting. In addition, they suffered from violence and intimidation, particularly by the **Ku Klux Klan**, a **white supremacist** group, and some were even **lynched**.

The Second World War was a **major turning point** for blacks. Thousands of blacks served in the armed forces and worked in the war industries in defence of democracy and freedom. But after the war they were still second-class citizens in their own country. However, **conditions had now changed**, and over the next 40 years black Americans (and other ethnic minorities) gradually, and often painfully, won civil and political equality.

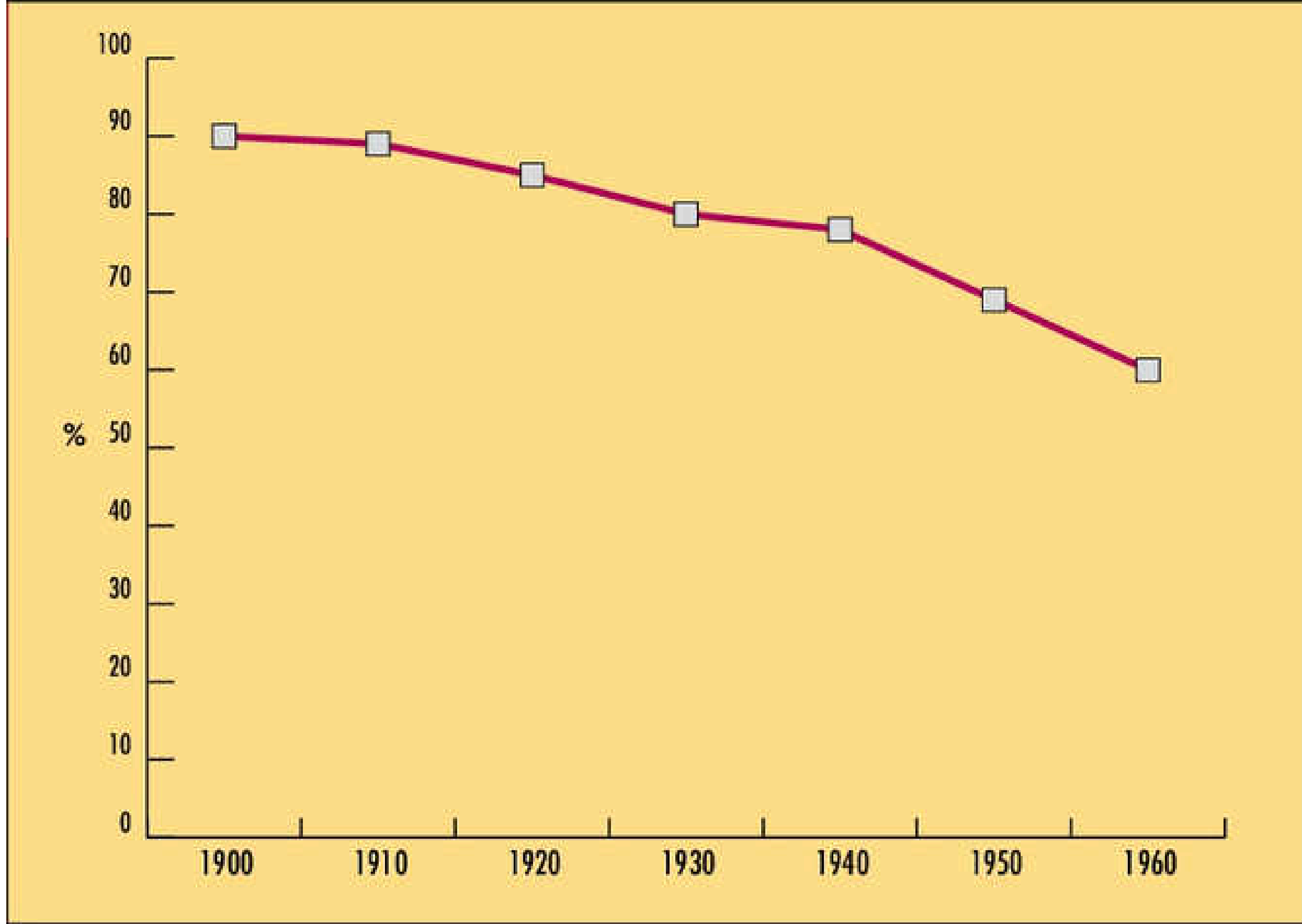
The Conditions of Change

- By 1945, many black Americans had **migrated** from the South (where they worked on subsistence farming) to northern cities. This continued into the 1950s and 1960s, so many benefited from the greater prosperity (affluence) of the times. Others migrated to southern cities. Because blacks were **concentrated in cities**, they were easier to organise.
- Black **education** had expanded in the North and South with more schools, colleges and universities. This progress continued over the next 40 years. A new, **educated black leadership** emerged.
- Blacks also depended a great deal on their **Christian churches** and on **Christian leadership**. Some of their most important leaders were clergymen and these gave them unity and a belief to carry on.
- When black Americans returned from the **Second World War**, they had **higher expectations** for greater civil and political rights and they were not prepared to accept less.
- There was a decline in colour prejudice as **whites** believed less and less that blacks should be denied equal opportunity simply because they were black. This was part of **liberalism** or liberal ideas. This was helped by leaders such as President Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor, during the war.

The Conditions of Change

- The development of the **Cold War** from the late 1940s onwards had a significant influence on the progress of black rights. The US portrayed itself as the leader of the **Free World** against evil Communism. This position was difficult to maintain when the **Old South** continued segregation and legal discrimination against blacks. If the US wanted to maintain respect in Europe and the new countries of Africa and Asia, it would have to reform itself.
- The influence of the **mass media**, especially television, which became widespread in the 1950s, was very important. All Americans became aware of the issues affecting black Americans. Very often television highlighted the brutal and oppressive treatment of blacks in various incidents in the South.
- Blacks themselves were **better organised**. The **NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)**, founded in 1909, fought a series of successful Supreme Court challenges to laws in the South. The NAACP was later joined by other organisations such as **CORE (Congress of Racial Equality)** who worked in different ways for racial desegregation.

Percentage of Black Americans Living in Southern States of USA, 1900-60



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What were:
 - a. The Jim Crow Laws
 - b. Segregation
 - c. The Ku Klux Klan
2. What were the conditions of change in post-war USA which helped black Americans win civil and political equality?

