

PART SEVEN

EUROPE IN THE POST-WAR ERA

Following the devastation of World War II, Europe rebuilt under the growing shadow of the Cold War between the Western powers, led by the United States, and the Soviet Union. The dawn of the nuclear age added to rising tensions. The Soviet Red Army, which had liberated Eastern Europe from the Nazis, became an occupying force. In Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and the other states of Eastern Europe, Soviet-backed Communists pushed other political parties aside until they held unchallenged authority in each state. They nationalized industries and undertook massive forced collectivization of agriculture. Germany, devastated by total defeat, was divided into a western zone, which became the German Federal Republic (West Germany), and an eastern zone, which became the Communist German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Berlin, lying within East Germany, remained divided between East and West, and quickly became a particular focus of Cold War rivalry. Soviet intervention in 1956 to crush a revolt against Communist rule in Hungary further strained relations between East and West. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear war. The United Nations became a battleground for the Cold War (see Chapter 28). Yet it was an arena for verbal battles—hostile words and strident denunciations were better than war.

Signs of gnawing poverty were not hard to find in every country in the post-war period. Only half of the houses in France had running water, and only a third of those in Austria, Spain, and Italy. Providing decent housing became a goal of governments in most countries. However, Western Europe did slowly recover

from the ordeal of total war, and the relative peace and new prosperity engendered a "baby boom" (1946–1964), as in the United States. More and more people lived in cities, with fewer working the land, and a burgeoning culture of consumption took hold, increasingly influenced by America. The status of and opportunities for women gradually improved. Women finally achieved the right to vote in France and Italy. In Britain, the Labour government laid the foundations for the modern welfare state, with governments assuming increased responsibility for their citizens. The welfare state emerged in part out of the experience of state planning and social solidarity during World War II, as many countries began wide-ranging social services to aid and protect their people. Other Western states, too, increased the number of social services provided by their governments, as did their Communist counterparts.

The period between 1950 and 1973 was a period of dynamic economic growth in Western Europe. The number of people working in manufacturing or the service sector increased dramatically, as the percentage of people working the land fell. Reflecting the wartime experience, economic and social planning played an important part in the recovery of the European economy and its rapid expansion.

In the post-war period, movements for independence in the Asian and African colonies of the European powers led to rapid decolonization and further loss of European authority. The age of empire ended with decolonization. Britain granted independence to its former colonies. France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Portugal also lost their empires, but after nationalist insurrections and bloody fighting.

Political change in Europe came rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s. In Greece, Spain, and Portugal, repressive dictatorships gave way to parliamentary regimes. Parties concerned with the environment—the "Greens"—made sizable political inroads in West Germany. But, at the same time, terrorism brought a new, unsettling dimension to political life. Terrorist groups threatened security in such areas as Northern Ireland and the Basque region of Spain, where nationalists were demanding independence, and in the Middle East, where militant Arab organizations opposed the policies of Israel (which became independent in 1948) toward the Palestinian people.

In the Soviet Union, following his rise to head of state in 1985, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev initiated a bold series of economic and political reforms, hoping to maintain communism by eliminating its authoritarian nature, encouraging greater political participation, and bringing economic prosperity. When move-

ments for reform arose in the countries of the Eastern European bloc, beginning in Poland and Hungary, Gorbachev made clear that the Soviet Union would not intervene. Communism collapsed in one Eastern European state after another in 1989. Throngs of East Germans pouring through the Berlin Wall in November 1989 symbolized the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. Germany became a unified state once again. The Soviet Union itself then broke apart, as one former Soviet republic after another declared independence. The Cold War ended, after having largely defined international relations since the end of World War II. The collapse of what has been called the Soviet Union's empire left the United States as the world's only superpower, with an informal empire of its own.

In the former Communist states, the challenges of achieving democratic rule with little or no democratic traditions or a successful market economy were daunting. The ethnic and religious complexity of these states compounded the difficulties. In the former Yugoslavia, a bloody civil war began in Bosnia in 1992. The war brought atrocities on a scale not seen since World War II, most of which were perpetuated by Serb forces against Muslims.

The post-war era also brought about European economic cooperation among Western states. European economic cooperation had begun in the years following World War II, with the founding of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation in 1948, the creation of the Common Market in 1959, and the European Community in 1967. The Treaty of Maastricht, signed in 1992 by the twelve members of the European Community, created the European Union, which had as a base a partnership between France and Germany. The single market that began for member states in 1993 led to the implementation of a common currency—the “euro”—in 2002 (although three states have retained their former currencies). Twenty-seven states are now members of the European Union. Romania and Bulgaria were admitted in 2007, with the candidacies of Croatia, Macedonia, and Turkey still pending.

The globalization of the world economy, reflecting remarkable improvements in transportation and communication, has brought the continents of the world closer together, facilitating the movement of people, ideas, and products across the globe. Migrants from Africa and Asia began to arrive in Europe in ever greater numbers, attracted by the possibility of jobs and a better life. Many fled political turmoil at home, arriving as political refugees or simply crossing borders without detection. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the Balkans also headed west. Periods of economic downturn have left immigrants unwanted by many

in their adopted countries, which have been subject to xenophobia. Even as Europe now enjoys peace, the question of immigration remains a challenge, particularly in Western Europe. And so does the specter of increased terrorism across the globe, in the wake of the attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001.

CHAPTER 27

REBUILDING DIVIDED EUROPE



The Second World War ended with little of the optimism that had followed the conclusion of the First World War. Winston Churchill, for one, was pessimistic: “What is Europe now? A rubble heap, a charnel house, a breeding ground of pestilence and hate.” Four times more people had been killed in World War II (as a direct or indirect result of the fighting) than had died in World War I, which had been “the war to end all wars.” As the smoke of war cleared, Europeans struggled to comprehend the devastation around them: flattened cities, crippled industry, and millions of refugees. The world soon learned that more than 6 million Jews had been exterminated by the Nazis. Countries that the German armies had occupied or that had been Nazi allies had to determine how to deal with collaborators, and they also faced the challenge of establishing democratic political institutions. In the meantime, intellectuals wrestled with the horrendous catastrophe that had occurred.

The shift from a wartime to a peacetime economy would pose a great challenge. The economies of the Western nations recovered from the war with remarkable speed and entered a period of spectacular economic growth. Economic growth came even as superpower competition between the United States and the Soviet Union made the other European powers less important in the world, as did the growing prodigious economic might of Japan and the rise of China as a great power.

