

UNIT

7

The World in Uncertain Times, 1950–the Present

- Section 1** Containment Abroad and Agreement at Home
- Section 2** Decade of Change
- Section 3** Limits of Power
- Section 4** The Trend Towards Conservatism
- Section 5** Towards a Postindustrial Society:
Living in a Global Age

UNIT OVERVIEW

The foreign policies that began after World War II continued to shape America's response to events abroad for decades. The policy of containment, begun under President Truman, eventually led the United States into its longest war, one that caused deep splits within American society.

During the period from the 1950s to the present, life changed at home for Americans. An expanding civil rights movement, a major constitutional crisis, new technologies, and a changing economic picture are some of the highlights of these years.

Some key questions to help you focus on this time period include:

- How did the foreign policy concerns of the United States become more global in scope?
- What were the goals and the achievements of the civil rights movement?
- How did the war in Vietnam affect American society?
- How did relations of the United States with the Soviet Union change under Presidents Reagan and Bush?
- What are some of the major challenges that the nation will face in years to come?

SECTION

1

Containment Abroad and Agreement at Home

SECTION OVERVIEW

During the 1950s, the Cold War intensified and spread to new locations around the world. Meanwhile, the new economic prosperity allowed many Americans to enjoy greater wealth and leisure than their parents had. At the same time, the civil rights movement intensified as African Americans demanded justice and equality.

KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

As you review this section, take special note of the following key themes and concepts:

Foreign Policy How did tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union increase and decrease during Eisenhower's presidency?

Citizenship How did African Americans begin to organize the civil rights movement?

Economic Systems Who benefited from the "Eisenhower prosperity," and who did not?

KEY PEOPLE

Dwight D. Eisenhower
Nikita Khrushchev
Fidel Castro
Jackie Robinson
Rosa Parks
Martin Luther King, Jr.

KEY SUPREME COURT CASE

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas



THE BIG IDEA
Foreign policy, especially the Cold War, influenced events in the 1950s. During this period

- President Eisenhower attempted to limit communism.
- policies toward Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America took shape.
- the economy of the United States improved.
- African Americans renewed their struggle for civil rights.



KEY TERMS

balance of power ✓
brinkmanship ✓
arms race ✓
Sputnik ✓
domino theory ✓
Eisenhower doctrine ✓
suburbanization ✓
civil rights movement ✓

THE COLD WAR CONTINUES

The United States emerged from World War II as the strongest nation in the world. It controlled the atomic bomb, and its economy was undamaged by the destruction of war. The Soviet Union, however, quickly became America's chief rival. By 1949, it too had the atomic bomb. It had also taken control of most of the nations of Eastern Europe and was seeking to extend its influence elsewhere.

The Cold War, 1950–1960



ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

Examine the timeline, then answer the following questions.

- Did the Korean War begin before or after Eisenhower became President?
- Which events on the timeline took place in Europe?

President Harry S Truman began the policy of containment after the war in an attempt to limit the spread of communism. As the United States and the Soviet Union—the two world superpowers—attempted to maintain a **balance of power**, a cold war developed.

Eisenhower's Foreign Policy

As President, Dwight D. Eisenhower continued Truman's basic policy of containment. However, he and his secretary of state John Foster Dulles introduced some new ideas.

MASSIVE RETALIATION Eisenhower worried that defense spending would bankrupt the nation. Yet he feared that the Soviets might see cutbacks in military spending as a sign of weakness.

Eisenhower and Dulles instead devised a "new look" for the nation's defense. The United States would rely more heavily on air power and nuclear weapons than on ground troops. Dulles announced a policy of massive retaliation. This meant that the United States would consider the use of nuclear weapons to halt aggression if it believed the nation's interests were threatened.

Dulles further stated that the nation must be ready to go "to the brink of war" in order to preserve world peace. This policy of **brinkmanship** greatly increased world tensions during the 1950s.

THE ARMS RACE The United States and the Soviet Union began an arms race, stockpiling nuclear and nonnuclear weapons. The United States exploded a hydrogen bomb in 1952, and the Soviets tested one a year later. Both nations rushed to develop missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons. The balance of power became a balance of terror.

In 1953, Eisenhower announced the Atoms for Peace Plan at the United Nations. The plan called for United Nations supervision of a world search to find peaceful uses for nuclear technology. The Soviet Union refused to participate.

