

Life During the Cold War, 1945-1989

THE STORY MATTERS...

In 1950 the South African government passed laws segregating black Africans from white Africans. This system of legalized racism is known as apartheid. Opposition and resistance to apartheid came from leaders within South Africa, such as Nelson Mandela. Mandela, head of the African National Congress, was imprisoned for 27 years because of his protests. Following his release, Mandela led negotiations to transform the South African government into one based on equality. In 1994 he became South Africa's first democratically elected black president.

Lesson 33-1

Western Europe and North America

READING HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

shift minimal

Content Vocabulary

welfare state bloc consumer society
women's liberation movement real wages

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How does war result in change?
- What challenges may countries face as a result of war?

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

Most Western European countries recovered rapidly from World War I. The United States experienced an economic boom after World War I but was troubled by social and political issues.

Western Europe

GUIDING QUESTION *How did Western Europe recover from World War II?*

With the economic aid of the Marshall Plan, the countries of Western Europe recovered relatively rapidly from the devastation of World War II. By 1950, industrial output in Europe was 30 percent above prewar levels.

France and de Gaulle

One man – the war hero Charles de Gaulle – dominated the history of France for nearly a quarter of a century after the war. In 1946 de Gaulle helped establish a new government, the Fourth Republic. It, however, was largely ineffective. In 1958 leaders of the Fourth Republic, frightened by bitter divisions caused by a crisis in the French colony of Algeria, asked de Gaulle to form a new government. That year, de Gaulle drafted a new constitution for the Fifth Republic that enhanced the power of the president. The French president would now have the right to choose the prime minister, dissolve parliament, and supervise defense and foreign policy. French voters approved the constitution, and de Gaulle became the first president of the Fifth Republic.

As president, de Gaulle wanted France to be a world

power once again. To achieve this, de Gaulle invested heavily in nuclear arms. France exploded its first nuclear bomb in 1960. During de Gaulle's presidency, the French economy grew at an annual rate of 5.5 percent, faster than the rate of growth in the United States. France became a major industrial producer and exporter, especially of automobiles and weapons. Nevertheless, problems remained. Large government deficits and a rise in the cost of living led to unrest. In May 1968, a series of student protests was followed by a general labor strike. Discouraged, de Gaulle resigned from office in April 1969 and died within a year.

In the 1970s, a deteriorating economic situation caused a political shift to the left. By 1981, the Socialists gained power in the National Assembly. Socialist François Mitterrand was elected president. He initiated a number of measures to aid workers – an increased minimum wage, a 39-hour work week, and higher taxes for the rich. The Socialist government also nationalized, or took over, major banks, the steel industry, the space and electronics industries, and insurance firms.

Socialist policies, however, largely failed to work, and France's economic decline continued. In the elections in March of 1993, the Socialists won only 28 percent of the vote. A coalition of conservative parties gained 80 percent of the seats in the National Assembly.

West Germany: The Economic Miracle

The three Western zones of Germany were unified as the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. From 1949 to 1963, Konrad Adenauer (AHD • uh • NAU • uhr), the leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), served as chancellor (head of state). Adenauer sought respect for West Germany. He cooperated with the United States and other Western European nations, especially France – Germany's longtime enemy.

Under Adenauer, West Germany experienced an "economic miracle." This revival of the West German economy was largely guided by the minister of finance, Ludwig Erhard. Unemployment fell from 8 percent in

1950 to 0.4 percent in 1965. After Adenauer resigned in 1963, Erhard succeeded him as chancellor and largely continued his policies.

An economic downturn in the mid-1960s brought the Social Democratic Party into power in 1969. The Social Democrats, a moderate socialist party, were led by Willy Brandt, mayor of West Berlin. In December 1972, Brandt signed a treaty that led to greater contact between East Germany and West Germany. Economic, cultural, and personal ties between the countries were stronger as a result. For his efforts, Brandt received the Nobel Peace Prize for 1971.

Great Britain

The end of World War II left Great Britain with massive economic problems. In elections held immediately after the war, the Labour Party overwhelmingly defeated Churchill's Conservative Party.

Under Clement Attlee, the new prime minister, the Labour government set out to create a modern welfare state, a state in which the government takes responsibility for providing citizens with services and a minimal standard of living. In 1946 the new government passed the National Insurance Act and the National Health Service Act. The insurance act provided government funds to help the unemployed, the sick, and the aged. The health act created a system of socialized medicine that ensured medical care for everyone. The British welfare state became the norm for most European states after the war.

