

A Nation Divided and 1968

The Working Class Goes to War

A “Manipulatable” Draft

- Selective Service System, **draft**, calls men 18–26 to military service
- Thousands look for ways to avoid the draft
- Many—mostly white, affluent—get college deferment
- 80% of U.S. soldiers come from lower economic levels

African Americans in Vietnam

- African Americans serve in disproportionate numbers in ground combat
- Defense Dept. corrects problem by instituting draft lottery in 1969
- Racial tensions high in many platoons; add to low troop morale

Women Join the Ranks

- 10,000 women serve, mostly as military nurses
- Thousands volunteer: American Red Cross, United Services Organization

The Roots of Opposition

The New Left

- **New Left**—youth movement of 1960s, demand sweeping changes
- **Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Free Speech Movement (FSM):**
 - criticize big business, government; want greater individual freedom

Campus Activism

- New Left ideas spread across colleges
- Students protest campus issues, Vietnam war

The Protest Movement Emerges

The Movement Grows

- In 1965, protest marches, rallies draw tens of thousands
- 1966, student deferments require good academic standing
 - SDS calls for civil disobedience; counsels students to go abroad
- Small numbers of returning veterans protest; protest songs popular

From Protest to Resistance

- Antiwar demonstrations, protests increase, some become violent
- Some men burn draft cards; some refuse to serve; some flee to Canada

War Divides the Nation

- **Doves** strongly oppose war, believe U.S. should withdraw
- **Hawks** favor sending greater forces to win the war
- 1967 majority of Americans support war, consider protesters disloyal

Johnson Remains Determined

- LBJ continues slow escalation, is criticized by both hawks and doves
- Combat stalemate leads Defense Secretary Robert McNamara to resign

The Tet Offensive Turns the War

A Surprise Attack

- 1968 villagers go to cities to celebrate Tet (Vietnamese new year)
- Vietcong among crowd attack over 100 towns, 12 U.S. air bases
- **Tet offensive** lasts 1 month before U.S., S. Vietnam regain control
- Westmoreland declares attacks are military defeat for Vietcong

Tet Changes Public Opinion

- Before Tet, most Americans hawks; after Tet, hawks, doves both 40%
- Mainstream media openly criticizes war
- LBJ appoints **Clark Clifford** as new Secretary of Defense
- After studying situation, Clifford concludes war is unwinnable
- LBJ's popularity drops; 60% disapprove his handling of the war

- U.S. forces
- Communist forces
- ★ Major U.S. bases in 1968
- ★ Major attacks during Tet Offensive



Days of Loss and Rage

Johnson Withdraws

- Senator **Eugene McCarthy** runs for Democratic nomination as dove
- Senator **Robert Kennedy** enters race after LBJ's poor showing in New Hampshire
- LBJ announces will seek peace talks, will not run for reelection

Violence and Protest Grip the Nation

- Riots rock over 100 cities after Martin Luther King, Jr. is killed in 1968
- Kennedy wins CA primary; is fatally shot for supporting Israel
- Major demonstrations on over 100 college campuses

A Turbulent Race for President

Turmoil in Chicago

- Vice-president **Hubert Humphrey** wins Democratic nomination
- Over 10,000 demonstrators go to Chicago
- Mayor Richard J. Daley mobilizes police, National Guard
- Protesters try to march to convention; police beat them; rioting
- Delegates to convention bitterly debate antiwar plank

Nixon Triumphs

- Nixon works for party for years, wins 1968 Republican nomination
- Campaign promises: restore law and order, end war in Vietnam
- Governor **George Wallace** is third-party candidate
- Champions segregation, states' rights; attracts protest-weary whites
- Nixon wins presidency with 301 electoral votes. Humphrey gets 191 and Wallace gets 46.