In 1957, the Soviets launched a satellite, Sputnik, into orbit around the earth. The arms race then became a space race as the United States rushed to launch its own satellites, some for military purposes.

Foreign Policy in Asia

Asia became a major area of concern for United States foreign policy. The communist victory in China in 1949 raised fears of further communist expansion. The war in Korea, even though it ended in what was basically a draw in 1953, added to these fears.

THE DOMINO THEORY As communists took control of the governments of China and, later, some nations of Southeast Asia, American worries about Communist expansion increased. Eisenhower stated that the United States must resist further aggression in the region and explained what came to be known as the domino theory. The nations of Asia, he said, were like a row of dominoes standing on end. If one fell to communism, the rest were sure to follow.

SEATO One way to resist aggression, Dulles claimed, was through alliances. To mirror the formation of NATO in Europe, Dulles in 1954 pushed for the creation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Its original members—Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and the United States—pledged to meet any “common danger” from communist aggression.

Foreign Policy in the Middle East

The Middle East was the scene of several outbreaks of trouble during the Eisenhower administration.

IRAN In 1954, the prime minister of Iran tried to nationalize that country's foreign-owned oil industry. The United States, through the Central Intelligence Agency, secretly arranged the overthrow of the prime minister's government and the restoration of the shah to the throne of Iran. This action helped secure America's supply of oil at the time but caused problems for the nation in years to come.

EGYPT Gamal Abdel Nasser, president of Egypt, had counted on economic support from the Soviet Union and the United States to build a huge dam at Aswan on the Nile River. Nasser's friendliness to the Soviet Union led the United States to withdraw its support. Nasser

KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

Interdependence

In 1954, the Central Intelligence Agency tried to overthrow the government of Iran and restore the country's former ruler, the shah. Why?

GEOGRAPHY IN HISTORY

Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal sparked a crisis that involved Great Britain, France, and Israel. Why was the Suez Canal so important to these nations?

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

On the examination, you will need to understand United States foreign policy during the 1950s in the Middle East.

What is the Eisenhower Doctrine? List two countries to which it is applied.

1.

2.

READING STRATEGY

Analyzing Cause and Effect

Why did the policies of Fidel Castro anger the Eisenhower administration?

then nationalized the Suez Canal, which was run by a British and French company. He planned to use revenues from the canal to pay for the dam.

Great Britain and France, joined by Israel, sent troops to seize the canal. Fearing that fighting would spread through the region, both the United States and the Soviet Union supported a United Nations resolution condemning the attack. Britain, France, and Israel withdrew, and the canal remained under Egyptian control.

THE EISENHOWER DOCTRINE Troubles in the Middle East led Congress to adopt what became known as the **Eisenhower Doctrine** in 1957. The United States pledged to help any Middle Eastern nation resist communist aggression.

LEBANON In 1958, the Eisenhower Doctrine was tested when the governments of Lebanon and Jordan asked for help. The United States sent marines to Lebanon, and Great Britain sent troops to Jordan to help restore political calm in those nations.

Foreign Policy in Latin America 50's

Troubles also flared up closer to home during Eisenhower's time in office. Three instances are especially notable.

GUATEMALA The CIA staged a successful covert operation in Guatemala in 1954. It arranged a revolt that toppled a government considered to be too friendly to communists.

NIXON'S TOUR In 1958, Vice President Richard Nixon went on a goodwill tour of Latin America. In Peru and Venezuela, however, angry mobs surrounded his limousine, throwing rocks and eggs at it. This event revealed the strong anti-American feelings that had built up in Latin America in response to repeated interventions in the region by the United States.

CUBA In 1956, Fidel Castro began a revolt against the government of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. When the revolt ended with Castro's victory in 1959, the United States quickly recognized the new government.

Castro, however, soon adopted policies that angered the Eisenhower administration. He limited civil liberties and imprisoned political opponents. He also nationalized key industries and turned to the Soviet Union for aid.

Large numbers of Cubans fled Castro's rule, with many settling in southern Florida. Some worked actively to end Castro's rule. Meanwhile, they became one more immigrant group that contributed to the richness of the American multicultural experience.

Changing Relations with the Soviet Union

Tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union rose and fell during Eisenhower's time in office.

