Chapter 30: Crisis in Authority
OBJECTIVES

- We will examine the growing protest against traditional American society and its values by examining the counterculture movement, protests from minorities and women and its implications.
“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!” Isaiah 30:1-2.
Crisis in Authority:

- Alarming to conservative Americans in the 1960s and 1970s was a pattern of social and cultural protest that was emerging from younger Americans.
- The protests were motivated by two impulses.
- One was the impulse, originating with the political left, to create a great new community of “the people,” which would rise up to break the power of elites and force the nation to end the war.
- And pursue racial and economic justice and transform political life.
Crisis in Authority:

- The other impulse was a vision of liberation expressed in minority groups to define and assert themselves and make demands on the larger society.
- By 1970, more than half of the American population was under thirty years with record numbers attending college.
- This was the largest generation of youth in American history.
Crisis in Authority:

- In 1962, a group of students, most of them from prestigious universities gathered in Michigan to form an organization to give voice to their demands; Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

- Their declaration of beliefs, the Port Huron statement, expressed their disillusionment with the society they had inherited and their determination to build a new politics.
Crisis in Authority:

- A 1964 dispute at the University of California at Berkeley over the rights of students to engage in political activities on campus gained national attention.

- The Free Speech Movement created turmoil at Berkeley as students challenged campus police, occupied administrative offices, and produced a strike in which nearly three-quarters of the Berkeley students participated.
Crisis in Authority:

- The immediate issue was the right of students to pass out literature and recruit volunteers for political causes on campus.
- But the protest quickly became as well an expression of a more basic critique of the university and the society it seemed to represent.
Crisis in Authority:

- Small group of militants such as “the Weathermen” a violent offshoot of SDS was responsible for several cases of arson and bombing that destroyed campus buildings and claimed several lives.
- But not many people, not even many students, ever accepted the most radical political views that lay at the heart of the new left.
- But mainly supported the position of SDS and other groups on the Vietnam War.
Crisis in Authority:

- These protests and others demonstrated that the opposition to the Vietnam War intensified in the United States as mass protests were organized in cities around the country.
Counterculture:

- Closely related to the New Left was a new youth culture openly scornful of the values and conventions of middle-class society.

- As if to display their contempt of conventional standards, young Americans flaunted long hair shabby or flamboyant clothing, and a rebellious disdain for traditional speech and decorum.
Counterculture:

○ Also central to the counterculture was the drug culture with marijuana and LSD.

○ Morals were challenged as people strived for what feels good coupled with the introduction of the birth control pill and abortion that encouraged promiscuity.
Counterculture:

- The counterculture challenged the structure of modern American society, attacking banality, hollowness, artificiality, materialism, and isolation from nature.

- The most committed adherents to the counterculture—the hippies, rejected modern society and attempted to find refuge in a simpler more “natural existence.”
Counterculture:

- Perhaps the most pervasive element of the new youth society was one that even the least radical members of the generation embraced: rock music.
- By the 1960s, rock had begun to reflect many of the new iconoclastic values of its time.
- Groups like the Beatles shifted from pop to drugs and eastern religion.
Counterculture:

- Rock’s driving rhythms, its sensuality is often harsh and angry tone all made it an appropriate vehicle for expressing the themes of the social and political unrest of the late 1960s.

- A powerful symbol of the fusion of rock music and the counterculture was the great music festival at Woodstock, New York.

- The purpose of the 1969 Woodstock music festival was to express the ideals of the counterculture philosophy.
THE MOBILIZATION OF MINORITIES:

- As African Americans led the charge in protest, Native Americans, Hispanics, and gay men and women and minorities also embraced political activism.
THE MOBILIZATION OF MINORITIES:

- In the 1950s the federal “termination” policy as applied to American Indians sought to end their cultural distinctiveness.
- The Federal government withdrew official recognition of tribes that were separate from the state governments in jurisdiction to the same jurisdiction as whites.
THE MOBILIZATION OF MINORITIES:

- This led to Indian activism and in 1961, the Declaration of Indian Purpose stressed the right to choose their own way of life.
- To preserve their Indian heritage and change the way Indians were portrayed in popular culture.
THE MOBILIZATION OF MINORITIES:

- In 1968, a group of young militant Indians established the American Indian Movement (AIM) which drew its greatest support from those Indians who lived in urban areas.
- But soon established a significant presence on the reservations as well.
THE MOBILIZATION OF MINORITIES:

- In the late 1960s and early 70s, American Indian activism led Congress passing the Indian Civil Rights Act, that recognized the legitimacy of tribal laws within the reservations.

- Indian activists also fought for old treaty fishing rights in Washington State, Indians occupying Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay claiming the site by right of discovery.

