

## The Disillusioned 1970s

### Events and Policies

- RICHARD NIXON (1913-1994, in office 1969-1974, 37<sup>th</sup> President): based his presidential election campaign on the promise to end the Vietnam War against which there were growing protests
- GERALD FORD (1913-2006, in office 1974-1977, 38<sup>th</sup> President)
- JIMMY CARTER (b. 1924, in office 1977-1981, 39<sup>th</sup> President)

### **Economic Crisis**

- the prices went up, especially gas and electricity prices, the unemployment rate was rising
- after Nixon's resignation the power of Congress grew rapidly due to weak presidents
- Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (1973): signed the **Helsinki Accords** (1975) as an important step for ending of the Cold War which ruined economy so that there were no more resources for defence

### **Middle East Conflicts**

- Arab-Israeli Conflict: the American support for Israel lead to the OPEC fuel embargo against the US (1973-1974)
- Iranian Revolution (1979): the overthrow of Pahlavi's monarchy and establishment of a republic under Khomeini
- Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989): the USSR invaded Afghanistan to support the Marxist government against the mujahideen resistance supported by resources from US and other states in the context of the Cold War
- **Carter Doctrine** (1980): declared by President Carter in his State of the Union Address as a reaction to the USSR invasion of Afghanistan, the US will use force if necessary to defend its national interests in the Persian Gulf

### Society

#### **Riots and Violence**

- frequent anti-war riots, anti-government moods, and general disillusionment springing from the ongoing war, rising economic crisis, and assassinations of political and moral leaders
- Martin Luther King: assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee in 1968, an escaped convict was charged for the murder
- Robert F. Kennedy: assassinated during his presidential election campaign in Los Angeles, California in 1968 by a young Palestinian who was convicted and sentenced to a life imprisonment
- Kent State University, Ohio: during a war protest on the campus the National Guard shot four students to death
- Jackson State University, Mississippi: during a riot on the campus the State Police shot two students to death

#### **Watergate Scandal (1972-1974)**

- in 1972 five men were arrested for breaking into the headquarters of Democrats in Watergate, Washington D.C.
- the two-year investigation was conducted by FBI, Senate Watergate Committee, and House Judiciary Committee
- **CARL BERNSTEIN** and **BOB WOODWARD**, *The Washington Post* investigative journalists, helped to reveal the scandal
- in 1974 President Nixon resigned when it was proved that he actively tried to conceal that the burglary was ordered by Republicans as one of a whole series of illegal activities authorized and carried out by Nixon's staff

#### **Second Wave of Feminism**

- in 1920 women won the right to vote, in 1970s feminists fought against patriarchal structures and male leadership
- BETTY FRIEDAN'S *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) became popular among middle class women who, like the author, felt unfulfilled as housewives and sought to achieve something more
- **National Organization for Women** (founded in 1966): the largest feminist organization in US, tried to introduce laws banning sexual discrimination, worked to make universities and employers more open to accepting women
- Women's Liberation: a radical feminist movement, organized demonstrations (with banners like 'Welcome to the Miss America Cattle Auction'), burned implements of female torture (bras, curlers, and housewife magazines)
- Consciousness Raising Groups: women organized informal gatherings and discussion groups in their homes
- Equal Rights Amendment (ERA): first brought to Congress in the 1920s, since then many times, but never passed
- New Conservatism: promoted family, religion, nationalism, rejected female liberation, abortion, homosexuality
- **Roe v. Wade** (1973): a Texas woman sued the state for not being allowed abortion, won, and made abortion legal

#### **Gay Liberation Movement**

- the movement started in 1960s, became organized only in 1970s when first individuals came out, homosexuality was outlawed in many states

- **Stonewall Riots** (1969): an all-night long demonstration of gays and lesbians after the police raided the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, New York City
- Gay Pride Day (1970): the first anniversary of Stonewall was commemorated by a now annually organized march
- HARVEY MILK (1930-1978): a political activist, the first openly gay man elected to a public office in San Francisco

## Culture

### Music

- after the death of Elvis Presley (1977) and the end of the Beatles (1970) rock'n'roll loses its dominant position
- **disco**: BEE GEES, JOHN TRAVOLTA, JACKSON FIVE, STEVIE WONDER, DONNA SUMMER
- soft pop: CARPENTERS, EAGLES
- hard rock: BLACK SABBATH, LED ZEPPELIN, KISS
- punk: RAMONES, PATTI SMITH, BLONDIE
- punk rock: SEX PISTOLS, THE CLASH (both British)
- GIL SCOTT-HERON: a soul and blues singer and political poet ('Watergate Blues')
- BOB MARLEY: a Jamaican reggae singer and songwriter ('Could You Be Loved')
- KENNY ROGERS: a country singer
- PHILIP GLASS: a minimalist music composer, author of music based on repetitive structures

### Film

- experiences a great comeback after the 1960s television era
- disaster: *The Poseidon Adventure* (1969), *Earthquake* (1974), *The Towering Inferno* (1974), *Airport 1975* (1974)
- musical: *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), *Grease* (1978), *Hair* (1979)
- Vietnam: *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Coming Home* (1978), *The Deer Hunter* (1978), *Apocalypse Now* (1979)
- *The Godfather* (1972), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Jaws* (1975), *Rocky* (1976), *Star Wars* (1977), *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979)

### Television

- talk shows on controversial issues
- live broadcast, especially from Vietnam and Senate hearings on the Watergate affair
- miniseries: *Roots*, *Happy Days*, *Sesame Street*

### Architecture

- skyscrapers: Transamerica Pyramid (1972, architect WILLIAM PEREIRA) in San Francisco, California; Pennzoil Place (1975, architect PHILIP JOHNSON) in Houston, Texas
- **arcology**, a combination of art and ecology: PAOLO SOLERI's *Arcosanti* project in Arizona (under construction since 1970); FRANK GEHRY's residence in Santa Monica, California (1978); I. M. PEI's Dallas City Hall, Texas (1978)
- **earth art**: WALTER DE MARIA's *The Lightning Field* in New Mexico (1978), MICHAEL HEIZER's *City* in Nevada (under construction since 1972), CHRISTO's *Running Fence* in California (1976, removed by the author)

### Pictorial Arts

- **illusionism**, gives the impression of a three-dimensional object rather than a painting: RICHARD HAAS's murals
- photorealism, or, **hyper-realism**, gives the impression of a photography: RICHARD ESTES's paintings
- installations: JUDY CHICAGO's *The Dinner Party* (1979)
- pop art: ANDY WARHOL's 'Campbell's Soup' (1968)
- realism: ANDREW WYETH's *Helga Paintings* (1971-1985)

### Literature

- novelists: TONY MORRISON's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), JOHN UPDIKE's *Rabbit Redux* (1971), JOYCE CAROL OATES's *Wonderland* (1971), KURT VONNEGUT's *Breakfast of Champions* (1973)
- playwrights: DAVID MAMET's *American Buffalo* (1975), SAM SHEPARD's *Buried Child* (1978), NEIL SIMON