NEW SOVIET LEADERSHIP Josef Stalin, leader of the Soviet Union since the 1920s, died in 1953. In time, Nikita Khrushchev took over as the head of the Soviet government. This change marked a temporary easing of Cold War tensions as the Soviets began to focus more on improving conditions within their nation.

PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE Relations between the superpowers gradually improved. In 1955, the leaders of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France held the first summit meeting since World War II in Geneva, Switzerland. The superpower leaders began talks on disarmament that, in time, led to a suspension of nuclear testing.

POLAND AND HUNGARY In 1956, riots by Polish workers won concessions from the Communist Polish government. Inspired by this, students and workers in Hungary began demonstrations that fell that ended with the Soviet Union sending tanks and troops to bring that nation firmly back under Communist control. The suppression of the Hungarian revolt cooled relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

CAMP DAVID Relations improved again by 1959. Khrushchev visited the United States, and he and Eisenhower held lengthy talks at Camp David, the presidential retreat near Washington, D.C. The spirit of goodwill that grew at these talks encouraged the leaders to announce another summit meeting in Paris in 1960.

THE U-2 INCIDENT The Paris summit proved a disaster. Shortly before it opened, the Soviet military shot down an American U-2 aircraft deep in Soviet territory. The pilot admitted that he had been spying on Soviet military bases.

Eisenhower said that he had approved the U-2 flights and promised to suspend them. Khrushchev denounced the United States and demanded an apology. Eisenhower refused, and the summit collapsed before it really started.

In summary, Eisenhower's foreign policy was primarily a continuation of Truman's containment policy. Many of the events of the 1950s can be compared to kettles ready to boil over in the 1960s. In later years, the Eisenhower administration was criticized by some as not being aware enough of the struggles of developing nations and of their desires to end colonial rule.

KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

Foreign Policy

Relations between the United States and the Soviet Union changed several times during the 1950s. Following the death of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in 1953, the new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev focused more on improving conditions within his nation. This eased cold war tensions.

- What event rekindled the Cold War in 1956? —

TURNING POINT

Why is the U-2 incident considered a turning point in U.S.-Soviet relations?

AN IMPROVING ECONOMY AT HOME

When Dwight Eisenhower became President in 1953, he was the first Republican President since 1933—the year Herbert Hoover left office during one of the worst years of the Great Depression. Since that time, Democrats Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman had called for

KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

Presidential Decisions and Actions

President Eisenhower believed that what was good for business benefited the United States as a whole. He attempted to limit the federal government's power but expanded several social programs, including Social Security.

- Why did farm conditions present a problem for Eisenhower?
- How did Congress resolve the problem?

New Deal and New Society policies that had vastly increased both the federal government's spending and its role in society.

Eisenhower's Economic Policies

Eisenhower had a deep dislike for strong centralized government. In addition, he generally believed policies that were good for big business were good for the nation as a whole.

EISENHOWER'S DOMESTIC POLICIES Eisenhower attempted to cut back on the federal government's size and power. He reduced spending for defense and foreign aid.

Eisenhower did recognize that many social programs begun under the New Deal were very popular. He extended some of these and, in some cases, started new programs. The Social Security program was expanded to include seven million more people, and a new cabinet post, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, was created.

THE FARM PROBLEM Conditions on the nation's farms pulled Eisenhower between his desire to cut government spending and his wish to extend some social programs. Farm production had been increasing while prices for agricultural products had been declining.

Farmers had been receiving payments from the federal government to make up for changes in market conditions. Eisenhower's secretary of agriculture wanted to be able to cut such payments. Farmers protested, and in 1956, Congress approved a new program that paid farmers for not planting crops. Both types of payments are called subsidies, or direct payments by a government to private individuals.

"Eisenhower Prosperity" and Consumer Spending

Despite the problems noted above, the American people commonly prospered during the 1950s. There were several reasons for this.

- During World War II, Americans had worked hard and generally earned good wages. Because of rationing and shortages, however, they could usually only spend their money on basic necessities.
- By war's end, Americans had accumulated huge amounts of capital—wealth in the form of money or property. They were ready to spend this capital on consumer goods.
- By the 1950s, wartime price controls were over, and factories had converted from the production of military supplies to the production of consumer goods.