The European population grew from 548 million in 1950 to 727 million in 2000. The post-war period brought a “baby boom.” Life expectancy increased as people lived longer due to improvements in medicine and diet. Mechanization and commercialization augmented agricultural production. Because of what became known as a “Green Revolution,” more and more rural people left the land for cities, which grew rapidly. Over the decades that followed, greater opportunities for women became available. At the same time, simultaneous revolutions in transportation, communications, and consumerism transformed the way Europeans lived.

Putting Europe back together proved a daunting task. By the time World War II ended in 1945, as many as 60 million people had been killed as a result of the war. Although fewer people from France and Great Britain were killed in the Second World War than the First World War, death tolls in Central and Eastern Europe during the Second World War were almost beyond comprehension. In the Soviet Union, deaths due to the war can only be estimated at between 15 and 25 million people—even more, if one includes the millions who were victims of Joseph Stalin's purges. Moreover, 1,700 cities and towns and 70,000 villages were completely destroyed. About 6 million Germans died in Hitler's war. Poland lost 6 million people—a fifth of the population—including 3 million Jews, more than 90 percent of the Jewish population. Ten percent of the population of Yugoslavia had perished. Damage to property from air raids, ground warfare, and reprisals by retreating German forces was incalculable. German air raids in the first year of the war devastated sections of London and Coventry in Britain, Leningrad and Kiev in the Soviet Union, and the Dutch port of Rotterdam. The German army completely leveled Warsaw in retaliation for the 1944 uprising there. In turn, Allied bombing runs left Berlin, Dresden, and the industrial cities of the Rhineland in ruins, and key French industrial and port cities were severely damaged as well.

Only recently have historians become aware of the tragedies stemming from what would in the 1990s be known as “ethnic cleansing” during and immediately after the war. For example, between April 1943 and August 1947 in the territories that would become Communist Poland and the Soviet republic of Ukraine, about 100,000 civilian Poles and Ukrainians were killed and another 1.4 million were forced from their lands by the invading Red Army. During the period of Nazi and then Soviet occupation (for the second time, as the Soviets had occupied these territories during 1939–1941), first Ukrainians and then Poles themselves undertook “ethnic cleansing.” Ukrainian nationalists killed Poles in Volhynia and Galicia in 1943, and the Poles committed atrocities when civil war between the two ethnic groups followed the liberation of Poland.

The Potsdam Conference

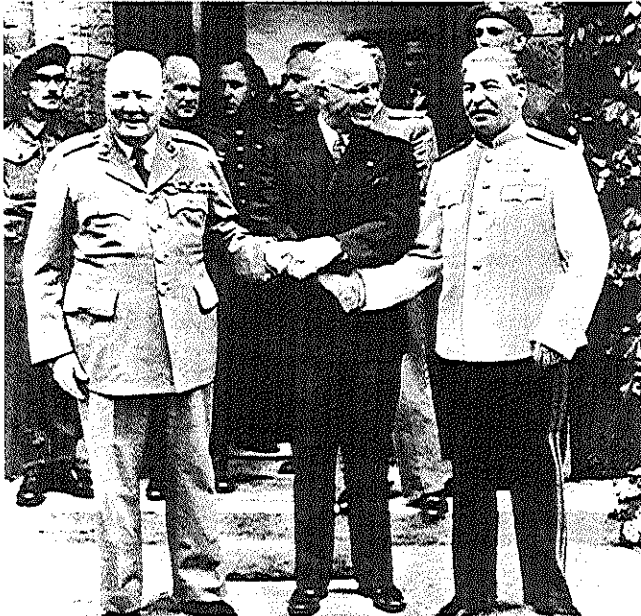
Decisions taken by the Allies toward the end of the war brought a radical restructuring of the national boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe. The restructuring was largely determined by the Soviet military advance. By the time of the German surrender in May 1945, the Red Army had occupied all of the states of Eastern Europe except Yugoslavia and Greece. In Germany, Soviet troops controlled what became the eastern zone; the British held the industrial Rhineland and Ruhr Basin, as well as much of

the north; American and French armies held southern Germany; and the four powers divided Berlin.

At the Potsdam Conference of July 1945, Stalin, Churchill, and Truman considered the fate of defeated Germany. The defeat of Churchill's Conservative Party in the election that took place at the same time as the conference brought Clement Attlee (1883–1967) to Potsdam as British prime minister, leading one diplomat to conclude that the meeting of the "Big Three" had become a meeting of "the Big 2 and a half." The Allies had already decided to divide defeated Germany into a British, French, Russian, and American zone of occupation. They created a new border between Germany and Poland, which would be the Oder and Niesse Rivers. The port of Gdańsk was restored to Poland. The Allied leaders agreed that Germany should be reunified, despite the original opposition of de Gaulle, and that German populations living in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary should be forcibly resettled in Germany, as the new governments of those states demanded. The Four Power Allied Control Council (France had joined the Potsdam powers) planned a new, disarmed, and de-Nazified Germany.

The growing mistrust between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union affected the Potsdam Conference. Stalin's territorial demands included

Winston Churchill, Harry Truman, and Joseph Stalin at the Potsdam Conference in 1945.



strategically crucial parts of Turkey. The Western Allies refused, because such a move would have given the Soviet Union virtual control of the straits of Constantinople—which Russian tsars had sought since the eighteenth century. The Soviet Union had already occupied in 1940 the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, a large chunk of East Prussia, and parts of Finland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania (Bessarabia and some of Bukovina). Poland, which lost much of its eastern territory to the Soviet Union, gained in the west at Germany's expense (see Map 27.1).

Other territorial adjustments came at the expense of Germany's wartime allies, such as Italy, from which Yugoslavia acquired a small border region. As the Allies dictated the new alignments, little attention was paid to the fact that the new borders, as after World War I, left various nationalities dissatisfied. Hungarians living in Transylvania did not want to be left within the redrawn borders of Romania; the many fewer Romanians who found themselves inside Hungary resented what they considered to be punishment for having been forced by the Nazis and their wartime dictators to fight on the side of Germany. Austria, which Hitler had annexed to his Reich in 1938, had its independence restored. Military occupation of Austria by the victorious World War II powers ended in 1955 with the withdrawal of Soviet troops in exchange for Austria's declaration of neutrality. In northern Europe, Finland retained its independence and the Soviet Union accepted Finnish neutrality.