The PROCESS OF DESEGREGATION

The army

One of the first areas to be desegregated was the **armed forces** - army, navy and air force. President Truman issued an **Executive Order** in 1948 ending segregation in the armed forces. This process was speeded up by the **Korean War** when it was easier to organise mixed units of blacks and whites. By 1954, the armed forces were desegregated, though the officer class was largely white.

KEY CONCEPT: MASS MEDIA

Mass Media is a medium of communication (newspapers, magazines, radio and television) which reaches a large audience or the mass of the people.

KEY CONCEPT: LIBERALISM

Liberalism was the political belief that was concerned with personal freedom and social progress. Liberals favoured gradual reform of political and economic matters. US liberals favoured government intervention in the economy.

Education

A much more difficult and controversial area was education. The battle here was carried on by the NAACP, who took test cases all the way to the **Supreme Court**. In 1953 a new Chief Justice, **Earl Warren**, was appointed by President Eisenhower. Over the next 16 years his Court provided a succession of judgments which opened up not only education, but many other areas of life.

One of the most important decisions was ***Brown v. The Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*** in 1954. Here the Court said, *'We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of separate but equal has no place. Separate education facilities are inherently unequal.'* It declared state laws which required public school segregation **unconstitutional**. In a follow-up judgment, it said that public schools should be integrated *'with all deliberate speed'*.

In spite of the Supreme Court ruling, there was huge **resistance** to **integration** (mixing people of different colours) in the South, where **17 states** had segregated education. White **Citizens Councils** and governors all over the South resisted and they were sometimes backed up by a revived **Ku Klux Klan**. This resistance led to conflict, as in **Little Rock, Arkansas** in 1957, where angry whites tried to prevent desegregation.

Education

Central High, Little Rock: In Arkansas the state's Board of Education planned a process of desegregation for September 1957. But when **nine black students** attempted to enter the **Central High School** in Little Rock, National Guardsmen stopped them. But the governor was forced to withdraw the National Guards and the students entered the school under police protection. Very soon an angry mob attacked the school. Newspaper coverage highlighted the incidents and forced **President Eisenhower** to send 1,000 federal troops. These had to stay on guard for a few months until tempers cooled.

Bussing: Although legal segregation in the South was ended by the Brown case, **segregated housing** in other parts of America resulted in separate black and white schools. Supreme Court decisions supported the bussing of black and white students across cities to achieve a **racial balance** in public schools. In the North, this resulted in widespread resistance - even rioting in Boston and Detroit - because black students were moved from inner-city ghettos to suburban schools and vice versa. Eventually the Supreme Court softened compulsory bussing.

Education

However, while these and other legal battles were won, by 1964 only 2 per cent of blacks attended multiracial schools in 11 southern states. Even in the North, by the late 1980s two-thirds of black children attended public schools where they formed over 50 per cent of the students. This indicated that in spite of Supreme Court judgments there were other social and political conditions which hindered desegregation. In part this was caused by **white middle-class families** sending their children to private schools and leaving the public schools to black students.

University of Mississippi: In 1962, **James Meredith**, a 29-year-old air force veteran, attempted to attend the all-white University of Mississippi. He was opposed by the governor, who believed in state power over federal power: *'We must either submit to the awful dictate of the federal government or stand up like men and tell them.'* Meredith was only admitted when President Kennedy sent federal marshals to protect him. However, a few days later, a white mob attacked the university and two onlookers were killed. Regular army troops had to be sent in to control the situation.

Transport: Transport was also segregated in some parts of the South. Blacks had to sit at the back of buses and whites at the front. The battle to desegregate transportation was highlighted by the **Montgomery Bus Boycott**, 1955-56.

THE MURDER OF EMMETT TILL

Emmett Till, a 14 year old boy from Chicago, was brutally murdered in Money, Mississippi in August, 1955, because he said, *'Bye baby'* to a white shop assistant. His battered body was visible in an open coffin and photographs were later published in newspapers and magazines. *'These photographs quickly became a symbol of the violence that simmered just under the surface of segregated communities in the South.'* (***Eyes on the Prize***) Later, Bob Dylan wrote a song, *'The Death Of Emmett Till'*, about the murder and the trial, in which two white men were acquitted. The murder and trial highlighted the issue of civil rights and the treatment of black Americans, especially for whites living in the Northern cities of the US.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is desegregation?
2. How did each of the following help in the process of desegregation:
 - a. The army
 - b. Earl Warren
 - c. Brown v Board of Education, Topeka
 - d. Little Rock
 - e. James Meredith

CASE STUDY *The Montgomery Bus*
BOYCOTT, 1955-56

Introduction

Montgomery was the capital of the state of Alabama in the Deep South. It was a city of 70,000 whites and 50,000 blacks. It enforced **Jim Crow** by having segregated schools and other public facilities. Most blacks were employed in **low- paid, unskilled jobs**; 60 per cent of black women worked as domestics and 50 per cent of black men worked as domestics or labourers. The **average income** of blacks was half that of whites. (Source 1)

The **bus company** followed the pattern of the rest of the city. It employed no blacks as drivers. It also segregated buses, with blacks sitting at the back and whites at the front. Black passengers often complained. about verbal abuse from the white bus drivers. (Source 2)

SOURCE 1 - NEGROES' MOST URGENT NEEDS

FOLLOWING ARE A FEW OF THE MOST URGENT NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE. IMMEDIATE ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN EACH OF THESE. WHAT IS YOUR STAND TOWARD THEM?

1. The present bus situation. Negroes have to stand over empty seats of city buses, because the first ten seats are reserved for whites who sometime never ride. We wish to fill the bus from the back toward the front until all the seats are taken. This is done in Atlanta, Mobile, Alabama and in most of our larger southern cities.
2. Our parks are in a deplorable state.
3. Sub-division for housing [of Negroes stopped]
4. [Civil service] Jobs for qualified Negroes [not open to them]
5. Negro representation on all boards affecting Negroes
6. Congested areas, with inadequate or no fireplugs
7. Lack of sewage disposals make it necessary to resort to outdoor privies [toilets] which is a health hazard

Gentlemen, what is your stand on these issues? What will you do to improve these undemocratic practices? Very truly yours,
Montgomery Negroes

Inez Jessie Baskin Papers, in the Alabama Department of Archives and History,

Montgomery     @MsDoorley

QUESTIONS

1. According to W.T. Cosgrave, what advantages did de Valera have as a negotiator?
2. What did Cosgrave mean by the words 'keeping their ablest player in reserve'?
3. How did de Valera regard his own role as 'symbol of the Republic'?
4. In his view, what was a 'shirking of duty'?

