

Essay 5

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Question

- “1968 was a turning point for the United States.” To what extent is this an accurate assessment? In your answer, discuss TWO of the following:
 - National politics
 - Vietnam War
 - Civil Rights Movement

Thesis

- 1968 was a turning point in the United States. Evidence of this can be seen in the controversial election of 1968 and the gains made in the civil rights movement.

National politics

- The election of 1968 ended democrat dominance in the presidency
- Democrats had won 7 of the last 9 elections
- The Vietnam war and civil rights caused the democrats to lose.
- Every viable Democrat candidate collapsed in one way or another
- LBJ - Tet offensive, Robert Kennedy - assassinated
- The Democrats completely collapsed after the anti war rally and police riot in Chicago.
- Nixon won the election in 1968 and the republicans would hold power for the next 40 years.

Civil Rights

- Another 1968 turning point occurred in the Civil Rights movement.
- Prior to 1968. led by Dr. Martin Luther King and other non-violent statesmen African American Civil Rights in America had achieved unparalleled success. This success peaked with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- Both of these pieces of legislation showed a cooperation between Civil Rights Activists and the federal government that led to real, meaningful change

- April 4, 1968 Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis. Riots broke out in over 100 US cities following his death, the worst in Baltimore and Washington DC.
- The violence that ensued and the rise of activists such as the Black Panthers and nation of Islam in his absence caused whites to abandon whatever support they had shown during the early 1960s

- By the 1968 elections whites would flee the pro-Civil Rights Democratic party for the American Independent Party or even Republicans which was especially damaging in the South where southern whites had voted Democrat for over 100 years.
- Post 1968 there would be almost no significant Civil Rights legislation on a national level although enforcement of previous legislation would, over time, become the norm rather than the exception