



Unit 11 Essay 2

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Explain how THREE of the following contributed to the social revolutions of the 1960s:

New Left

Civil Rights Movement

Counterculture

Women's Movement

The 60's were filled with many social revolutions and changes. African Americans starting voicing more and more opinions about equal rights and started a Civil Rights Movement. Also the baby boom of the 1950's, were growing up and started revolting against their parents by listening to rock and roll, becoming "hippies" and joining the sexual revolution. Lastly, women were speaking out about their rights and started the Women's Liberation Movement. All three of these had major impacts on changes throughout the 60's.

Civil Rights Movement



- ▶ The Civil Rights movement reached its height during the 1960s with the passage of the most comprehensive civil rights legislation passed by Congress and signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination for reason of color, race, religion, or national origin in places of public accommodation, and anything covered by interstate commerce. That included restaurants, hotels, motels, and theaters. The act also forbade discrimination in employment and discrimination on the bases of sex.
- ▶ The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed to protect the right to vote. Federal observers would be placed at the polls to make sure all citizens had the right to vote. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 outlawed discrimination in housing and the selling of real estate.
- ▶ The Civil Rights Movement carried over to other "rights" movements including women's rights and the "rights" of students and others to protest the nation's war in Vietnam. The Civil Rights Movement was a social revolution and its success gave encouragement to other movements.

Counterculture



- ▶ The 1960s were a decade of enormous social change. In many respects, the unpopular and misunderstood Vietnam War served as the catalyst for a counterculture movement where young people openly questioned the status quo and decisions made by older generations. The birth control pill, which was introduced in 1960, gained popularity as well, leading to a sexual revolution and a change in lifestyle for many.
- ▶ Some of those who dropped out of traditional society were called “hippies,” and they gravitated to areas such as the Haight-Ashbury section of San Francisco. They became known as “flower children” because they believed that utopia was found in nature.
- ▶ Hippies were mostly middle-class whites but without the political drive. Their hallmarks were a particular style of dress that included jeans, tie-dyed shirts, sandals, beards, long hair, and a lifestyle that embraced sexual promiscuity and recreational drugs, including marijuana and the hallucinogenic LSD. The sex and drug culture were reflected in the rock music of the time by such groups as Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead.



▶ A landmark counterculture event was the Woodstock Festival, held in upstate New York in August 1969. Billed as “three days of peace, music, and love,” the promoters expected a large crowd but not the 300,000 to 400,000 people who actually attended. In spite of the large numbers, there were no serious problems; adequate medical care was available — mainly for drug-related emergencies — and the police decided not to try to enforce drug laws.

▶ While the general permissiveness of the counterculture encouraged sexual freedom, other factors also contributed to the change in attitudes toward sexuality. Oral contraceptives became available, and by 1970, 12 million women were “on the pill.” Throughout the sexual revolution, which lasted until the onset of the AIDS crisis in the mid-'80s, the birth rate declined and the number of abortions, unwed mothers, and divorces rose.



Women's Movement



- ▶ American feminists showed vitality and momentum. They won legislative and judicial victories and provoked an intense rethinking of gender roles. Thousands of women marched in the Women's Stride for Equality of the fiftieth anniversary of woman suffrage in 1970.
- ▶ In 1972 Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments, which prohibited sex discrimination in any federally assisted educational program or activity. It declared "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." This act's biggest impact was to create opportunities for girls' and women's athletics at schools and colleges. This act didn't reach its full potential until the 1980s and 1990s.

- ▶ In Reed v. Reed (1971) and Frontiero v. Richardson (1973), the court challenged sex discrimination in legislation and employment. In the case Roe v. Wade (1973), the Court struck down laws prohibiting abortion. They argued that a woman's decision to terminate a pregnancy was protected by the constitutional right of privacy.
- ▶ In 1972 President Nixon vetoed the proposal to set up nationwide public day care. He claimed it would weaken the American family.
- ▶ The worst defeat for the feminists was that of the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) which died in 1982 just three states short of success.



Conclusion

The 60's was a time full of major changes and social revolutions in America's society. African Americans were speaking out for equal rights and desecration. The children of the baby boom of the 50's were growing up and rebelling against their parents and shocking previous generations with rock and roll, hippie movement, and new sexual revolutions. Women were also speaking out about equal rights and started a liberation movement which changed women's roles across the country. All three of these examples are strong examples of social revolutions and changes to the society during the 1960's.