NEW HOMES The postwar years saw the start of a "baby boom." The growth in family size, the accumulation of capital, and the availability of government loans to veterans brought a rapid increase in home building.

SUBURBS Much new home building was done in areas surrounding major cities (urban areas). These areas are called suburbs. The suburbs

Still in existence today

Lots of spending

Whole

Suburbs

Refrigerator-Freezers!

THE FINAL FROST BARRIER!

IT'S HERE!
A FROST-FREE
FOOD FREEZER!
NO FROST!
NO FROST-LOCKED
FOODS!
NO DEFROSTING!

You'll feel like a queen...
• This 1 1/2 cubic foot unit with smart-looking thin look and enhanced white-bright Linework styling.
• Takes on both floor space - only 32 inches wide - yet this 14 cu. ft. Frost-Free Refrigerator-Freezer allows more food to fit.

• Serve family meals in minutes. No dinner ready for guests.
• Keep over a week. Enjoy both home and take-out food.
• Cook and hold in quantity. Enjoy "2nd" days.
• Freeze leftovers, like soups, stews, dips, enjoy them weeks later.
• Space for freezing your own fruits and vegetables. Safe and easy, too.

DESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND!

ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

Examine the advertisement at left, then answer the questions.

- What product is the advertisement promoting?
- Who is the advertisement targeting? What clues lead you to this conclusion?
- What does this advertisement suggest about the U.S. economy at the time?
- How is this advertisement similar to ads you see today? How is it different?

READING STRATEGY

Reinforcing Main Ideas

How did the growth of suburbs contribute to the decline of many cities?

offered limited jobs and services for their residents, most of whom worked in the cities. The suburbs grew rapidly. Levittown, New York, for example, became a symbol of **suburbanization**, with some 17,000 tract houses built in four years. By the 1960s, almost a third of all Americans lived in suburbs.

The growth of suburbs contributed to the decline of many cities. As people moved out of cities to suburbs, fewer taxpayers remained to help pay for essential services. At the same time, a greater concentration of poorer people in the cities increased the demand for many social services.

AUTOMOBILES Cars made the growth of suburbs possible, and suburbs increased the demand for cars. Since public transportation systems grew more slowly than suburbs, people in suburbs relied increasingly on their cars. Increased demand for automobiles benefited many areas of the nation's economy. Factories turned out the steel, glass, and rubber that went into new cars. Refineries also produced oil and gas that powered them.

The federal government stepped into the transportation picture with passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1956. This provided funding for what became a 44,000-mile network of interstate highways.

READING STRATEGY

Formulating Questions

The increase in demand for cars benefited many industries, such as the steel and oil industries. Increased automobile ownership also made it possible for people to live in suburbs without public transportation, because the government provided funding for an extensive highway network.

- What were some of the negative consequences of this increased reliance on cars?

**GEOGRAPHY
IN HISTORY**

In which areas of the United States did the population grow most quickly during in the 1950s? Give examples of three states that experienced rapid growth.

1.

2.

3.

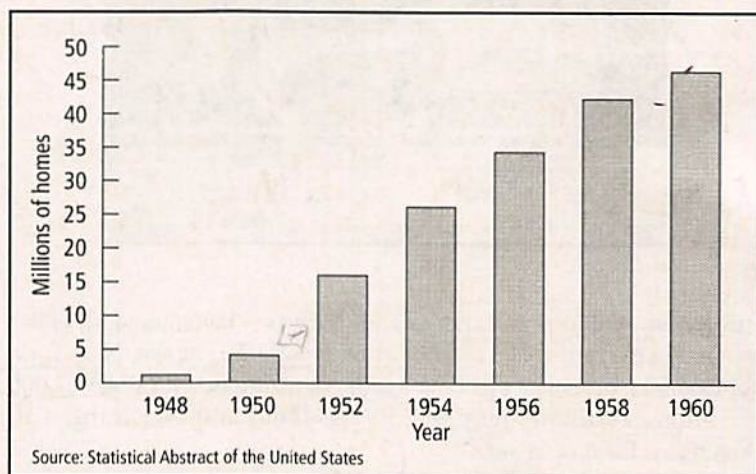
**ANALYZING
DOCUMENTS**

Examine the bar graph at right. Between which two years did the number of homes with television sets increase most dramatically?

