

US History

The Conservative Revolution

Learning Target:

I can examine the evolution of conservatism in the United States from the New Deal through Reagan.

1. The Evolution of Conservatism

- The nation has had a long running debate on the proper role and size of government
- Conservatives have long promised to keep taxes low and minimize spending
- At times the nation has agreed and at other times it hasn't

The New Deal

American Liberty League –

- Founded to defend conservative values of private property and individual enterprise
- Claimed the New Deal undermined these values
- Had difficulty overcoming FDR's popularity

Eisenhower to Goldwater

Dwight Eisenhower –

- 1952 election of Eisenhower led to eight years of Republican rule
- Called his style of government "modern Republicanism"
- Accepted the basic framework on the New Deal and actually expanded it slightly

Barry Goldwater –

- Ran for president in 1964 vs. Lyndon Johnson on a very conservative platform
- Opposed most of the New Deal including Social Security, Civil Rights, and welfare programs
- Many believed he was too conservative and Johnson easily defeated him
- Did win several southern states unhappy with desegregation
- Showed the south may be willing to break with the Democrats
- Conservatives had little say in government during Johnson's Great Society

Nixon & the Welfare State

Richard Nixon –

- Nixon won in 1968 bringing the Republicans back to power
- Wanted to trim social welfare programs
- Government continued to grow under Nixon angering many conservatives

Social Issues

-Conservatives became troubled by the rapid cultural changes of the 1960s & 1970s

Music –

-Rock music became more and more shocking with sexual & drug oriented lyrics

Youth Culture –

-Illegal drug use had become more widespread and student protest movements concerned many

Sexual Revolution –

-Many believed the birth control pill promoted promiscuity

The Election of 1980

Ronald Reagan (Republican) vs. Jimmy Carter (Democrat and Incumbent President)

The New Right –

-Formed by conservative groups to win the election

-Two key concerns

-Size of government and its role in the economy

-The restoration of Christian values in American society

Reagan Landslide –

-Seized on growing discontent or malaise in the nation

-Criticized Carter's handling of the economy

-Foreign events like the Iran hostage crisis also helped Reagan win

-Reagan won the electoral college 489 - 49

“I’m talking in human terms and he is hiding behind a dictionary. If he wants a definition, I’ll give him one. A recession is when your neighbor loses his job. A depression is when you lose yours. A recovery is when Jimmy Carter loses his.” – Ronald Reagan