- The Nixon administration responded by appointing Louis Bruce, a Mohawk-Sioux to the position of commissioner of Indian Affairs.
THE MOBILIZATION OF MINORITIES:

- In 1973 Indians occupied the old Indian battle site of Wounded Knee for two months demanding radical changes in the administration of reservation and insisting that government honor long forgotten treaty obligations.

- A brief clash between the occupiers and Federal forces left one Indian dead and another wounded.
THE MOBILIZATION OF MINORITIES:

- In *United States v. Wheeler*, the Supreme Court confirmed that tribes had independent legal standing and could not be terminated by Congress.
Latino Activism:

- Between 1960 and 1970, the Latino population of the United States tripled.
- They were the fastest growing minority group.
- In 1953, the government launched Operation Wetback to deport the illegals, but the effort failed to stem the flow of new arrivals.
- By the late 1960s, Mexican Americans were one of the largest population groups in the West.
Latino Activism:

- Puerto Rican migrants established a large community in New York City.
- Large number of Central American immigrants arrived in the U.S. in the 1980s escaping the turmoil of civil war and strife in that region.
Latino Activism:

- One of the most visible movements was in California where Latino farmworker Cesar Chavez created an effective union of itinerant farmworkers.
- In 1965, his United Farm Workers (UFW) a largely Mexican organization launched a prolonged strike against growers to demand recognition of the union and increased wages and benefits.
Latino Activism:

- Chavez also enlisted a coalition of college students, churches, and civil rights groups and won a substantial victory when the growers of California’s table grapes signed contracts with his union.
Latino Activism:

- There was support for bilingualism in education that argued that non-English speaking Americans were entitled to schooling in their own language, that otherwise would be at a grave disadvantage in comparison with native English speakers.

- The Supreme Court affirmed the right of non-English speaking students to schooling in their native language in 1974.
Latino Activism:

- Opponents cited not only the cost and difficulty of bilinguals, but the dangers it posted to students’ ability to assimilate into mainstream of American culture.
Gay Liberation:

- Homosexuals were often marginalized and in New York City’s Greenwich village, the police would often harass gay bars.
- This led to the 1969 Stonewall Riots where Homosexuals fought back against police and help ignite the gay liberation movement.
Gay Liberation:

- By the early twenty-first century, homosexuals in the United States experienced a powerful backlash from within American society.
- Gays achieved many of the same rights as other minority groups.
- Openly gay politicians won election to public office.
- And were making slow, halting progress, achieving laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual preference.
THE NEW FEMINISM

- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 had an amendment, Title VII that extended to women many of the same protections against discrimination that were being extended to African Americans.
THE NEW FEMINISM

○ In 1966, Friedan joined with other feminists to create the National Organization of Women (NOW) which soon became the nation’s largest and most influential feminist organization.

○ This addressed the needs of women in the workplace.
THE NEW FEMINISM

- Women also made significant progress in politics.
- Sandra Day O'Conner was named as a justice of the Supreme Court by Ronald Reagan.
- In 2010, Nancy Pelosi became the first female speaker of the House.
In 1972, Congress approved the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution that was submitted to the states for ratification. This has been promoted since the 1920s by some feminists. For a time, ratification seemed certain. However it was strongly opposed by some women who were antifeminist that thought it would threaten traditional gender roles. In 1982 the amendment finally died when the time allotted for ratification expired.
The Abortion Controversy:

- By the 1960s and 70s, women’s movement created strong new pressures on behalf of legalizing abortion.
- Several states had abandoned restrictions on abortion by the end of the 1960s.
The Abortion Controversy:

- And in 1973 the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade* based on a relatively new theory of a constitutional right to privacy first recognized by the Court only a few years earlier, invalidated all laws prohibiting abortion during the first trimester, the first three months of pregnancy.

- The decision would become the most controversial ruling of the century.
ENVIRONMENTALISM IN A TRUBULENT SOCIETY:

- There was growing awareness of the environment in the 1960s and 70s that still has its presence today.
- Environmentalism was traditionally based on preserving nature for its aesthetic and beauty.
- But at this time, science based ecology formed the linchpin for environmentalism.
ENVIRONMENTALISM IN A TRUBULENT SOCIETY:

- Ecology rests primarily on the assumption that nature should be preserved because humans need to maintain the interrelated balance of life.

- In Rachel Carson’s 1962 book *Silent Spring* helped launch the modern environmental movement by focusing on the problems concerning pesticides.
On April 22, 1970 people all over the U.S. gathered in schools and universities, in churches and clubs, in parks for their first Earth Day.

Earth Day was seen as nonthreatening and distance itself from the left as a day to bring awareness to the environment.

It was an example of the popularization of the environment.
Environmentalism in a Troubled Society:

- It also became the fabric of public policy.
- The Environmental Protection Agency was created in 1970 when Richard Nixon signed the National Environmental Act into law to enforce antipollution standards on business and consumers.