Continuing economic problems brought the Conservatives back into power from 1951 to 1964. Although they favored private enterprise, the Conservatives accepted the welfare state and extended it by financing an ambitious building program to improve British housing.

Between 1964 and 1979, power alternated between Great Britain's Conservative Party and Labour Party. In 1979 the Conservatives came to power under Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first female prime minister.

Thatcher pledged to limit social welfare, to restrict union power, and to end inflation. Her main focus was privatization. Although she did not eliminate the basic social welfare system, Thatcher broke the power of the labor unions and controlled inflation.

Thatcherism, as her economic policy was termed, improved the British economic situation, but at a price. Business investment and the number of small businesses increased substantially. The south of England, for example, prospered. Old industrial areas elsewhere, however, were beset by high unemployment, poverty, and violence. Thatcher dominated British politics in the 1980s, but in 1990 her popularity fell, and she resigned as prime minister.

The European Economic Community

The destructiveness of two world wars caused many thoughtful Europeans to consider the need for some form of European unity. National feeling was still too powerful, however, for European nations to give up their political

sovereignty. As a result, the desire for unity focused chiefly on the economic arena, not the political one.

In 1957 France, West Germany, the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg), and Italy signed the Rome Treaty. This treaty created the European Economic Community (EEC), also known as the Common Market.

The EEC was a free-trade area made up of the six member nations. These six nations would impose no tariffs, or import charges, on each other's goods. However, as a group, they would be protected by a tariff imposed on goods from non-EEC nations. In this way, the EEC encouraged cooperation among the member nations' economies.

By the 1960s, the EEC had become an important trading bloc (a group of nations with a common purpose.) In 1973 Britain, Denmark, and Ireland joined the EEC. With a total population of 165 million, the EEC was the world's largest exporter and purchaser of raw materials. By 1986, Spain, Portugal, and Greece had become members. By 1992, the European Economic Community comprised 344 million people and was the world's largest single trading bloc.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Describing How was the Fifth Republic in France different from the Fourth Republic?

The U.S. After the War

GUIDING QUESTION *What social and political issues challenged the United States during the Cold War?*

Between 1945 and 1970, the ideals of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal largely determined the patterns of American domestic politics. The New Deal brought basic changes to American society. These changes included a dramatic increase in the role and power of the federal government, the rise of organized labor, the beginning of a welfare state, and a realization of the need to deal fairly with the concerns of minorities, especially African Americans.

The New Deal tradition in American politics was reinforced by the election of Democratic presidents – Harry S. Truman in 1948, John F. Kennedy in 1960, and Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964. Even the election of a Republican president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, in 1952 and 1956, did not change the basic direction of the New Deal.

An economic boom followed World War II. A shortage of consumer goods during the war left Americans with extra income and the desire to buy goods after the war. In addition, the growth of labor unions brought higher wages and gave more workers the ability to buy consumer goods. Between 1945 and 1973, real wages grew an average of 3 percent per year, the most prolonged advance ever in American history.

Prosperity was not the only characteristic of the early 1950s. Cold War struggles abroad led to the widespread fear that Communists had infiltrated the United States.

This climate of fear produced a dangerous political agitator, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin. His charges that hundreds of supposed Communists were in high government positions helped create a massive “Red Scare” – fear of Communist subversion. When McCarthy attacked “Communist conspirators” in the U.S. Army, he was condemned by the Senate in 1954. Very quickly, his anti-Communist crusade came to an end.

The 1960s and Civil Rights

In August 1963, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., leader of a movement for racial equality, led a march on Washington, D.C., to dramatize the African American desire for equality. King’s march and his impassioned plea for racial equality had an electrifying effect on the American people. By the end of 1963, a majority of the American people called civil rights the most significant national issue.

After the assassination of John Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson became president. Following his landslide victory in 1964, he pursued the cause of equal rights for African Americans. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 created the machinery to end segregation and discrimination in the workplace and all public places. The Voting Rights Act made it easier for African Americans to vote in Southern states.

Laws alone, however, could not guarantee the Great Society that Johnson talked about creating. He soon faced bitter social unrest. In 1968 Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated. Riots hit more than 100 cities, including Washington, D.C. The riots led to a “white backlash” (whites became less sympathetic to the cause of racial equality) and continued the racial division of the United States. Antiwar protests also divided the United States as some Americans turned against the Vietnam War.

The combination of antiwar demonstrations and riots in the cities caused many people to call for law and order. This was the appeal used by Richard Nixon, the Republican presidential candidate in 1968. With Nixon’s election, a shift to the political right in American politics began.