As after the end of World War I, the Western Allies disagreed on the question of war reparations. The Soviet Union, which had suffered far more than Great Britain and the United States, demanded that Germany be forced to pay for the costs of the war. Specifically, Stalin wanted the equivalent of \$20 billion in reparations, as well as German industrial equipment. The Soviet Union eventually received half the amount of money demanded (although in greatly inflated currency), as well as about 25 percent of industrial equipment from the German zones occupied by Britain, France, and the United States. In the meantime, Soviet trains and trucks began to haul German machinery and other industrial materials from the eastern zone back to Russia. By now fully suspicious of Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe, Truman eliminated the Soviet Union from the list of nations eligible for U.S. loans to help with rebuilding their economies.

The Western Allies concurred that the victors should negotiate peace treaties with Germany's former allies (Italy, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria), which were to be represented by "recognized democratic governments." But it was soon clear that the governments of the last three nations were anything but democratically elected.

The United Nations and Cold War Alliances

In November 1944, the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in Washington, D.C., planned the United Nations, which would replace the League of Nations.

in San Francisco in 1945 drew up the UN Charter. The UN headquarters was placed in New York, where a secretary-general would coordinate its activities. The United Nations would consist of a General Assembly of member nations (fifty-one at the organization's inception), each of which would have one vote, and a Security Council of eleven members (fifteen after 1965). The United States and Britain agreed to Stalin's demand that the Soviet Union would have one of the five permanent seats—and thus veto power—on the Security Council once the proposed United Nations had been established. The United States, Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., France, and the Republic of China (Taiwan) were designated as "permanent members of the Security Council," each with a veto over deliberations, and the other five seats (ten after 1965) would be filled on a revolving basis by states chosen by the General Assembly. When China was admitted to the UN in 1971, it received the Republic of China's permanent seat on the Security Council.

The United Nations helped the European state system reemerge after the war. Furthermore, in some cases the UN provided necessary mediation in disputes between nations. However limited its powers, the United Nations, unlike the defunct League of Nations, could send peacekeeping forces to various hot spots on the globe, although the accomplishments of these efforts would vary considerably. Moreover, the UN provided emergency relief funds in the immediate post-war period to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Italy, and Greece.

In 1941, the Atlantic Charter (see Chapter 26), which had defined Allied war aims, had led to agreement that trials for war crimes would follow the war, once national sovereignty had been restored when Germany had been defeated. At the Saint James Conference in January 1942 the Allies declared their intention to punish war criminals. Gradually, consensus had emerged that an international order had to be constructed that went beyond state sovereignty. In 1944, the Permanent Court of Justice in The Hague organized a commission to consider definitions of war crimes, with the assumption that the United Nations would bring such criminals to justice.

The concept of war crimes that had developed during the war led in 1948 to the UN General Assembly adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document has subsequently served as the basis for efforts to protect the rights of individuals. Building in part on the Bill of Rights of the United States and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizen of the French Revolution, the Universal Declaration proclaimed civil and political rights; the right to a fair trial; the freedoms of assembly, belief, and speech; and the rights to education, an adequate standard of living, and to participation in cultural life. Moreover, slavery and torture were acknowledged as violations of human rights. The Genocide Convention of 1949 made genocide a crime under international law.

Besides joining the United Nations to mediate disputes, the states of Europe also hedged their bets by establishing military alliances, whereby they

pledged to come to the defense of their allies in case any one of them was attacked. Thus, in March 1948, Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg signed the Pact of Brussels. It served as the military component of the subsequent Council of Europe to which most of the nations of Western Europe adhered. The United States joined members of the Pact of Brussels in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, which subsequently added Italy, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Portugal, Canada, Greece, and Turkey (see Map 27.2). Directed against the Soviet Union, the treaty bound all of the member countries to defend jointly any of the signatories who were attacked, creating a unified command for a common army and placing NATO's headquarters in Paris. NATO became the cornerstone of the alliance between the United States and Western Europe.