A NATION ON THE MOVE Americans moved from central cities to suburbs. They also moved to new areas of the country. Many people moved from the industrialized but decaying cities of the Northeast and Midwest and from the farms of the Midwest to the Sun Belt. This was the name given to the states of the South and West—including Florida, Texas, Arizona, and California—that experienced a faster than average population growth beginning in the postwar years.

The sun and warm climate of these states enticed both retirees and businesses that wished to relocate. As this region grew, it attracted more industry and prompted both population and job loss in what came to be called the Rust Belt. This region included the states of the Northeast (including New York and Massachusetts) and Midwest (including Ohio and Michigan).

Homes with Television Sets, 1948–1960



TELEVISION After limited broadcasting in 1939, national broadcasting began in 1946. Television became the leading form of popular entertainment, and its growth, both as a source of amusement and a tool for learning, has continued to the present day.

**A RENEWED STRUGGLE
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS**

Since the period of Reconstruction after the Civil War, African Americans faced discrimination, especially in southern states. Jim Crow laws limited the freedoms of African Americans. For generations, white southerners continued to maintain economic, social, and political control over the South.

Beginnings of Change

Until well into the twentieth century, much of the South was segregated, or separated by race. Although such segregation was less apparent in the North, African Americans were generally restricted to poorer neighborhoods and lower-paying jobs. Although African Americans fought for change, until the 1950s their gains were limited.

Not until 1947, for example, were African Americans permitted to play on major league baseball teams in this country. In that year, Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers. This was one sign that public attitudes on segregation were beginning to change.

TRUMAN'S POLICIES ON CIVIL RIGHTS President Truman appointed a presidential commission on civil rights in 1946. Based on its report, Truman called for the establishment of a fair employment practices commission. Congress, however, failed to act on the idea.

Using his powers as commander in chief, Truman issued an executive order banning segregation in the armed forces. He also strengthened the Justice Department's civil rights division, which aided blacks who challenged segregation in the courts.

TURNING POINT

Why is it considered a turning point in the struggle for civil rights when Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers?

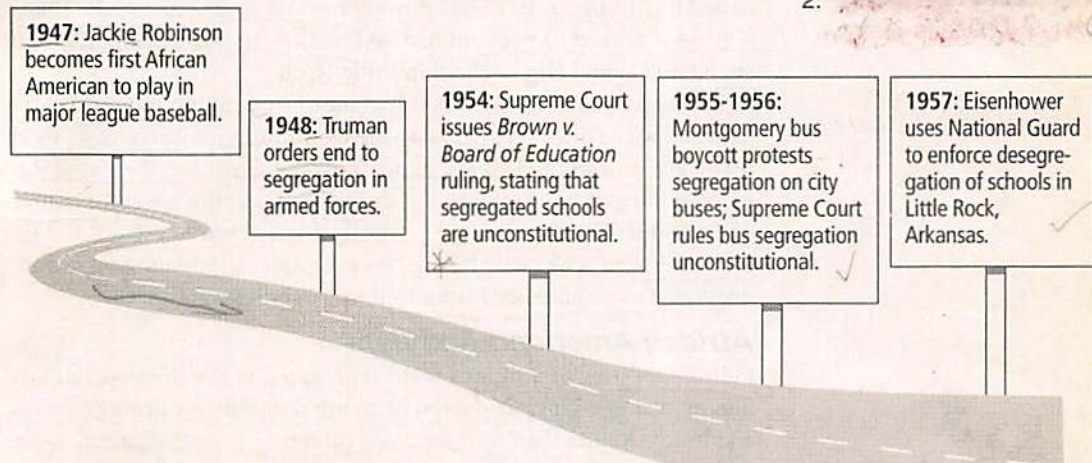
READING STRATEGY

Organizing Information

The struggle to secure African American civil rights required the efforts of countless dedicated activists, organizers, and political leaders. What are two changes that President Truman made that had an impact on civil rights?

- 1.
- 2.

Civil Rights Milestones



Civil Rights and the Courts

In the 1950s, the Supreme Court made several important decisions concerning the civil rights of African Americans.

THE WARREN COURT In 1953, a vacancy occurred on the Supreme Court. President Eisenhower then appointed Earl Warren, former governor of California, as chief justice. Warren presided over the Supreme Court until 1969. During that period, the Court reached a number of decisions that deeply affected many areas of American life. Among the most far-reaching of the Warren Court's decisions were those dealing with civil rights for African Americans.

