

# Against The System:

Social and political movements of  
the 1960s

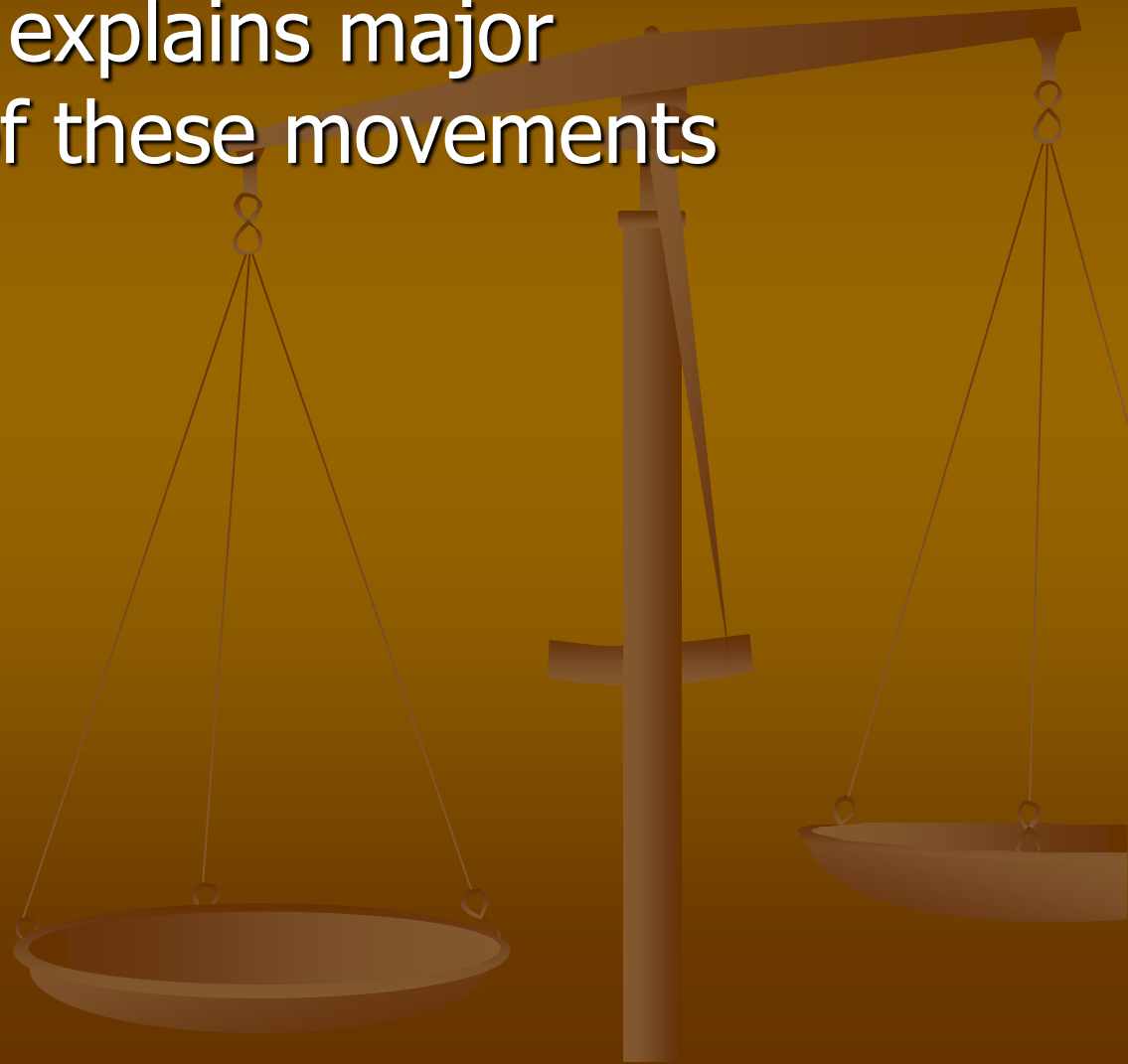
# Beyond Civil Rights...

In the 1960s, several movements came about that challenged conventional ways of thinking in the United States.

These were in addition to (or in some cases caused by) the success of the Civil Rights Movement

These included the Women's Movement, the Youth Movement, and the Environmental Movement.

This presentation explains major developments of these movements



# The Women's Movement

- ▶ Like the civil rights movement, the women's movement used various means to end discrimination.
- ▶ Activists created pressure groups, adopted confrontation tactics like sit-ins and marches, and tried to capture media attention.
- ▶ By the end of the 1960s, feminists had created an energetic campaign that called both for legal equity and for the restructuring of gender roles and social institutions.