SOURCE 2 - CODE OF THE CITY OF MONTGOMERY

Section 10. Separation of races - Required.

Every person operating a bus line in the city shall provide equal but separate accommodation for white people and negroes on his buses, by requiring the employees in charge thereof to assign passengers seats on the vehicles under their charge in such manner as to separate the white people from the negroes, where there are both white and negroes in the same car...

Section 11. Some powers of persons in charge of vehicle; passengers to obey directions.

Any employee in charge of a bus operated in the city shall have the powers of a police officer while in actual control of any bus, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the preceding section, and shall be unlawful for any passenger to refuse or fail to take a seat among those assigned to the race in which he belongs, at the request of any such employee in charge, if there is such a seat vacant.

Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery

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Rosa Parks

One of those who used the buses regularly was **Rosa Parks**, a 42-year-old black woman. She worked as a seamstress in a downtown department store. She was also a member of the local **NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)**. She had been put off a bus in the mid-1940s for refusing to do as she was told. She had recently completed a workshop on race relations.

On 1 December 1955, she boarded a bus after a day's work and some shopping. She took a seat in the black section at the rear. When all the seats filled up, she was told by the driver to get up and give her seat to a white man - but she refused. The driver called the police and Rosa Parks was arrested for breaking city laws. She had to appear in court four days later.

(Sources 3, 4 and 5)

SOURCE 3

Rosa Parks being fingerprinted in Montgomery after being charged with violating segregation laws.



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SOURCE 4 - WHY MRS PARKS WAS CHOSEN

'Mrs Parks was a married woman. She was morally clean, and she had a fairly good academic training.. If there was ever person we would've been able to [use to] break the situation that existed in the Montgomery city line, Rosa L. Parks was the woman to use... I probably would've examined a dozen before I got there if Rosa Parks hadn't come along before I found the right one.'

E. D. Nixon, quoted by Gary Younge in The Guardian, 16 December 2000

SOURCE 5 - NOT YIELD ONE INCH

'The City Commission, and we know our people are with us in this determination, will not yield one inch but will do all in its power to oppose the integration of the Negro race with the white race in Montgomery, and will forever stand like a rock against social equality, intermarriage and mixing the races under God's creation and plan.'

Statement from the Montgomery City Commission at the start of the boycott, quoted in M. Walker, Makers of the American century

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SOURCE 6 - THE WEAPON OF PROTEST

'Since it had to happen, I'm happy it happened to a person like Mrs Parks, for.. nobody can doubt the height of her character. Nobody can doubt the depth of her Christian commitment... And you know my friends, there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled on by the iron feet of oppression. The only weapon that we have in our hands this evening is the weapon of protest. If we were incarcerated behind the iron curtains of a Communistic nation, we couldn't do this.. But the great glory of American democracy is the right to protest for right.. We are not wrong in what we are doing. If we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong, God almighty is wrong.'

Martin Luther King, speaking at a public meeting at the beginning of the boycott

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Organising the Boycott

Local black leaders decided to take action. **E. D. Nixon** was leader of the Montgomery NAACP and **Jo Ann Robinson** was leader of the Women's Political Council of Montgomery.

Nixon asked Parks if the NAACP could use her case to fight for desegregation, even though it might put her life in danger. She discussed it with her husband and mother and decided to let the NAACP go ahead with a lawsuit to contest the constitutionality of the segregation law.

Robinson, along with the Women's Political Council, decided to ask blacks to **boycott** the buses on the following Monday, the day of Parks' trial. They issued 35,000 leaflets to spread the word. The boycott decision was supported by **black ministers** in their church sermons on Sunday.

The organisers looked around for a **leader**. They found one in **Martin Luther King**, a 26-year-old clergyman who had come to Montgomery just a year before. King was an inspirational leader and an outstanding speaker. As one historian wrote, *'As King spoke in a singsong cadence [tone, lilt], his followers would cry and clap and sway, carried away by the magic of his oratory.'* He became President of the **Montgomery Improvement Association** (MIA), which was set up to lead the boycott. (Sources 6, 7, 8 and 9)

King was inspired by the teachings of the leader of Indian independence, **Mahatma Gandhi**, **Reinhold Niebuhr**, who was a theologian, and **Daniel O'Connell**. From these people he adopted the method of **non-violent protest**. This belief spread to others and it gave his followers a strong feeling of unity and determination.

In court on Monday, 5 December, Parks was convicted and was fined \$10. Her lawyer appealed against the conviction. But the bus boycott that day was successful. Most blacks supported it in spite of great inconvenience.

SOURCE 7 - THIS IS NOT A WAR

'There are those who would try to make this a hate campaign. This is not a war between the white and the Negro but a conflict between justice and injustice.. We must use the weapon of love.'

Speech by Martin Luther King

SOURCE 8 - MARTIN LUTHER KING SPEAKING

'Martin Luther King spoke in a very soft, rich voice, and as he was going along, you'd get the feeling.. that here was a person who really cared... He was able to make all of us - the washerwoman, the domestic, the teenager - feel like he was talking directly to each of us.'

Inez Jessie Baskin, quoted in P. Jennings and T. Brewster, The century

SOURCE 9 - COMMUNIST VIEW

'No day passed but the Italian Communists pointed to events in our South to prove that American democracy was a "capitalist myth".. No man has ever waged the battle for equality under our law in a more lawful and Christian way than you have.'

Clare Booth Luce, American ambassador to Italy, wife of the founder of Time magazine, January 1957 in a private letter to Martin Luther King, quoted in M. Walker, Makers of the American century

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Continued Boycotting

After the success of the **Monday boycott**, the Montgomery Improvement Association decided to continue with the boycott until the bus company gave in to its demands:

- That black drivers be employed on the buses.
- That drivers should be courteous to passengers.
- That seats should be filled on a first come, first served basis.

The policy of boycotting was **risky** because it needed widespread support. Blacks would have to walk to work or co-operate with sharing cars. But boycotting also had **advantages**:

- It allowed people to take action without violence.
- It could create a sense of solidarity.
- It would hit the bus company because it would lose money. (Sources 10 and 11).

SOURCE 10

Blacks walking to work during the Montgomery Bus Boycott.