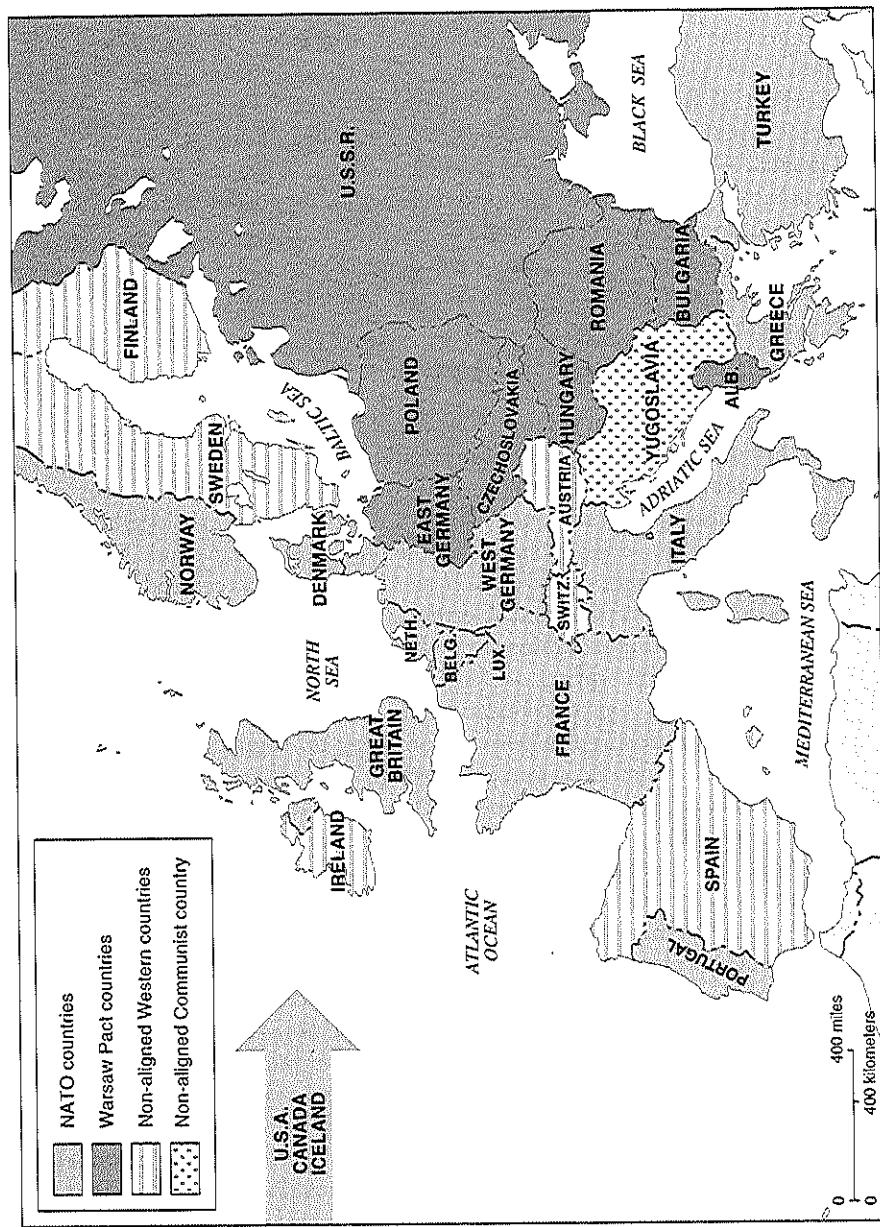
Confronting Turmoil and Collaborators

Europe became a continent of "displaced persons" (DP's) as well as of widows and orphans. Now national minorities within newly redrawn boundaries were forced into boxcars and moved—displaced—to new locations so as to correspond more or less to newly drawn national frontiers. In all, there were about 50 million refugees in the immediate post-war period. Furthermore, millions of prisoners of war, such as Germans incarcerated in the Soviet Union, had to be repatriated. Germans living in Lithuania, which in 1940 had been incorporated against its will into the Soviet Union, were returned to Germany. In the spring of 1945, about 20 million people were on the move. In addition, tens of thousands of Germans were forcibly expelled from Czechoslovakia during the period from May to August of 1945 and during the organized transfers of January through November 1946. Thousands died during this hard time. In all, about 12 million Germans were forced to leave their homes. Almost 4 million returned to Germany, most arriving from the U.S.S.R. and Poland with virtually nothing. In Germany, one of every six persons was a refugee and 1.5 million Germans still lived in camps for displaced persons in 1947.

Although drab and carefully regulated along military lines by the American, British, and French occupiers, with barbed wire, the careful distribution of food and clothing, and curfews, DP camps brought some normalcy to the lives of their occupants, many of whom had been slave laborers for Germany, including Polish and Ukrainian Jews, as well as Jews from the Baltic states, and some fortunate survivors of the death camps.

Stalin repopulated East Prussia with about 1 million people hauled from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and even distant Kazakhstan. Poles whose homeland had become part of the Soviet Union now moved into western Poland. At the same time, almost 500,000 Ukrainians were forced by Poland to head eastward to the Soviet Union. Several hundred thousand Jews from Eastern Europe who had survived the Holocaust now headed west, some fleeing new pogroms in Poland in 1946. In all, about 7 million members of

MAP 27.2 EASTERN AND WESTERN BLOCS, 1955 NATO and the Warsaw Pact were the military alliances that defined the post-war world.





Refugees waiting for food in a Displaced Persons Camp in Germany.

Eastern European ethnic groups faced resettlement. The result was a dramatic decrease in the percentage of ethnic minorities living in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania, declining from 32 percent to 3 percent in the first case. Churches, synagogues, and even a few mosques were razed, depending on the location; towns and streets received new names to reflect the brutal transfer of ethnic minorities.

The punishment of those who had collaborated with the Nazis began as soon as the occupied territories were liberated (and, in some cases, had begun during the war itself). In France, resistance forces summarily executed (sometimes after quick trials) about 10,000 accused collaborators. Courts sentenced about 2,000 people to death (of whom about 800 were executed) and more than 40,000 to prison. Vichy Prime Minister Pierre Laval was executed. Marshal Philippe Pétain was found guilty of treason, but because of his age and stature as the “hero of Verdun” during the First World War, he was imprisoned on a small island off the western coast of France, where he died in 1951. Women who had slept with German soldiers had their heads shaved and were paraded through their towns in shame.

In countries that had been occupied by Hitler's armies, people struggled to determine degrees of guilt. In Belgium, courts prosecuted 634,000 people for their part in the German occupation—a staggering figure in a country of only 8 million people. In Norway, 55,000 members of the Norwegian Nazi Party were put on trial after the war, and although many drew jail terms, only 25 were executed. On the other hand, in Austria, where much



A French collaborator whose head has been shaved is paraded, with her baby, through a village near Cherbourg following liberation of the region by Allied troops, 1944.

of the population had seemed to welcome union with Hitler's Germany with frenzied enthusiasm, only 9,000 people were tried and only 35 collaborators executed. In Italy, where reprisals against Nazi collaborators at the war's end had been carried out with speed and efficiency (about 15,000 executions between 1943 and 1946), there were few trials of fascists after the war. This was in part because the Italian fascists had been, at least when compared to the Nazis, relatively mild in their treatment of their enemies. Furthermore, millions of people had joined fascist organizations or unions because they felt obliged to do so. In Eastern Europe, purges of former Nazi collaborators took on a high profile, such as in Yugoslavia, where Tito's victorious forces executed thousands of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes who had collaborated, many of them murderously.

The most dramatic post-war trial occurred in Nuremberg in August 1945 when the Allies put twenty-four high-ranking German officials on trial before an international tribunal. The court found twenty-one of the defendants guilty of war crimes, and ten were executed. Hermann Göring committed suicide in his cell shortly before he was to be executed. Less spectacular trials of more minor Nazi figures went on in Germany for years.