# *Commission on the Status of Women of 1961*

- ▶ President Kennedy established **the first presidential commission to look into the status of women in the United States** in 1961.
- ▶ After collecting data for two years, the commission issued a report
- ▶ **The report cited:**
  - 1) **employment discrimination**
  - 2) **unequal pay**
  - 3) **legal inequality**
  - 4) **insufficient support services for working women**

# *The Feminine Mystique*

- Journalist Betty Friedan wrote a **book that challenged the notion that women could be fulfilled only as wives and mothers.**
- It became the “bible” of the feminist movement.



# Civil Rights Act of 1964

- **Although designed to benefit African-Americans, this act included provisions barring sex discrimination.**
- The act included setting up the EEOC to enforce the laws



# National Organization for Women (NOW)

- **This is a civil rights group that was organized in 1966 to urge equal opportunity and end sex discrimination.**
- Betty Friedan was its first president.
- The group was formed because the EEOC was ignoring gender-based charges of discrimination.
- It is still very powerful today.





# Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

An amendment was **passed by Congress in 1972 to guarantee equality of the sexes under the law.**

It **failed to be ratified** by 2/3 of the states, but signified the legitimacy of the feminist's claims



# Roe v. Wade (1973)

- Abortion rights became an issue in the 1960s.
- **In 1973, abortion was legalized by the Supreme Court of the United States.**
- However, it remains one of the most controversial topics in America today.



# The Youth Movement

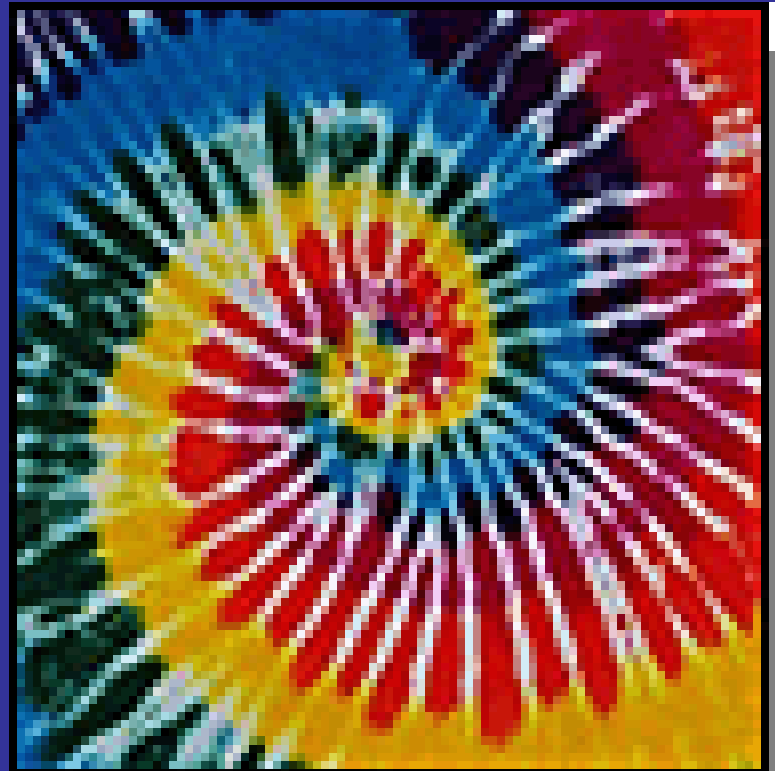
- As the baby boom generation veered toward adulthood, its members began to challenge the status quo.
- College campuses filled with young people who had the freedom to question the moral and spiritual health of the nation.
- The result was the “counterculture movement” of the 1960s.

# “Hippies”

- Some youth began to question ALL aspects of established society.
- **Hippies were extreme examples of 1960s youth: they decried materialism, mocked convention, spurned authority, joined communes, enjoyed rock music, and experimented with drugs and sex.**