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SOURCE 11 - ORGANISING THE TRANSPORT

'One of the first practical problems that the ex-bus riders [had experienced] is that in finding some way to get around the city. The first thing that we decided to do was to use a taxi, and they had agreed to transport the people for just ten cents, the same as the buses. Then the police commission stopped this by warning the taxis that they must charge a minimum of forty-five cents person. Then we immediately got on the job and organised a volunteer car pool. And almost overnight over three hundred cars were out on the streets of Montgomery. [applause] They were out on the streets of Montgomery carrying the people to and from work from the various pickup and dispatch stations. It worked amazingly well. Even Commissioner Sellers had to admit in a White Citizens Council meeting that the system worked with 'military precision.' [applause] It has continued to grow and it is still growing. Since that time we have added more than twenty station wagons to the car pool and they're working every day, all day, transporting the people. It has been an expensive project. Started out about two thousand dollars or more a week, but now it runs more than five thousand dollars a week. We have been able to carry on because of the contributions coming from the local community and nationally, from the great contributions that have come from friends of good will all over the nation and all over the world. [Applause]'

Martin Luther King speaking in San Francisco in June 1956, to gather support for

the Boycott.

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@MsDoorley

Continued Boycotting

In organising the boycott, black leaders collected money to buy station wagons for a private **taxi service**. Some of the money came from local black workers (who donated 20 per cent of their wages), the NAACP, the United Auto Workers' Union, sympathetic whites and the Montgomery Jewish community. The leaders set up a **Transportation Committee** to form **car pools**, while some black workers took bicycles or walked to work. When local insurance agents tried to cancel **insurance** for the car pool, the boycotters insured with Lloyds of London. (Sources 14 and 15)

The **black churches** played a vital role in organising the boycott. The churches raised \$30,000 for the car pool, and the churches became the despatch centres where people gathered to wait for rides. During the year, 24 ministers were arrested for helping the boycott.

White Opposition

City authorities tried to undermine the protest. When black-owned taxis (cabs) took customers for 10 cents a trip the same as a bus fare - the city authorities threatened to shut them down. At the same time, the **Ku Klux Klan** became active. They marched in the streets and poured acid on cars involved in the car pooling. The homes of King and other leaders were bombed. (Sources 13 & 14)

The police also interfered. Those involved in car pools were stopped regularly by police trying to find any excuse to disrupt the boycott. **King** was arrested for doing 30 miles an hour in a 25-mile-an-hour zone. In February 1956, 89 blacks, including King, were arrested under an old law banning boycotting. **Black churches** were **bombed**. But the boycott held out during 1956 in spite of great pressure. This was partly helped by the increasing outside interest, both in America and abroad. Television and newspapers publicised the boycott and the local white reaction to it.

One local white supporter wrote; *'All the big newspapers have people here and the Radio and TV and Figaro and the Manchester Guardian and that of course is a big factor in giving the Negroes the feeling that they have support all over the world and certainly the papers in the rest of the country have done a good job of coverage.'* (Virginia Durr)

SOURCE 12 - A PROTEST OF THE PEOPLE

'The amazing thing about our movement is that it is a protest of the people. It is not a one-man show. It is not the preachers' show. The masses of this town, who are tired of being trampled on, are responsible.'

Jo Ann Robinson, 1955

SOURCE 13 - LISTEN, NIGGER

'Listen, nigger. We've taken all we want from you. Before next week, you'll be sorry you ever came to Montgomery.'

Late-night phone caller speaking to Martin Luther King, quoted in P. Jennings and T. Brewster, *The century*

SOURCE 14 - WE WANT TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES

'We believe in law and order. Don't get panicky. Don't do anything at all. Don't get your weapons. He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword. Remember, that is what God said. We are not advocating violence. We want to love our enemies. We must love our white brothers no matter what they do to us.'

Martin Luther King, after his house was bombed

SOURCE 15 - THERE LIVED A GREAT PEOPLE

'If you will protest courageously and yet with dignity and Christian love, when the history books are written in future generations the historians will pause and say, "There lived a great people a black people - who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilisation."

Martin Luther King, 1956, quoted in P. Jennings and T. Brewster, *The century*

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Supreme Court Judgment

At the same time, the lawsuit by the NAACP was proceeding through the law courts. The Montgomery NAACP leaders decided that Rosa Parks' case might get bogged down in the state courts. Instead they filed a federal case, *Browder v. Gayle*. Browder was another Montgomery woman, also a NAACP activist, who had been arrested like Rosa Parks eight months earlier, while Gayle was the Mayor of Montgomery. The case eventually reached the **Supreme Court** in Washington. The Court ruled on 13 November 1956 that the city laws relating to buses violated (broke) the Constitution. It said that the seating arrangements must stop on 20 December. When the city officials gave in, King and his Montgomery Improvement Association called off the boycott. On 21 December 1956, 381 days after it began, King and other civil rights leaders took seats at the front of the bus. But this led to a new round of violence when snipers shot at buses, and churches and houses were bombed. However, this **white backlash** soon quietened down. After it was over, King appeared on the front cover of Time magazine, which regarded him as the **American Gandhi**. He was also invited to the independence ceremony for the African country of Ghana.

Conclusion

The **significance** of the Montgomery Bus Boycott:

- The success of a **well-organised and peaceful resistance** set an example for further action. against segregation. Many historians regard it as the beginning of the modern civil rights movement.
- This was a **new method** of non-violent protest that blacks could use to promote civil rights, and not just the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) way of testing the laws.
- **Non-violent protest** was also used by James Meredith in the University of Mississippi, and in the Lunch Counter Protests and the Freedom Rides. It was also used in the Selma to Montgomery March.
- The boycott involved **local black leaders** and **followers** who had to face violence and pressure. The organisation and commitment involved was a source of great pride to black people all over America.
- It saw the rise to prominence of **Martin Luther King**. Following on from this, he founded the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference** in 1957, which became prominent in fighting for civil rights for blacks. Luther King became the accepted leader of black America. He used his influence to ensure that the Civil Rights Act 1964 and the Voting Rights Act 1964 were passed into law.
- The boycott got support from the **press and television**, especially outside the South, and highlighted the issues for northern whites. This method was also used by Martin Luther King in Birmingham, Alabama.
- It highlighted the role of the **black churches and religious leaders** in the fight for civil rights.