Many war criminals, however, escaped or were let free after the war. Doctor Josef Mengele, who had carried out brutal experiments on living patients, including children, managed to escape to Paraguay. A good many Nazis found a warm welcome from right-wing dictatorships. The U.S. government facilitated the escape of a number of Nazi war criminals in exchange for informa-

tion about Communists in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Indeed, growing anti-communism put a brake on purges of wartime collaborators in Western Europe. Other war criminals managed to fade into the chaos of post-war Europe, some with new names and identities. Some did not even bother to change their names, and more than a few eventually served in the West German government. In 1959, Israeli agents in South America kidnapped Adolph Eichmann, who had participated in the murder of thousands of Jews. He was put on trial in Israel, where he was convicted and put to death. In the mid-1980s, a French court convicted Klaus Barbie, a Nazi war criminal who had fled after the war, sentencing him to life in prison. Maurice Papon, an official who had signed away the lives of hundreds of Jews during Vichy and then gone on to a successful career as an official in several French governments, was finally tried and convicted in 1998, proud to the end that his superiors thought well of his work as a bureaucrat. The justice meted out to Nazis and collaborators may have been imperfect, and sometimes came quite late, but it was better than no justice at all.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND PROSPERITY, THE WELFARE STATE, AND EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION

The European economy lay in ruins. Bombing on both sides had been systematic, destroying with increasing accuracy the industrial structure of Europe. Sunken ships blocked port harbors. Almost all bridges over the major rivers had been destroyed. Only fragments of Europe's transportation and communication networks remained in service. In Britain, gold and silver reserves had sunk dramatically, and the government had been forced to take out large loans, initiating a long period of virtual British dependence on the United States, which provided the bulk of these funds. Non-military manufacturing had plunged during the war. The markets for British manufactured goods, which had all but disappeared during the war, could not be quickly reconstituted.

Agricultural production in every war zone had fallen by about half, leaving millions of people without enough to eat. Inflation was rampant; the value of European currencies plunged. As after World War I, the German currency became virtually worthless. German housewives picked through the rubble of bombed-out buildings looking for objects of value, combing forests for mushrooms and berries for their families to eat. The black market supplied many necessities.

However, the European economy revived with impressive, unanticipated speed (see Table 27.1). As a response to growing Communist influence, in March 1947 President Truman announced the "Truman Doctrine," which proclaimed "the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."

TABLE 27.1. INDICES OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION, 1946–1950
(1938 = 100)

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
Belgium	91	106	120	129	139
Britain	106	114	128	137	148
France	79	95	111	122	125
Italy	75	93	99	105	119
Netherlands	74	94	113	126	137
W. Germany	29	34	51	75	90

Source: William I. Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent, 1945–2002* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), p. 135.

Because great economic turmoil had contributed to social and political instability between the world wars, the United States undertook a program of massive economic aid to Western Europe. Through the Marshall Plan, named after the American secretary of state, George Marshall, who devised it, the United States contributed \$13 billion between 1948 and 1951 toward the rebuilding of the Western Allies' economies. The Marshall Plan was intended to help Western Europe resist communism—as the United States pressured the governments of France and Italy not to name Communists to key ministries—and to make Europe a powerful trading partner for American industry.

The Marshall Plan contributed to the revival of Western Europe. However, the European economic recovery was already well under way by the time the Marshall Plan began in 1948. Britain and France had already matched their industrial production of the pre-war period, and Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium followed within a year. Moreover, the monies provided by the Marshall Plan amounted to only 6.5 percent of France's gross national product, 2.5 percent of that of Britain, and 5.3 percent of that of Italy. The Marshall Plan did assist Western European states to purchase raw materials, fuel, and machinery for industry. In Britain, about a third of the aid went to the purchase of food. Funds from the Marshall Plan also allowed Western European governments some margin to pay for the beginnings of social programs emerging with the construction of welfare states (see p. 1126). The United States offered loans and credits to a number of European countries, with an eye toward encouraging anti-communism, while having excluded the Soviet Union from the provisions of the Lend-Lease Act.

The difficult years in the immediate post-war period gave way to a period of considerable economic growth from 1950 to 1973. European economies benefited from the globalization of trade, the availability of a labor supply, and the use of oil instead of coal as the principal source of fuel for industrial growth. This rapid rise in the demand for oil dramatically increased

the strategic importance of the Middle East. Natural gas, much of which was imported from the Soviet Union, offered another source of energy.

Economic growth followed a combination of state involvement in the economy and the liberalization of trade, creating mixed economies. The most successful mix seemed to be a combination of state planning, timely nationalizations (notably of railroads, coal, and steel), and encouragement of private industry. Nationalized railroads aided the process of rebuilding and expansion in West Germany, France, Belgium, and Britain. The Italian government owned almost 30 percent of Italian industry. In Italy, the role of the state in orchestrating industry, encouraged by Mussolini, survived the war. The Institute for Industrial Reconstruction, which had been founded in 1933, controlled an increasing number of enterprises. The National Agency for Hydrocarbons emerged as a veritable cartel in itself, drawing huge profits from a variety of activities, including construction, chemicals, and textile production. Government investment helped the emergence of the Italian steel industry, and a state-owned petroleum company provided industry with inexpensive fuel.

The British economy slowly revived following the war. Industrial production reached pre-war levels by 1946 and grew by a third by the end of the decade, despite increasingly obsolete factories and low rates of investment and savings. In France, the state assumed control of the largest banks, the Renault automobile plants (whose owner had collaborated with the Germans), natural resources (such as gas and coal), steel and electricity, and airlines. The brilliant French economist Jean Monnet (1888–1979) headed an Office of Planning, which encouraged and coordinated voluntary plans for modernizing business enterprises and agriculture, drawing on the capital and expertise of government technocrats. French industrial production in 1959 was twice that of 1938. Table 27.2 provides comparative rates of industrial productivity for the major nations of Europe, as well as for Japan and the United States. Italy also enjoyed a real boom. Real wages in Italy in 1954 were more than 50 percent higher than they had been before the war, as the Italian economy grew rapidly with the help of U.S. financial assistance. Smaller nations also thrived. Norway, Denmark, and Sweden all became more prosperous thanks largely to the development of fishing, agriculture, industry, and booming service sectors.

The Western Allies recognized that the economic recovery of West Germany was essential to achieving political stability in Central Europe and resisting communism. Aided by a stable political life, the German Federal Republic reformed its battered currency, the mark. Price controls and rationing ended. This helped restore confidence, which in turn helped fuel the economic resurgence. Black-marketeering gradually ceased as inflation and unemployment were brought under control.

