

Glossary

Affluence An abundant supply of money, property or wealth.

Allies Nations united in alliance to fight Germany and Japan during the Second World War.

Anarchy Disorder or chaos resulting from the absence or failure of government.

Anarchists believe in a totally free society, without government.

Austerity When consumer goods and luxuries are in short supply.

British Empire Territories ruled by Britain. By the fifties the British Empire, which in the nineteenth century covered a quarter of the world, was shrinking as colonies became independent.

Civil rights movement The campaign by blacks in the USA to win full equality under the US Constitution.

Cold War The period of antagonism between the Communist East, led by the USSR, and the capitalist West, the USA and its allies. It reached its height during the early 1950s.

Commonwealth Association of states formerly within the British Empire.

Communism A political theory aiming to establish a society where the major enterprises such as factories, mines, farms and shops are owned by all citizens rather than a class of wealthy people. In practice, Communist societies have tended to create powerful state authorities which control those enterprises.

Conscription (or draft) Compulsory enlistment in the armed forces.

Contraceptive A device used to prevent unwanted pregnancy.

Coronation The crowning of a monarch. Queen Elizabeth II was crowned on 2 June 1953.

Epidemic A word to describe a disease affecting a lot of people at the same time.

European Economic Community (EEC) An association of Western European countries, brought into being by the Treaty of Rome (1957) signed by France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The United Kingdom, the Irish Republic and Denmark joined in 1973, and Spain, Portugal and Greece are also now members.

Four-minute mile A long-sought-after record in track running. Roger Bannister became the first person to run a mile in under four minutes in May 1954.

Franchise In US sport, a baseball or football franchise is a team which can be bought and sold, like a business. In 1953, for example, the Boston Braves baseball team moved to Milwaukee.

Haute couture French for 'high fashion'.

Hell's Angels Groups identified with high-powered customized motorbikes, and sometimes associated with gang violence.

Holiday camp A type of holiday centre popular in the UK during the fifties. Guests stayed in cabins or chalets, and food and entertainment were provided for them.

Homosexual Someone sexually attracted to members of the same sex; particularly a man who is attracted to other men. Women attracted to other women are more usually called lesbians.

Immunization Protecting people from a disease, usually through an injection.

Mysticism Philosophical and religious belief in the possibility of making direct contact with God.

Nationalize To put an industry under the control of the state.

Nuclear deterrent Atomic weapons;

deterrence strategy holds that if opposing sides have equally strong nuclear forces, neither will ever use such weapons.

Pacifism The belief that all forms of violence are wrong, and that people should not fight in wars.

Payola Bribes paid to persuade a DJ to play certain records.

Permissiveness A view of life which holds that people should be allowed to do as they please, with as little interference as possible.

Pop art A form of art glorifying the modern, mass-produced images of comics, TV and advertising.

Rationing Restricting the distribution of goods which are in short supply. In Britain many things were rationed during the

Second World War, and rationing did not end completely until 1954.

Segregation The separation of people according to race, as practised in some US states during the fifties, and in South Africa to this day.

Sexual stereotyping The assumption that men and women have certain fixed roles in society; for example, that men go out to work while women stay at home as housewives and mothers.

Synthetic Something made artificially.

Tin Pan Alley A district in a city associated with the production of popular music.

Originally it referred to an area of New York. It is mainly used to describe 'commercial' popular music prior to rock'n'roll.

Further Reading

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Index

- Advertising 6, 17, 19, 23, 34, 35
 Australia 6, 14, 26, 31, 33, 45
- Ball, Lucille 22
 Balmain, Pierre 7
 Bannister, Roger 19
 Beatniks 31
Ben-Hur 22
 Berry, Chuck 13
Blackboard Jungle 13
 Boeing 707 38
 Brando, Marlon 10, 20
 Britain 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 19,
 23, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35,
 37, 41, 42, 45
 British Empire 6, 38
 Buildings 33
- Calder Hall 41
 Campaign for Nuclear
 Disarmament (CND) 5
 Canada 6, 26, 45
 Cars 26, 28, 32, 35, 36
 Castro, Fidel 40
 Civil rights movement 29, 43
 Clothes 5, 7–11
 Coffee bars 29, 30, 31
 Commonwealth 6, 23, 38
 Communism 21, 40, 44, 45
 Conscription 26
 Le Corbusier 33
 Crosby, Bing 13
 Cuba 40
- Dancing 9, 24
 Dean, James 20
 DiMaggio, Joe 25
Don't Knock the Rock 14
 Drugs 16, 30
- East of Eden* 20
 Elizabeth II, coronation of 23, 42
 Everest, Mt 42
 Everly Brothers 14
- Festival of Britain 34
 Films 10, 13, 14, 20–22
 Freed, Alan 13, 16
 Fuller, Buckminster 33
- Ghana 38
 Greasers 10
- Hairstyles 8, 9, 10, 13
 Haley, Bill, and the Comets 13,
 14
 Hell's Angels 31
 Hillary, Edmund 42
 Hobbies 26
 Holidays 26
 Holly, Buddy, and the Crickets
 14, 15
 Hungarian uprising 14
- I Love Lucy* 22
The Incredible Shrinking Man
 21
Invaders from Mars 21
Invasion of the Bodysnatchers
 21
 Iron curtain 4
 Israel 42
 Issigonis, Alec 36
- Jive 9, 24
- Kennedy, John F. 23
 King, Reverend Martin Luther,
 Jr 29, 43
 Korean War 5, 45
- Lewis, Jerry Lee 14
 Little Richard 14
 Little Rock, Arkansas 29
Love Me Tender 14
- Magazines 17, 19
 Mansfield, Jayne 9
 Mitchell, Guy 13
 Modernism 36
 Monroe, Marilyn 9, 25
 Music 5, 12–16
- Newspapers 17, 19
 New Zealand 6
 Nkrumah, Kwame 38
 Nuclear weapons 5, 6, 37
- On the Waterfront* 20
- Permissiveness 30–31
 Polio vaccine 44
 Presley, Elvis 10, 14, 15, 16
- Quant, Mary 8
- Racism 29
 Radio 14, 17, 19–20
 Ray, Johnnie 12, 14
Rebel Without a Cause 20
 Records 12, 16
Rock Around the Clock 22
 Russell, Jane 9
- Salk, Dr Jonas 44
 Second World War 4, 5, 20, 28,
 29, 44
 Sex 19, 30
 Shops 32
 Silvers, Phil 22
 Sinatra, Frank 13
 Skiffle 15
 Soviet Union 4, 37, 40, 41, 44, 45
 Sport 19, 23, 25–6
 Sputnik 1 40
 Suez crisis 42
 Supermarkets 32, 33
- Tamla Motown records 16
 Teddy boys 10, 11, 29, 31
 Television 14, 17, 19, 20, 21,
 22–3, 25, 26
 Tenzing Norgay 42
This Island Earth 21
- United States 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12,
 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26,
 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 37, 40,
 42, 45
- Valens, Richie 15
 Van der Rohe, Mies 33
 Vincent, Gene 14
- West Side Story* 31
The Wild One 10, 20
 Wright, Frank Lloyd 33
- Youth clubs 30