Conclusion

- The boycott was eventually ended by a **Supreme Court decision**; on its own it might have failed to force the Montgomery city officials to change.
- It also **failed to end Jim Crow** in other areas of Montgomery life; schools, hotels and theatres were still segregated and bus drivers were still white.
- **Rosa Parks** lost her job and had her life threatened several times. She and her husband left Montgomery in 1957 and settled in Detroit, where she worked as an administrative assistant in a politician's office. In 1994, she was attacked and beaten by a young black man who wanted money. Two years later she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

EXAM QUESTION

In what ways did the Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-56, advance the cause of the civil rights movement? (2007)

WEB RESOURCES

- The Montgomery Bus Boycott, <http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/>
- Using Primary Sources in the Classroom, Civil Rights Movement Unit Lesson 1: Riding the Bus - Taking a Stand <http://www.archives.state.al.us/teacher/rights/rights1.html>
- Martin Luther King, An Extraordinary Life, http://projects.seattletimes.com/mlk/?utm_source=redirect&utm_medium=vanityURL&utm_campaign=redirect
- Eyes on the Prize, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/>
- Teaching the Montgomery Bus Boycott, <http://civilrightsteaching.org/resource/teaching-the-montgomery-bus-boycott/>
- Civil Rights, <http://www.lbjlibrary.org/exhibits/civil-rights/>

The **CIVIL RIGHTS PROTEST** *Continued*

The Civil Rights Protest Continued

Lunch counter protests: Non-violent protest became an important part of the methods used to change segregation. It was used in 1960 in the lunch counter protests. A group of black students sat at a **whites only** lunch counter. The first protest took place in an all-white Woolworth's cafeteria in **Greensboro, North Carolina**, led by four black students. **Martin Luther King** visited the students to encourage them. Their action set off a widespread lunch counter protest in 54 cities in the Old South, involving up to 70,000 students in these sit-ins. These protests were highlighted in the press and on television. Their success in **desegregating lunch counters** led to greater student involvement, largely led by the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee).

The Freedom Riders: In 1961, black and white college students took **interstate buses** to test that the law against segregating interstate buses was being applied. One bus was firebombed and other Freedom Riders were attacked by crowds. Once again, the **media** highlighted the issues and forced the federal government to enforce desegregation on interstate buses.

Albany, Georgia: The **SNCC**, who wanted full desegregation, first targeted this city. Older black leaders in the city invited **King**, who led a march and got agreement from the city authorities. However, as soon as King left the agreement was reneged on - the city refused to desegregate the schools and closed the public parks. King had failed to gain national publicity over the situation in Albany because the police deliberately did not attack the protestors. King looked on the Albany Movement as a failure.

The Civil Rights Protest Continued

Birmingham, Alabama: In the case of the lunch counter protests and the Freedom Riders, the protestors encouraged a **white backlash** against their actions to get national and world media coverage. This was also the case in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963 when Martin Luther King used school children as demonstrators. The overreaction of the police chief, **Eugene 'Bull' Connor**, and his men when they used **dogs and water cannon** was featured on television.

Washington: Soon after, in August 1963, a huge peaceful rally of 250,000 civil rights protestors marched in Washington to advance their cause. It was here that **Martin Luther King** made his famous *'I Have a Dream'* speech.

Mississippi Freedom Summer: Only 5 per cent of blacks were registered to vote in Mississippi compared to 30 per cent over the South generally. As well as this, 70 per cent of blacks in the state were illiterate. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organised Freedom Summer in 1964 to promote black voter registration. Many white activists from the North came south to help. There was resistance from the Ku Klux Klan and the police. White segregationists murdered three student activists (two of them white). Mississippi Freedom Summer attracted widespread publicity.

The Civil Rights Protest Continued

Selma to Montgomery March: In 1965, half of the population of Selma County, Alabama were black, but only 1 per cent of blacks were registered to vote. Efforts by black leaders to register black voters were stopped by police and state troopers in **Selma**. When they attempted to march from Selma to Montgomery, the state capital, to protest, they were attacked by state troopers. But this shocking violence was covered by national television. President Johnson sent National Guardsmen to Selma to protect the marchers, who were now joined by **Martin Luther King** and other black leaders. Three thousand began the march in Selma and this had increased to 25,000 by the time the march reached Montgomery. This march won support for the **Voting Rights Act**, which became law in August 1965.

KEY PERSONALITY: MARTIN LUTHER KING

Martin Luther King was born in Atlanta, Georgia, the son of a **Baptist** minister. He was encouraged by his father to enter the Baptist ministry instead of law or medicine, which was his preference. He studied for the ministry and completed his education at Boston University, where he was awarded a PhD in 1955.

At the same time, he was appointed pastor of a Baptist church in **Montgomery**, Alabama. It was here that he came to national prominence as leader of the **Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-56**.

Soon after, King founded the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference**. He made good use of his gifts as a powerful and moving speaker to publicise the problems of blacks. In the early 1960s, he was involved in many **non-violent demonstrations** against segregation and he was arrested several times. He was involved in leading demonstrations in **Birmingham, Alabama**, over segregated hotels and restaurants. Late in 1963, he led 200,000 people in a civil rights march in Washington. It was here he made his '**I Have a Dream**' speech.

KEY PERSONALITY: MARTIN LUTHER KING

In 1964, he was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** and he also saw the passing of the **Civil Rights Act 1964**. He was also involved in the **Selma to Montgomery march** to highlight voting discrimination against blacks. This led to the passage of the **Voting Rights Act 1965**, which gave power to the federal government over voter registration.

However, by now King's leadership was being challenged by younger, **more radical** (extreme) black leaders, such as **Malcolm X**. King himself became more critical of other **social and economic problems** faced by blacks. He was also investigated by the FBI, who were trying to uncover any **dirt** to undermine his campaign. He became very critical of the **Vietnam War**, which he believed was taking money away from the reform programmes to help the poor. He was planning a **Poor People's March** on Washington when he was assassinated in **Memphis, Tennessee** in 1968 on the balcony of a motel by a hired assassin, **James Earl Ray**. His death gave rise to widespread riots in the black areas of many American cities.

EXTRACTS FROM MARTIN LUTHER KING'S SPEECH IN WASHINGTON, AUGUST 1963

'..I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today....

With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.'

King goes North

Martin Luther King next turned his attention to the Northern ghettos. Here the problem for blacks was social and economic inequality. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) decided that they would concentrate first on Chicago in 1966 to highlight the problems of bad housing, poor facilities and discriminatory house-selling practices. But the SCLC campaign led to conflict with the police and with white neighbourhoods. King's own family suffered from the poor conditions, living in a small apartment. Overall, King's Chicago campaign was a failure and it showed him the difficulties of trying to overcome social and economic inequality.

