

US History An Age of Civil Disobedience

Learning Target:

I can analyze the expansion of the Vietnam anti-war movement on the home front.

1. Antiwar Protesting Intensifies

The Student Movement –

The Generational Gap Widens –

- Cold War fears, Civil Rights protests, Vietnam War
 - Led youth of the 1960's to question values of parents and American society
- Generation gap between baby boomers and parents widened as decade wore on
 - 1964 – the first wave of baby boomers entering college
 - 1960's youth movement started on college campuses with white middle class students

The New Left –

- The growing student movement of the 1960s became known as the “New Left”
- Promoted change to American society other than socialism

Students for a Democratic Society –

- Founded in 1960 and promoted a return to a “participatory democracy”
- Believed corporations and large gov't institutions had taken over America

Free Speech Movement –

- Started at the University of California at Berkley
- Grew from clash between students and administration over free speech on campus

Campus Activism –

- SDS and FSM spread to campuses across the country
- The Vietnam War would further fuel their protests

The Protest Movement Grows –

SDS & College Deferments –

- Johnson made college deferments for students in good academic standing
- SDS organized protests on college campuses & at selective service centers

Other Groups Protest –

- Returning veterans who served in Vietnam began to protest
- Folk music began to protest the war
 - Country Joe & The Fish – I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag

Draft Resistance –

- 1967 – 500,000 protestors gathered in Central Park to burn draft cards
- Protests continued to Nixon phased out the draft in the early 70s

War Divides The Nation –

- By 1967 it became clear that the nation was divided by Vietnam
- 1967 poll showed 70% of Americans believed that war protests were acts of disloyalty

“I’m bitter . . . It’s people like us who give up our sons for the country. The college types, the professors, they go to Washington and tell the gov’t what to do. But their sons, they don’t end up in the swamps over there, in Vietnam. No sir. They’re deferred, because they’re in school. What bothers me about the peace crowd is that you can tell from their attitude, the way they look and what they say, that they don’t really love this country.

– Firefighter who lost son in Vietnam

War Support Starts To Erode –

- Nixon’s escalation of the Vietnam War by bombing Cambodia provoked outrage in US
- Anger particularly high on the nation’s college campuses

Kent State Shootings –

Location –

- May 4, 1970 – Kent State University, OH

Background –

- Someone had previously set fire to the campus ROTC building
- Governor of Ohio had vowed to “eradicate” the protestors
- National Guard troops were sent in to control the protestors

The Shootings –

- National Guard troops shot randomly into the crowd of students
- They killed four and injured nine other students
- Some students merely walking across campus

Other Shootings –

- May 14, 1970 at Jackson State College
- 2 students killed protesting in a dorm by police
- Led to a nationwide strike by college students and faculty

The Repeal Of The Tonkin Gulf Resolution (Dec. 1970) –

- Members of Congress were also upset with Nixon’s bombing of Cambodia
- In response they repealed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution
- Nixon insisted this did not affect his authority to continue the war
- Congress developed plans to stop the war by cutting off funding once troops withdrew

The Pentagon Papers (1971) –

- A secret collection of government documents relating to the war in Vietnam
- Revealed the government had misled the American people about the course of the war
- They were leaked to the press by Daniel Ellsberg, a former Dept. of Defense official
- He leaked them because he found few South Vietnamese citizens supported the war
- Boosted the antiwar movement