An infusion of American aid—\$1.5 billion between 1948 and 1952, primarily through the Marshall Plan—contributed to the rebuilding of key industries in West Germany, which contained most of the nation's natural

TABLE 27.2. INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

	1938	1948	1952	1959	1963	1967
United States	33	73	90	113	133	168
West Germany	53	27	61	107	137	158
France	52	55	70	101	129	155
Italy	43	44	64	112	166	212
Holland	47	53	72	110	141	182
Belgium	64	78	88	104	135	153
Britain	67	74	84	105	119	133
Austria	39	36	65	106	131	151
Spain				102	149	215
Sweden	52	74	81	106	140	176
Japan	58	22	50	120	212	347

Source: Walter Laqueur, *Europe Since Hitler* (New York: Penguin, 1982), p. 194.

resources. The German Federal Republic also had the advantage (one, to be sure, bought at horrific cost during the war) of starting from scratch and building new factories that utilized the most modern equipment. West Germany's other advantages included the presence of many engineers, a skilled labor force, and protection by the Western Allies—so it did not have to spend much for defense. The government of the German Federal Republic took a lesser role in economic planning, but imposed short-term tariffs and encouraged agricultural modernization. The influx of refugees from East Germany contributed to the remarkable growth of the West German economy. West Germany in the 1960s attracted streams of migrant workers from Spain, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, and above all, Turkey.

As a result of the German economic "miracle," West Germany's gross national product tripled between 1950 and 1964. West Germany's imports multiplied during the 1950s by four times and its exports by six times. German industrial production more than doubled between 1948 and 1951, and it increased by six times from 1948 to 1964. West Germany assumed pre-war Germany's role as a major producer of steel and machinery. The chemical industry, strong in Germany since the late nineteenth century, continued to develop. By 1960, the German Federal Republic was the world's second leading exporter of goods, including machinery, appliances, radios, chemicals, and automobiles, as Volkswagens now streamed off the assembly lines.

The continued concentration of industrial production in large companies characterized the post-war period. Western Europe entered the world of conglomerates. A single Belgian company controlled as much as 80 percent of Belgian bank deposits, 60 percent of insurance business, 40 percent of the iron and steel produced, 30 percent of coal, and 25 percent of electrical

energy. This monopoly did not seem to slow the development of the Belgian economy, which expanded rapidly.

With the rapid development of the service sector of Western economies, the proliferation of white-collar jobs lifted the expectations, status, and income of hundreds of thousands of families. A more equitable distribution in taxation helped remove some of the tax burden from ordinary people. Still, in 1960, 5 percent of the British population owned about 75 percent of the nation's wealth.

Great economic disparities also remained between European nations. By the end of the 1960s, the German Federal Republic, Switzerland, and Sweden were the most prosperous European countries; Ireland, Portugal, Greece, and Spain were the poorest in Western Europe; and Romania and Albania were the poorest Communist states. In Table 27.2, Britain's relative decline clearly stands out.

Economic Cooperation

The post-war era also brought international economic cooperation among Western states. The Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) was founded in 1948 with seventeen member states, which the United States later joined. It was succeeded in 1961 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which was expanded to include Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. The OEEC helped plan European economic reconstruction after World War II. Cooperation among the Western states also led to the creation in 1952 of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The inspiration of the French statesman Robert Schuman (1886–1963), the ECSC also reflected the influence of U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson and of French economist Jean Monnet. The ECSC, which overcame strenuous British opposition, coordinated production of French and German coal and steel in the interest of efficiency, but it also was intent on forging a new relationship that ultimately would place France and West Germany at the center of the new Europe. Despite inevitable problems stemming from sometimes competing interests, the ECSC first raised the possibility of serious European economic integration. Such economic cooperation between countries also contributed to economic growth in Western Europe.

The Treaty of Rome (1957) laid the groundwork for the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community (EEC, the European Common Market). The EEC began in 1958 with six member nations—France, Italy, the German Federal Republic, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The EEC gradually eliminated trade barriers between member states in Western Europe, established common customs tariffs—thus reducing trade barriers and increasing trade between member states—and worked toward equalizing wages and social security arrangements among the member countries.

Following the war, a veritable "baby boom" occurred in Europe, as in the United States. Europe's population grew from 264 million in 1940 to 320 million by the early 1970s. The increase in the birthrate after the war more than made up for the loss of hundreds of thousands of emigrants to North America and Latin America, particularly from Italy. Europeans were also living longer, aided by improvements in diet and in medicine. The aging of the population presents major challenges for the twenty-first century. As the percentage of people no longer working rises, major strains on national budgets are a certainty because of increased costs for welfare and social security systems.

In the post-war period, increases in industrial and agricultural productivity, which opened up new jobs, encouraged families to have more children, as did government policies that aided families that had children. In France, where leaders had openly worried about the low birthrate, special incentives were offered to families that had more than two children. Medical advances (such as the virtual elimination of polio by the end of the 1950s) and an increase in the number of doctors further reduced infant mortality. The birthrate increased between 1950 and 1966 in every country in Western Europe, with Switzerland, the Netherlands, the German Federal Republic, and France leading the way. The Soviet Union and Poland, too, saw high annual natural increases. Nonetheless, because of virtually unchecked population growth in India, China, and other Third World nations, Europe's percentage of the world population fell to 16 percent in 1990.

The increase in the birthrate had far-reaching social and political implications. British, French, and German eighteen-year-olds received the right to vote in the early 1970s. Moreover, governments had to increase spending on education dramatically to prepare the young for jobs in an economy that was rapidly becoming more complex. The age until which school attendance was obligatory rose to fourteen or sixteen years old, depending on the country. Illiteracy became quite uncommon in Europe by the 1960s. As a result of the baby boom, more young people attended university. But despite the tripling of the number of university students in Britain, France, and Italy between 1938 and 1960, there was relatively little democratization of university enrollment, which remained the preserve of the upper classes. In 1967, fewer than 10 percent of French university students were the children of workers or peasants. In Great Britain, particularly, but also in the other countries of the West, working-class and farm families could not afford to send their children to university. Time away from earning a living represented an economic hardship. Still, in Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries, the number of students in higher education rose rapidly.

The Green Revolution

In the two decades that followed World War II, Western European agriculture was transformed by the "Green Revolution." Fewer farmers fed a much larger population. Large-scale, commercialized agriculture permitted most nations to produce most of the food consumed by their populations. Agricultural productivity rose by 30 percent between the end of the war and 1962. In the German Federal Republic, agricultural production increased by two-and-a-half times between 1950 and 1964.

There were several reasons for these changes in farming. First, mechanized agriculture was increasingly widespread, particularly use of the tractor. Second, fertilizers augmented farm yields in northern Europe, while pesticides—a mixed blessing because of the long-term ecological costs—prevented blight. Advances in types of seeds, animal husbandry (particularly artificial insemination), and irrigation also contributed to greater productivity. Third, the size of many farms increased as smaller and less productive plots were consolidated into larger units.