The Poor People's Campaign, 1968

King now took a more radical approach to tackling the social and economic problems of blacks. He planned a **Poor People's Campaign** which would include a national civil disobedience campaign, occupying government buildings and boycotting businesses. He demanded that the government spend \$30 billion a year to combat poverty.

But by now the civil rights movement was dividing. Martin Luther King's influence began to decline. In March 1968, he was shot by a **white assassin in Memphis**. His assassination sparked off huge rioting and looting in 130 cities across the US. Sixty-five thousand troops were called out to quell the riots, in which 35 people were killed.

Black Power and Black Panthers: Blacks were also demanding more than civil rights. *'What use is a mouthful of civil rights and a empty stomach?'* said an unemployed black youth. Large proportions of the unemployed were black. They were **frustrated** by the slow progress of racial integration, the poverty of the **black ghettos** and by white violence against civil rights marchers.

The Poor People's Campaign, 1968

Out of this grew a more **radical** (extreme) black voice. Led by **Malcolm X**, the radical black movement advocated violence and supported black nationalism. They advocated **Black Power**, which expressed a growing pride in being African-American. They sought the development of a separate black identity. The **Black Power** slogan was adopted by many different groups. The most extreme of these were the **Black Panthers**, who wanted to gain Black Power *'through the barrel of a gun'*.

They differed from **Martin Luther King** who sought white and black integration and who wished to respect the democratic tradition of the US. In contrast, **Malcolm X** sought separation of blacks and whites - he wanted black self-determination, where blacks would rule themselves.

Bad social and economic conditions in inner-city ghettos, combined with a growing violence, led to **race riots** in a number of cities, ranging from **Harlem** in New York to **Watts** in Los Angeles to Chicago between 1965 and 1968.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What part did each of the following play in the part of desegregation;
 - a. Lunch counter protests
 - b. The SNCC
 - c. Freedom Rides
 - d. Albany, Georgia
 - e. Birmingham, Alabama
 - f. 'I Have A Dream' speech
 - g. Mississippi Freedom Summer
 - h. Selma to Montgomery
2. What divisions occurred in the civil rights movement in the late 1960s?
3. What was black nationalism?

The **GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL RIGHTS**

The Government and Civil Rights

The federal government was concerned about racial conflict and about the image which US racial segregation gave to the world. In opposition to southern state governments, the federal government played a vital role in getting civil rights for blacks and other minority groups:

- Both Truman and Eisenhower ended segregation in the armed forces.
- In the **Civil Rights Act 1957**, Eisenhower set up a Civil Rights Commission to investigate places where blacks were denied the vote.
- Kennedy brought in the **Civil Rights Bill** but it was not until Johnson became President that it was passed. The **Civil Rights Act 1964** outlawed discrimination in public places, including restaurants, theatres, sport stadiums and cinemas. It also set up the **Employment Opportunities Commission** to outlaw job discrimination.
- The **Voting Rights Act 1965** organised **voters' registration** and banned literacy tests for voter registration.
- In 1968, another Civil Rights Act - popularly known as the **Fair Housing Act** - was passed. This prohibited discrimination concerning the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin and sex.
- The government extended **affirmative action** by ensuring that companies on federal contracts had to provide jobs for minorities.

Reagan, however, tried to withdraw federal support for the civil rights programme. He appointed more **conservative judges** to the Supreme Court. He also dismantled some of the welfare programmes set up under the **New Deal** and the **Great Society**, which had mostly benefited blacks.

Black Success

Many African-Americans benefited from the civil rights struggle as a new economic and social black leadership was created - in sports, films, politics and music. In the 1960s, Diahann Carroll and Sidney Poitier in television and movies, **Muhammad Ali** in boxing, Bill Russell and Wilt Chamberlain in basketball and the Motown stars in popular music became national and international figures. More blacks were registered to vote and more were elected to state and federal Houses of Congress. The first black mayor was elected in Springfield, Ohio in 1966. The next year saw the first black senator elected to the US Senate for almost 100 years. This was accompanied by a much greater white acceptance of blacks. Opinion polls showed clear majorities of whites in support of desegregation. However, this still left a large number of blacks in **poverty**. Black society itself became divided. Around 40 per cent of black society achieved a **middle-class lifestyle** during the 1970s, but about 30 per cent were still below the poverty line. The condition of these blacks was a class issue as much as it was a race issue.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What steps were taken by each of the Presidents from Truman to Johnson in granting civil rights?
2. What did Reagan do to slow down civil rights and conditions for black Americans?

Chicanos and Native Americans

- Chicanos (Mexican-Americans) and Native Americans (American Indians) were encouraged by the civil rights movement to fight for their rights. Chicanos were used legally and illegally as farm labourers in the US. They suffered general white hostility, particularly in California and Florida. In the early 1960s, **Cesar Chavez** used non-violent methods of **boycotting** to gain improved working and living conditions for agricultural labourers.
- **Native Americans** were even worse off. They suffered from over 100 years of discrimination and repression. By the end of the 1960s, their 1 million members suffered the worst education and housing and the highest disease and death rates among any ethnic group in the US. Some founded the **American Indian Movement** (AIM) and took over Alcatraz Island and government buildings to highlight their conditions. This worked. The **Indian Self-Determination Act 1975** was passed, which gave Indians control of their reservations. Other laws gave Indians **religious freedom** and **educational support**. Tribes also won legal battles to get the return of lands taken from them in the past by the federal government.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did black Americans make progress in society?
2. How did conditions improve for:
 - a. Chicanos
 - b. Native Americans

Urban POVERTY

Background

In the 1950s and early 1960s, most Americans were happy with their way of life. The affluence (wealth) of the country led people to believe that if poverty existed, it was only in **small pockets**. Then in 1962, Michael Harrington wrote *The Other America*, which revealed the poverty behind the affluence - 40 million Americans were living in poverty. This was about 25 per cent of the population.

Traditionally, poverty in America was associated with rural poor blacks in the South. But since the Second World War a number of changes had occurred that created the problem of **urban poverty**.

Causes – Black Ghettoes

During the 1940s and 1950s, there was **huge movement of black Americans** from the South to the northern cities. They fled poverty, racial discrimination, white violence and lynching to find a better life in the urban North. They sought jobs in the booming manufacturing industries. They concentrated in the inner areas or the centre of cities.