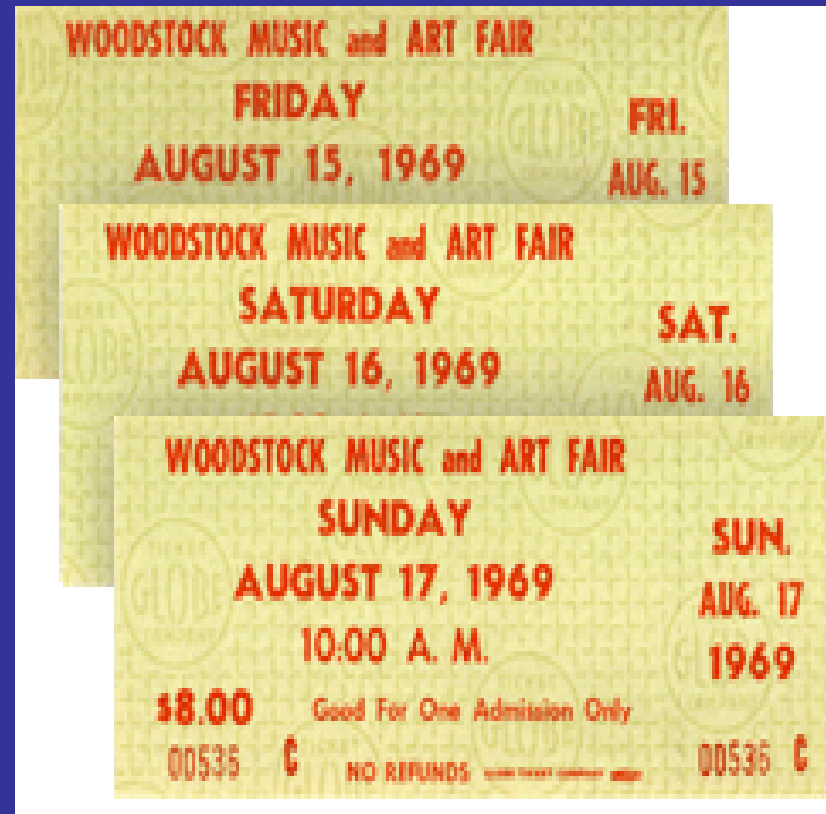


- Often hippies asserted their rebellious attitude through elements of personal style, such as long hair and tie-dyed clothes
- The expression “tune in, turn on, drop out” explained the manner in which hippies dealt with problems in society by removing themselves from it.



# Woodstock Festival

- The greatest “hippie” gathering of the decade took place in August of **1969** in **Woodstock, New York**.
- It was a **3-day music festival** seen by many as a **celebration of peace and love** that captured the essence of the movement.



# Images of Woodstock



# Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)



- **Many young people tried to change what they saw as problems of society rather than evade them.**
- **One such group was SDS, which started in 1960.** In eight years, membership swelled to 100,000.
- SDS believed that all Americans should decide on major economic, political, and social issues, and criticized American society for its focus on career advancement, material possessions, military strength, and racism.



# 1968 Democratic Convention


- Many people see this as **the height of the activist youth movement of the 60s.**
- **Antiwar demonstrators clashed with police,** and images of students being beaten by police shocked television audiences across the United States.



# Effects of the Youth Movement:

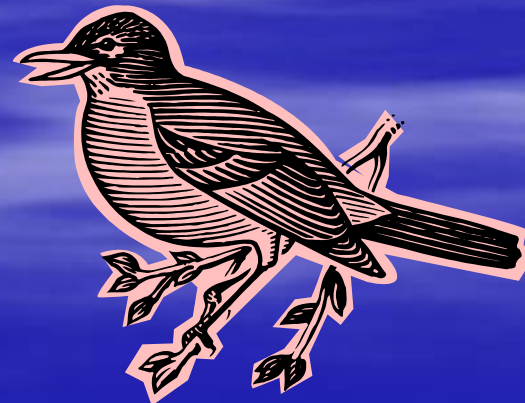
- 1. Colleges became less authoritarian – many relaxed dress codes, curfews, etc.**
- 2. Spread the ideas of the civil rights movement, feminist movement, and environmental movement**
- 3. Contributed to the end of the war in Vietnam**

# The Environmental Movement

- ◆ The movement to preserve the environment took hold throughout the turbulent 1960s as well.
  - ◆ During a time where all manner of conventions were being tested, it is logical that the industry of America and its use of resources would be questioned too.
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# *Silent Spring*

- In 1962, biologist Rachel Carson wrote a best selling book called *Silent Spring*.
- **This book attacked the use of toxic pesticides like DDT as a threat to both animals and human beings.**
- The book raised Americans' awareness of threats to the environment and moved many to take action



# New organizations



- **Activist formed a number of groups to organize rallies, protests, and legal action to protect environmental interests.**
- **Examples of these are:**
  - 1. Environmental Defense Fund (1967)**
  - 2. Friends of the Earth (1968)**
  - 3. Greenpeace (1970)**
  - 4. Sierra Club legal Defense Fund (1971)**

# Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

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- In response to growing citizen protests, Congress in 1970 passed the National Environmental Protection Act, which created the EPA.
- **This agency is responsible for protecting the environment and maintaining it for future generations.**
- In addition, Congress enacted laws to curb pollution, preserve wilderness areas, and protect endangered species.

# Legacy of the 1960s...

The 60s was one of the most controversial decades in American history.

As each of these movements sought to change society, many of their members wholly rejected everything that American society stood for up to that time.

These movements have had mixed success,  
but it is undeniable that American society  
has been forever altered.