Analyzing PRIMARY SOURCES

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

“This act flows from a clear and simple wrong. Its only purpose is to right that wrong. Millions of Americans are denied the right to vote because of their color. This law will ensure them the right to vote... I pledge you that we will not delay, or we will not hesitate, or we will not turn aside until Americans of every race and color and origin in this country have the same right as all others to share in the process of democracy.”

– President Lyndon B. Johnson, “Remarks in the Capitol Rotunda at the Signing of the Voting Rights Act,” August 6, 1965

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

What is the significance of the Voting Rights Act of 1965?

The 1970s and 1980s

As president, Nixon used illegal methods to gain information about his opponents. This led to the Watergate scandal. After lying to the American public about his involvement in the affair, secret tapes of his conversations in the White House revealed the truth. On August 9, 1974, Nixon resigned rather than face possible impeachment.

In the 1976 election, the former governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter, became president. A crisis abroad erupted when the Iranian government of the Ayatollah Khomeini (koh • MAY • nee) held 52 Americans hostage. Carter’s inability to gain the release of the American hostages contributed to his loss to Ronald Reagan in the 1980 election.

Canada

After the war, Canada began developing electronic, aircraft, nuclear, and chemical engineering industries on a large scale. Under Lester Pearson, the Liberal government laid the groundwork for Canada’s welfare state. A national social security system and health insurance program were enacted.

When Pierre Trudeau (TROO • DOH) became prime minister in 1968, he supported a vigorous program of industrialization. He was also dedicated to preserving a united Canada. At the same time, he acknowledged the rights of French-speaking Canadians. His government passed the Official Languages Act, which allowed English and French to be used in the federal civil service.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Drawing Conclusions In the United States how was the decade of the 1970s a reaction to the 1960s?

Western Society

GUIDING QUESTION *How did Western society change during the Cold War?*

After World War II, Western society witnessed rapid change. New inventions such as computers, televisions, and jet planes altered the pace and nature of human life.

A New Social Structure

Postwar Western society was marked by a changing social structure. Especially noticeable were changes in the middle class. Traditional middle-class groups were made up of businesspeople, lawyers, doctors, and teachers. A new group of managers and technicians, hired by large companies and government agencies, now joined the middle class.

Changes also occurred among the lower classes. The shift of people from rural to urban areas continued. The number of people in farming declined drastically. By the 1950s, the number of farmers in most parts of Europe dropped by 50 percent. The number of industrial workers declined as white-collar workers increased.

At the same time, a noticeable increase in the real wages of workers made it possible for them to imitate the buying patterns of the middle class. This led to what some observers have called the consumer society. Buying on

credit became widespread in the 1950s. Workers could now buy such products as televisions, washing machines, refrigerators, and stereos.

Women in the Postwar World

Women's participation in the world wars had resulted in several gains. They had achieved one of the major aims of the nineteenth-century feminist movement—the right to vote.

During World War II, women had entered the workforce in huge numbers. At the war's end, however, they were removed to provide jobs for soldiers returning home. For a time, women fell back into traditional roles. Birthrates rose, creating a “baby boom” in the late 1940s and the 1950s.

By the end of the 1950s, however, the birthrate began to fall and, with it, the size of families. The structure of the workplace changed once again as the number of married women in the workforce increased in Europe and the United States. These women, especially working-class women, faced an old problem. They still earned less than men for equal work. In addition, women still tended to enter traditionally female jobs. Many faced the double burden of earning income and raising a family. Such inequalities led increasing numbers of women to rebel. In the late 1960s came renewed interest in feminism, or the women's liberation movement.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the women's movement emerged in the United States and quickly spread to Western Europe. Supporters of the movement wanted to change the basic conditions of women's lives. The United States passed the Equal Pay Act in 1963. It required women to be paid the same as men for performing the same work.

A controversial issue was abortion. In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion in *Roe v. Wade*. Although national health insurance covered abortion in most of Europe, the procedure was debated in the United States.

Student Revolts

Growing discontent among university students led to an outburst of student revolts in the late 1960s. Many protests were an extension of the revolts in American universities, often sparked by student opposition to the Vietnam War. Some students, particularly in Europe, believed that universities failed to respond to their needs or to the realities of the modern world. Others believed they were becoming small cogs in the large and impersonal bureaucratic wheels of the modern world.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Summarizing What was a goal of the women's liberation movement?

LESSON 33-1 VOCABULARY

welfare state a state in which the government takes responsibility for providing citizens with services such as health care

bloc a group of nations with a common purpose

real wages the actual purchasing power of income

consumer society a society preoccupied with buying goods

women's liberation movement the renewed feminist movement of the late 1960s, which demanded political and economic equality with men