At the same time, there was **movement of whites** from the cities to the suburbs. This was often accompanied by a movement of industry to the suburbs. This left many decayed and abandoned buildings and factories in the centre. This was also a time of change in industry. As **manufacturing declined** in the 1950s and 1960s, so did the need for unskilled mostly black - labour.

Instead of the better life for many migrant black families, the inner cities became places with high concentrations of unemployment, poverty, low educational levels and poor housing. They became **black ghettoes**.

Taxes and Housing

The movement of the whites to the suburbs had another result: it deprived cities of **tax revenue** which could be used to maintain streets, schools and public areas. In spite of federal funding, many cities were in **financial trouble**. In 1975, New York City was almost bankrupt and was only saved by huge federal funding.

The cities were made worse by government **housing policies**. The cities built over 2 million new houses by the early 1970s but this was not enough to house people. These public housing projects were often a cause of further problems because the high-rise apartments only included the **very poorest people** and those with **serious social problems**. The government also provided billions of dollars from the 1940s for slum clearance, or **urban renewal**, as it was called. This often meant replacing the old tenements with office blocks and luxury apartments, which increased the number of homeless.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was Michael Harrington's estimate of the amount of poverty in the US in 1962?

War on Poverty

In the 1940s and 1950s, Presidents Truman and Eisenhower had **increased social security payments** and established a **minimum wage**. President Kennedy continued on the same path, but he also provided federal money for **school and job-based training**.

The federal government established a **poverty line** in 1964 - this was an income level below which people were regarded as poor. This included more than half the black population, almost half of female-headed families and a third of elderly people.

President Johnson wanted to use government resources to improve the condition of poor people as part of his **Great Society** programme. He believed that a **war on poverty** would give people a chance to help themselves. He set up the **Office of Economic Opportunity**.

This organised:

- **Head Start** - where children went to preschool classes.
- **Job Corps** - to provide skills for inner-city youth.
- **Community Action Programs** which set up clinics and law centres.

War on Poverty

He also provided \$1 billion to help poor students in **public schools**, but this was often spent by school boards on middle-class children instead. He also gave \$3 billion to fund low- and middle-income **housing** as well as rent aid. He set up **Medicare** for the elderly and **Medicaid** for the poorer welfare recipients.

Johnson's war on poverty had some success. The number of people below the poverty line dropped from 40 million in 1959 to 28 million in 1968 and 25 million in 1970. This was also helped by the growth in the economy in the 1960s. When the economy took a downturn in the 1970s and 1980s, government spending was cut back and this, along with rising unemployment, made urban poverty worse.

Urban Riots

However, before Johnson's policy could have any effect, riots broke out in 1965 in **Watts, Los Angeles**. These were sparked off by an incident between a young black driver who was drunk and a white policeman. The rioters looted and burned shops and businesses and threw bottles and stones at police. Thirty-four people were killed, almost all black, and over 900 were injured and 4,000 arrested.

Watts was the beginning of a series of urban riots that lasted from 1965-8 and affected many US cities - Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, Newark (New Jersey) and Detroit. There were 38 riots in 1966, in which seven people were killed, 400 injured and 3,000 arrested. In 1967, the worst year, there were 164 riots. The two most serious riots in Newark (New Jersey) and Detroit resulted in 23 and 34 dead respectively and thousands of buildings looted and burned.

Urban Riots - Causes

Many **causes** were given to explain these riots:

- There was a **concentration of poverty and unemployment** in these areas, and most of the rioters were poor or working class. They were class riots every bit as much as they were racial riots.
- But for others there were **rising expectations** - much of the legal discrimination against blacks had been overcome and the civil rights movement had given hope of a better life to blacks. But now there were other social and economic **barriers to improvement**. Indeed, blacks were better off on average than the 1950s, when there was no violence. The black ghettos in Detroit and Watts were better off than those in other cities.

'You go into a local store in Watts. Besides the rats and the roaches, the food was rotten. There would be some Jewish guy or white guy standing there saying, "The Hell with you, you're going to have to buy this anyway." Those were the first places people went, to burn down the store. What we didn't have in Watts wasn't civil rights. It was jobs, housing and education. It was a positive image of ourselves. We didn't know what they were complaining about in the South.'

(A Watts rioter)

Urban Riots - Causes

- There was also a concentration of **young people**, especially young men - the group most likely to be involved in violence.
- **Malcolm X** - Martin Luther King was not the hero of the young rioters. Instead of the message of non-violence, they preferred the message of Malcolm X. He wanted blacks to be black, he preached black nationalism and spoke about inequality. *'I'm not going to sit at your table and watch you eat,'* he said, *'with nothing on my plate and call myself a diner.'* Some preached a message of black power with violence.
- There was **growing tension** between **the police and black youths**. Most of the riots were sparked off by incidents between white police and black residents.
- The influence of **television**, which made people aware of what was happening elsewhere and spread a general discontent.
- There were also growing levels of **violence in society** generally and guns were easy to get.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where did urban riots first break out?
2. Where did they spread to?
3. What caused the riots?

Drugs AND *Crime*

Drugs and Crime

Poverty, unemployment and **slum conditions** were major causes of crime in the US. But they were not the only causes. There was also:

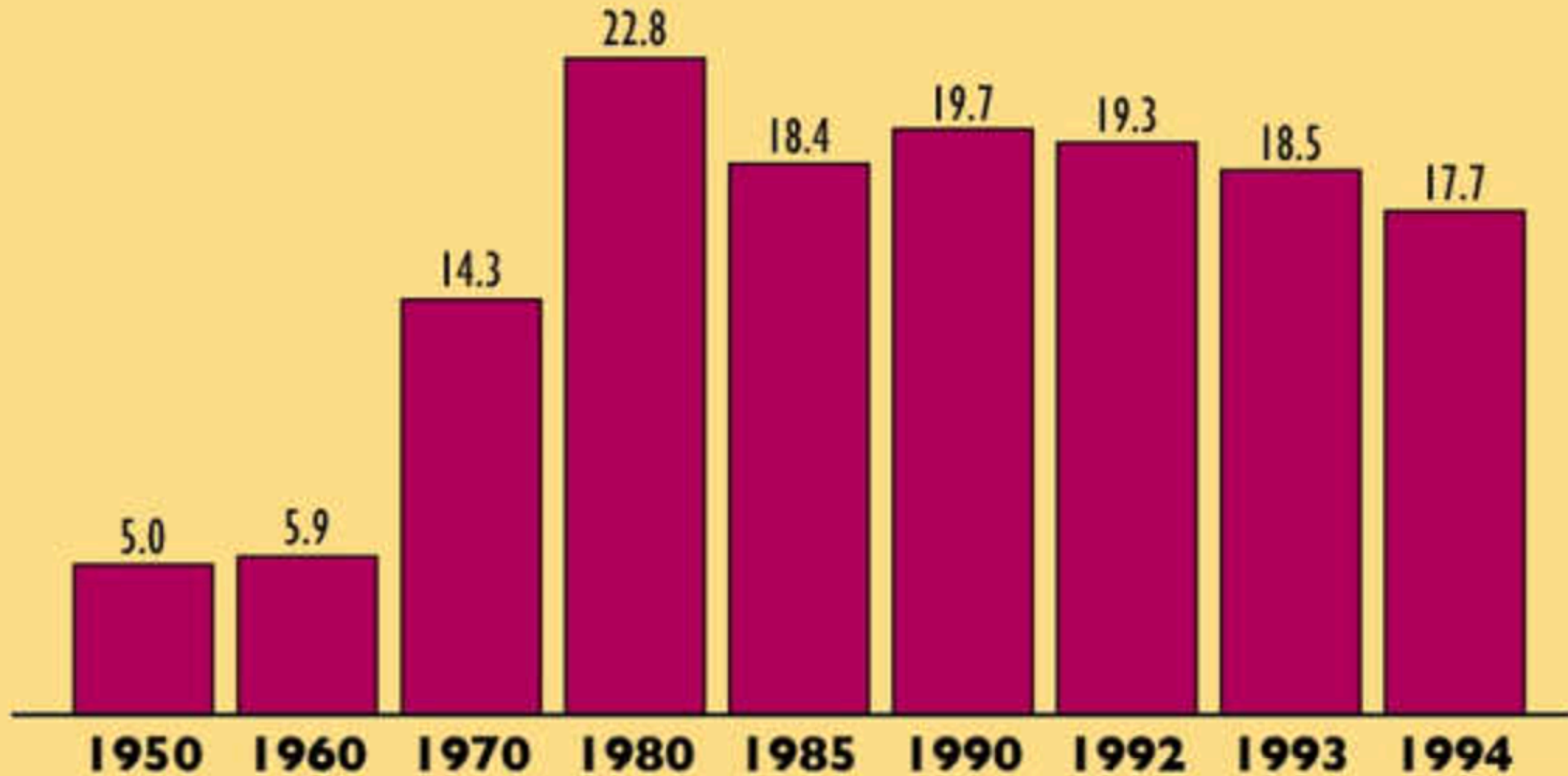
- The widespread availability of guns - almost one gun per person in a population of 250 million.
- Drug addiction and the cost of drugs.
- Inadequate number of police.

Crime levels began to rise after the Second World War. However, they jumped rapidly from the early 1960s onwards. Violent crime, for example, trebled between 1960 and 1977. The problem was more serious in the US than elsewhere. Compared with other industrialised countries, the US had the highest rate of reported murders, rapes and robberies.

Rising crime was largely an **urban** phenomenon. In the 1970s, 30 per cent of all reported crimes in America took place in the **six largest cities**. But these cities only contained 12 per cent of the country's population. New York, a city with a population roughly equal to Sweden's, had 20 times more murders.

Criminals tended to be **young, male, poor and black**. In 1975, three-quarters of all people arrested for violent crime were males under 25. But the average age of criminals dropped in the 1980s. Crime was largely confined to a small proportion of society. US criminologists estimated that two-thirds of all violent crimes were committed by 7 per cent of the people. These people were habitual offenders with a number of arrests. Crime also paid, particularly in relation to burglaries, where arrest and conviction rates were very low.

Serious Crimes Reported to the Police (Selected Years 1950–94)



Source: FBI, *Crime in the United States*, annual (per 1,000 of population)

Drugs

By the 1970s, much crime was **drug related**, as the US became the largest **consumer** of illegal drugs. This pattern began in the late 1950s and grew more rapidly in the 1960s, partly encouraged by being fashionable among pop and film stars. By 1990, 6 per cent of all Americans were drug addicts, but many more had experienced drugs. Surveys showed that 44 per cent of high school students had taken drugs at least once, and about 12 per cent were frequent users.

By the 1980s, drug trafficking had become a huge **multinational business** operated by **organised crime**. There were Columbian cartels linked with the Mafia and Jamaican, Puerto Rican, black or Mexican gangs in various cities across the US. Most of the drugs originated in poorer countries such as Columbia, Peru, Turkey and Afghanistan. Poorer peasants were dependant on the cash they got for their crops. In some places, guerrilla groups depended on the money from drug sales to fund their war against a local government.

Drugs were linked to **other crimes** and **problems**:

- Many drug addicts began to steal to feed their habit until they were stealing up to 90 per cent of what they spent on drugs.
- About half the US murders were drug related. These were often caused by gang wars between drug dealers competing for territory.
- The spread of AIDS was partly caused by dirty needles being shared among drug addicts.

Concerns about Crime

In the US, many **feared** the spread of crime. By the late 1960s, crime in the streets was the country's main problem according to opinion polls. Blacks as well as whites worried about the growth of crime because blacks were often the targets of crime from fellow blacks. Working-class whites were angry about crime - it led to increased racial tension. A white resident of Brooklyn, New York said, *'You can't walk anywhere. It's because these people don't know how to live. They steal. They got no values. They say it's history. It's not history, it's the way they live. They live like animals.'*

The **US government** reacted to the people's concerns. Crime became an issue in presidential and congressional elections. Government policies tried to tackle the causes of crime by investing in job-training schemes and improving education and housing. They also tried to **crack down** on crime by increasing penalties, building more prisons and putting more police on the street.

Similar approaches were tried in the case of **drug trafficking**. In 1986, President Reagan increased funding for police and increased penalties for drug traffickers. He also proposed **economic sanctions** against drug-producing countries to force them to deal with the problem there.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What caused crime in the USA?
2. Explain each of the following in relation to urban crime:
 - a. Crime levels
 - b. Young, male, poor, black.
3. How did drug trafficking become a multinational business?
4. In what ways were drugs related to other crimes and problems?