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JFK's Change in Public Opinion

There was a great difference in the public opinion of John F. Kennedy before and after his assassination. Before his assassination JFK was a fairly well-liked president, however there were many people who did dislike him, and the general public opinion of him was that he was trying to change too many things. For example, this is seen in a cartoon in the New York Times on October 6 1963. In this cartoon JFK is standing on top of two people he has beaten up in a boxing ring. The characters are labeled Tax Cut Foes and Test-Treaty Opposition. JFK is considerably smaller than his two opponents, and this shows how JFK was fighting the battles for the under represented people. Because JFK was fighting the under represented people's battles, the majority of society started feeling threatened by him. The last part of the cartoon is a huge man stepping into the ring labeled Civil Rights Opposition. This shows that JFK was getting even more resistance from society because the man stepping into the ring is enormous. Now JFK is thinking this is the hard one. All in all, this cartoon demonstrates the general feeling of the American society towards JFK. ¹

After the assassination of JFK the public opinion shifted dramatically. In the "City Goes Dark," an article written on November 23, 1963, epitomizes how public opinion changed. The author describes how the sorrow of the assassination almost silenced New York City.² This really embodies the change of public opinion regarding JFK. First, it shows how all of the people in New York were saddened by the death of

the president, not just the people who supported him throughout his presidency. This also shows that the people who did not like JFK stepped back and realized the good that he actually did. Also, people were not going out the night the news broke, which means that the people were actually disheartened and did not feel like going out on the town in the normally buzzing city.³

¹ Arthur Krock, "Kennedy Ups and Downs," New York Times (6 October 1963): 1. Available from: Proquest, New York Times Historical Collection, Menlo School Lib. <http://library.menloschool.org> (accessed 2 April 2006)

² Robert C. Doty, "City Goes Dark," New York Times (23 November 1963): 1. Available from: Proquest, New York Times Historical Collection, Menlo School Lib. <http://library.menloschool.org> (accessed 2 April 2006)

³ Ibid., p.2.