Università di Firenze Dipartimento di Formazione, Lingue, Intercultura, Letterature e Psicologia

Lingua Inglese John Gilbert

The ‘60s

U.S. historian Eric Foner: the 1960s the decade of “**the rights revolution**”

* a decade of anti-establishment and counter-cultural mass movements and and rebellion contesting foundations of U.S. society

- permanently changed U.S. culture and society

- also international in character: 1968 in France & Italy, 1968 Prague Spring & Warsaw Pact invasion, Olympics in Mexico with Black power demo by U.S. athletes & student massacre in Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Mexico City, etc.

‘60s saw the rise of a mass Civil Rights Movement for Afro-Americans

* 1948 Truman desegregated the U.S. military
* 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruled public school segregation unconstitutional
* December 1955 Rosa Parks & start of 381-day bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama with leadership of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1963 “Poor People’s March on Washington” of 250,000 with Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech

1964 Civil Rights Act approved by U.S. Congress to ensure Afro-Americans’ right to vote

1965 Malcolm X assassinated

August 1966 Afro-Am. rebellion in Watts (L.A., CA) with almost 1,000 buildings burned down

1966 Black Power ideology adopted by SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee)

1966 revolutionary socialist Black Panther Party founded & in next 10 years 38 leaders killed by police & FBI, some leaders still in prison

1966 Afro-Am. rebellion in Chicago destroyed large sections of city

1967 Afro-Am. revolts in Detroit, Newark & 33 other cities

4.04.68 Martin Luther King assassinated & Afro-Am. revolts in over 100 cities with 39 dead &

thousands injured

1968 James Brown "Say It Loud I’m Black And I’m Proud" - unofficial anthem of Black Power Movement: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrB4uQyU0DU

emergence of liberation movements of other ethnic groups:

Latinos: Chicanos “La Raza”; Puerto Rican “Young Lords”

Native Americans: American Indian Movement (AIM leader Leonard Peltier still in prison)

anti-war movement against U.S. wars in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos

birth of modern radical feminist movement

* 1963 Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* (in Italy *La mistica della femminilità)*
* 1966 National Organization of Women (N.O.W.) founded

emergence of New Left organizations (e.g. Students for a Democratic Society, SDS)

the Hippies & other counter-cultural movements: “sex & drugs & rock ’n’ roll”

* challenging official W.A.S.P. identity of the U.S.A. & many cultural traditions like deference to

authority, organized religion, militarism, racism, sexism, consumerism

the movements of the 1960s created a strong sense of collective identity, often transversal

* strong connection between individual identities & collective movements

- many leaders & activists were gay, but had to hide their sexuality

- but an LGBT+ identity, individually or collectively, had not yet emerged

the Stonewall Rebellion of June 1969 changed everything

- a famous quote from a Stonewall Rebellion veteran: “There had been race riots, women’s riots, all sorts of anti-war riots, and now it was time for the homosexual riots.”