Government programs encouraged the cooperative use of tractors and provided agricultural information to farmers. In many countries, government assistance facilitated reforestation, electrification, irrigation projects, and road building that would have been beyond the means of private initiatives. Improvements in agriculture were spread unevenly across Europe. Agriculture became most efficient in Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, West Germany, Denmark, and France. Agricultural surpluses helped some countries during the 1970s and 1980s become major exporters of food.

The continued commercialization of agriculture accentuated the exodus from the land to the rapidly growing cities of Europe. In Italy, the farming population fell from about 40 percent after the war to 24 percent in 1966. In Great Britain, the first European nation in which agriculture was substantially mechanized even before the war, less than 4 percent of the population worked the land by the early 1970s. Before World War I, about half the population of Europe worked in agriculture, a figure that included fishermen and foresters. In 1955, the percentage had fallen to about 24 percent, and it has continued to decline, although it remains higher in southern Europe. In every country, agriculture's share of the gross national product has fallen. At the same time, the increasing industrialization of agriculture and the use of synthetic fertilizers means that the old term "Green Revolution" in some ways no longer seems appropriate.

In the 1950s, Western European peasants started to join organizations to lobby for assistance and favorable tariffs. Peasants blocked traffic of capitals with tractors and farm animals to protest government policies. In France, wine producers have often attempted to block the arrival of cheaper products from Italy and Spain. Ironically, such protests have come at a time when peasants, because of the rural exodus in Western Europe, have lost most of their political voice.

The emergence of welfare states within the context of market capitalism was one of the most significant evolutions in the post-war period. State economic and military planning during World War II helped shape expectations of continued government assistance. In response to popular desire for social reforms, the British Parliament, spurred by the Labour Party, implemented new social benefits. These included the remarkable British National Health Service that began in 1948, funds for the unemployed, retirement pensions, and assistance for widows. It also enacted a series of bills nationalizing the Bank of England, airlines, railways, roads, canals, buses, London's subway, and the coal and steel industries. After the war, the shortage of homes was apparent and a quarter of all homes in Britain did not have their own lavatory. By 1951, a million new homes had been constructed in Britain. Economic growth and a low rate of unemployment made such programs, financed through taxation, easier than they would have been in a period of economic slowdown. The Conservatives, in power between 1951 and 1964, expanded the services of the British welfare state, even though Conservative policy had long been in principle against such strong government.

In other countries, too, the general appreciation of the sacrifices ordinary people had made during World War II led to a growing consensus that states should provide services to citizens. The welfare state also reflected the assumption that the monopoly of wealthy people over the economy had contributed to the rise of fascist movements in Europe between the wars.

Thus European states greatly expanded comprehensive welfare programs that provided social services for their citizens. "Welfare states" would provide cradle-to-grave social services. This was true in Western states, in which laissez-faire economic theory had long held the upper hand, as well as in Communist states, in which the role of centralized state economic planning was a major part of Communist ideology and practice. In many countries, social legislation provided government assistance to the sick and impoverished. Government insurance programs covered health care costs in Britain, Sweden, Denmark, France, Italy, and in the Soviet Union and other Communist states. Most countries in the West provided financial assistance to the unemployed; in Communist states, where there was not supposed to be any unemployment, menial jobs were found for almost everyone. In all, states expended four times more funds for social services in 1957 than in 1930. Progressive taxation helped raise funds to provide these services. In most European countries, education was made free, or fees were kept at modest rates. The prevalence of social programs in most European countries led to the characterization of welfare states as part of a "European" model of society, often contrasted with the United States. Between 1965 and 1981, the proportion of government expenditures in Britain that went to social welfare rose from 16 to 25 percent and in Sweden from 19 to 33 percent. Everywhere,

the increase in government services added to the size of bureaucracies. Yet the advent of welfare states was predicated on economic growth. When economies do not grow, social-welfare costs become drains on national budgets. Great Britain, France, and Sweden would later find, for instance, that rising medical costs could outstrip the ability of government programs to pay for them.

POLITICS IN THE WEST IN THE POST-WAR ERA

With Germany, Italy, and Vichy France defeated, political continuity with pre-war governments could be found only in Britain among the major Western European powers. Yet, even in Britain, political change occurred as voters in the first post-war election turned against the Conservatives and brought the Labour Party to power in July 1945. Labour's victory was a repudiation of the Conservative government's pre-war economic policies and its inadequate reaction to Hitler's aggressive moves in Central Europe in the late 1930s. Clement Attlee (1883–1967), a hard-working but uninspiring man who lacked Churchill's charisma, became prime minister. Churchill allegedly remarked, "An empty cab pulled up to 10 Downing Street, and Attlee got out." Nonetheless, Attlee proved to be an effective leader.

Following the economic recovery after the war, Britain's share in international trade declined sharply during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. West Germany and France passed Britain in most economic categories. Some conservatives blamed the welfare state and the strength of the unions for Britain's relative economic decline, arguing that both forced the government and private companies to pay higher wages. Yet British welfare costs were less than those of France, and British citizens paid proportionally fewer taxes than German or French citizens. Rather, the costs of maintaining the British Empire undercut the government's quest for austerity as it faced enormous trade deficits and debts to the United States. The Attlee government had to choose between financing domestic economic recovery and maintaining the British Empire. It chose the former (see Chapter 28).

Conservatives returned to power in Britain in 1951. Britain remained governed by an inter-connected elite of wealthy families—at one time during the government (1957–1963) of Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, thirty-five of his ministers, including seven members of his cabinet, were related to him by marriage. (Princess Margaret, sister of Queen Elizabeth, once suggested sarcastically that the traditional debutante balls no longer be held because "every little tart in London was getting in.") The Tories were committed to undoing the nationalizations undertaken by Labour after the war. But they found it difficult to privatize the iron and steel industries because they had become unprofitable and failed to attract private interest. Furthermore, the welfare system was generally popular. Labour



(Left) Winston Churchill giving his famous "V for Victory" sign. (Right) Charles de Gaulle returns to France after the German occupation and the Vichy years.

returned to power in 1964 with the support of the trade unions, and remained there until 1970.

In some ways, France emerged from World War II in better shape than it had from World War I. And although industrial cities and ports had been pounded by bombing raids—German in 1940 and Allied in the last years of the war—the systematic devastation that had taken place in northern and northeastern France during 1914–1918 had not been repeated, in part because the French armies had collapsed so rapidly in 1940.

