

Summary: Challenges of the 1970s

The Nixon Years

Richard Nixon was elected President in 1968. He helped build better relations between the United States and the two largest Communist countries: China and the Soviet Union.

In 1973, Israel was attacked by Egypt and Syria. Oil-producing countries that supported Egypt and Syria wanted to punish the United States for helping Israel. They produced less oil, so oil prices went up. High oil prices made costs rise for making and shipping goods, so prices rose. This is called inflation.

In 1972, Nixon's campaign workers broke into the Democratic Party headquarters in the Watergate building to steal information. They were caught. Nixon said he did not know about the break-in. An investigation proved that he had lied and was trying to cover up the crime. Nixon had to resign in 1974. Vice President Gerald Ford became President.

A Time of Change

In the 1970s many people struggled for equal rights. Women were paid less than men for doing the same job. They wanted equality. By the late 1980s, more women were legislators and 40 states had equal pay laws.

American Indians on reservations did not have good health care or education. Unemployment was high. They wanted more control of reservations. They wanted the government to honor treaties. Migrant workers formed unions and forced employers to improve conditions. Consumers pushed for product safety laws.

The Carter Years

In 1976 Jimmy Carter was elected President. Carter brought leaders from Israel and Egypt together to sign the Camp David Peace Accord. Carter tried to control inflation by raising taxes and lowering government spending. But oil prices continued to rise. In 1980, Carter lost the election to Ronald Reagan. Carter won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

resign *verb*, to give up your job

migrant worker *noun*, a person who moves from place to place to find work, mostly on farms

accord *noun*, an agreement.

After You Read

REVIEW What events caused inflation during the 1970s? Highlight the sentence that tells what started the war in the Middle East in 1973. Then circle the sentences that tell what action oil-producing countries took.

REVIEW What were two goals of the Indian rights movement? Circle two sentences that tell you the answer.

REVIEW What were President Jimmy Carter's successes? Highlight the sentence that tells what President Carter did to help solve the problems in the Middle East.