Greatly affected almost 3 decades.

KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

Constitutional Principles

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954) established that facilities separated by race were unequal. The decision reversed *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and made integration of schools possible.

- How did the governor of Arkansas respond to *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*?

BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION Only a year after he became chief justice, Warren presided over the court as it reached a landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Linda Brown, a young African American student, requested the right to attend a local all-white school in her Topeka neighborhood, rather than attend an all-black school that was further away.

The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision had held that separate but equal public facilities were legal. Schools were such public facilities, and Brown was refused admittance to the all-white school.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) joined the case and appealed it all the way to the Supreme Court. In a unanimous decision, the Court reversed its ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* and held that in the field of public education, “the doctrine of separate but equal has no place.”

LITTLE ROCK Although the Brown case opened the door for desegregation, integration did not follow immediately. Many Americans were shocked by the decision. In the South, whites began campaigns of “massive resistance” to public school desegregation.

Although the Supreme Court had ordered that school integration go forward “with all deliberate speed,” many school systems openly defied the ruling. In 1957, the governor of Arkansas ordered the state’s National Guard to prevent nine African American students from attending Central High School in Little Rock.

President Eisenhower was reluctant to step in, but the governor’s defiance was a direct challenge to the Constitution. Eisenhower placed the Arkansas National Guard under federal control and then used it to enforce integration. At the end of the school year, the governor continued his defiance by ordering all city high schools closed for the following year. The tactic failed, however, and in 1959 the first racially integrated class graduated from Central High School.

African American Activism

Public facilities of all kinds were segregated in the South—schools, movie theaters, lunch counters, drinking fountains, restrooms, buses, and trains. Rather than wait for court rulings to end segregation, in the 1950s African Americans began to organize a **civil rights movement**.

THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT In Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955, an African American seamstress named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man and move to the back of the bus, as was required by law. She was arrested for violating the law, and her action inspired a boycott of the city’s buses.

Martin Luther King, Jr., a young Baptist minister, emerged as a leader of the protest. King had studied the nonviolent methods of Mohandas Gandhi and Henry David Thoreau. His dynamic speaking style drew the attention and support of large numbers of people.

Major Civil Rights Protests, 1954–1965

Year	Event	Outcome
1954	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>	Supreme Court ruled that separate educational facilities for whites and African Americans are inherently unequal.
1955–1956	Montgomery Bus Boycott	Alabama bus company was forced to desegregate its buses. Martin Luther King, Jr., emerged as an important civil rights leader.
1961	Freedom Rides	Interstate Commerce Commission banned segregation in interstate transportation.
1963	James Meredith sues University of Mississippi for admission	Supreme Court upheld Meredith's right to enter the all-white institution.
1963	Protest marches in Birmingham, Alabama	Violence against peaceful demonstrators shocked the nation. Under pressure, Birmingham desegregated public facilities.
1963	March on Washington	More than 200,000 people demonstrated in an impressive display of support for civil rights.
1965	Selma March (Alabama)	State troopers attacked marchers. President Johnson used federal force to protect route from Selma to Montgomery and thousands joined march.

The boycott lasted 381 days. In the end, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation of public buses was illegal. Although Parks had not planned her action that day, her stand against injustice led the way for others.

Civil Rights Legislation

Congress also made some moves to ensure civil rights for African Americans. In August 1957, it passed the first civil rights act since Reconstruction. The bill created a permanent commission for civil rights and increased federal efforts to ensure blacks the right to vote. Another bill in 1960 further strengthened voting rights.

Although these bills had only limited effectiveness, they did mark the beginning of change. Martin Luther King, Jr., once remarked that it was impossible to legislate what was in a person's heart, but that laws can restrain the heartless.

ANALYZING DOCUMENTS

The table at left outlines some of the major civil rights protests from 1954 to 1965.

- Which protest led to the rise of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as an important civil rights leader?
- Which three key protests occurred in Alabama?

Bus Boycott, Freedom Rides, Selma March

KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

Individuals, Groups, Institutions

African Americans began to take direct action to end segregation following *Brown v. Board of Education*. Boycotts of schools, lunch counters, and buses, for example, began.

- How did the actions of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., change attitudes toward segregation?