In the eighteen months that followed his triumphant march down the Champs-Élysées to Paris's town hall in August 1944, Charles de Gaulle ruled virtually alone. In October 1945, the vast majority of French men and women voted against a return to the political institutions of the Third Republic, identified with France's defeat five years earlier. This referendum was the first election in which French women could vote after receiving the suffrage that year. In the subsequent elections for the Constituent Assembly, the Communist Party—whose contributions to the resistance had been essential—took the greatest percentage of seats. They were followed by the Popular Republican Movement (MRP), a new center-right party built on de Gaulle's reputation and Catholic support. However, frustrated that the new regime would

have a weak executive authority, de Gaulle resigned from government in January 1946.

After voters overwhelmingly rejected the Constituent Assembly's proposed constitution in May, a second Constituent Assembly was then elected to write a new constitution. It was approved by a narrow majority of voters in October 1946. Like the Third Republic, the political institutions of the new Fourth Republic seemed conducive to governmental immobility and instability. Between 1946 and 1958, France had twenty-four different governments, most based on left-center coalitions of the MRP, the Socialists, and smaller parties. The president and the prime minister had influence, but little power. While de Gaulle cooled his heels in his village, awaiting a call for him to return to power, a new Gaullist party (the Rally of the French People, or RPF) became the opposition party of the right.

In Italy, a new regime had to be constructed after the war. The monarchy's passive capitulation to fascism had discredited King Victor Emmanuel III. In June 1946, more than half of those voting repudiated the monarchy, despite the abdication of the king in favor of his son and the pope's attempts to influence the election. Italy became a republic.

The new Italian constitution provided for the election of the president by the two houses of parliament, both of which were to be elected by popular vote, now including women for the first time. The president had little real authority. Many Italians feared a powerful centralized state, at least partially because it would seem a continuity of fascism, but also because it seemed antithetical to long-standing regional identities. Fearful of losing influence, the Church vigorously opposed state centralization.

The new Italy was to be built on values associated with the resistance, which had been active in the north. Some Italians now called this a "cleansing wind from the north." But the Italian south and Sicily had been liberated by the Allies with very little help from a resistance movement, which remained dominated not only by powerful landowners but also by the Mafia. Moreover, many fascist officials in the south retained their positions, weakening the republic's prestige.

The government of Italy remained rooted in the center-right. The Christian Democratic Party, a staunchly anti-Communist centrist force with close ties to the Catholic Church and powerful economic interests, controlled political life in post-war Italy, dispensing patronage and bribes. Like its counterparts in West Germany and France, the Italian Christian Democratic Party reflected the accommodation of most Catholics with democracy. At the same time, the Communist Party became the second-largest political party, claiming the allegiance of a quarter of the population. In the 1960s, Italian governments undertook modest social reforms, encouraged by the popular Pope John XXIII (pope 1958–1963). This pushed the Christian Democrats to form coalitions with the Socialists.

Backed by the Soviet Union and its secret police, Communist governments took power in every Eastern European state in the post-war period. After first declaring support for the constitution of parliamentary democracies, calling for a union of "anti-fascist" political groups, and participating in elections, in each case Communist parties gradually eliminated competing parties, beginning with underground resistance organizations that had been created where possible during the war. Arguably only a mass base of Communist support existed in Yugoslavia. At the same time, Communist parties grew in strength in several Western European states. Communists dominated the major trade-union organizations in Italy and France; they entered post-war governments in Belgium and Denmark. Communist wartime resistance against Nazi Germany helped swell the prestige of Communist parties, even as their close identification with the Soviet Union began to engender suspicion among political elites. France, Italy, and the German Federal Republic had right-center governments in which Catholic parties played a major role.

Divided Germany

The Allies oversaw the development of the political institutions of what became the German Federal Republic. Until 1951, all legislation passed by the Federal Republic had to be approved by the Western Allies. They carried out a process of de-Nazification, beginning with education, but did not undertake any major social reforms. This meant that the powerful industrial cartels remained in place, despite the Allies' agreement to the contrary at Potsdam. The devastation of the German economy seemed to necessitate leaving what was left of Germany's industrial base intact. The constitution of the German Federal Republic stated that parties obtaining a minimum of 5 percent of the popular vote in an election could be represented in the Federal Parliament (the Bundestag). This kept small parties, principally those of the extreme right, out of the parliament. (During the Weimar Republic, many small parties had contributed to political instability.) The Federal Constitutional Court banned neo-Nazi parties, and the Communist Party was outlawed as well. The Allies insisted that the German president's powers be limited to avoid the unrestricted executive power that had existed in Hitler's Germany. The president was elected for a term of five years by a federal assembly consisting of all members of the Bundestag and about the same number of delegates from each state. The chancellor, appointed by the president, became the effective head of state. The states of the Federal Republic elected representatives to an upper house (Bundesrat). Because the upper house could block legislation, this electoral process, too, strengthened the decentralization of political power in West Germany.

Konrad Adenauer (1876–1967), the Catholic mayor of Cologne, served as chancellor of the German Federal Republic until 1963. His wartime

opposition to the Nazis, hostility to the Soviets and to East Germany, and his social conservatism reassured the Allies. Yet at the same time, Adenauer handed out positions to former Nazis and bent over backward to help Germans who had endured Allied reprisals for their service to the Nazi cause. In West Germany, the Allied program of "de-Nazification," intended to remove all former Nazis from positions of power and influence, overall had relatively little impact. It proved impossible to purge millions of people from government, industry, and education. The Allies concluded that Germany could not do without tens of thousands of experienced doctors, teachers, and engineers. Moreover, it would be difficult to distinguish between different degrees of Nazi commitment and action. Supported by smaller parties on the right, the Christian Democratic Union Party held power from 1949 until 1969, with the Social Democratic Party the chief opposition party. Adenauer forged a close alliance with France intended to serve as a bulwark against the Soviet Union.

In the meantime, the Cold War hastened the acceptance by the Western powers of the German Federal Republic and its rearmament in the Western alliance. In 1950 the Federal Republic became a nonvoting member of the Council of Europe. Moreover, bolstered by economic recovery and the total discrediting of the extreme political right wing, the German Federal Republic achieved full sovereignty and diplomatic respectability, joining NATO in 1955.

West Berliners looking across the mined "death strip," intended to discourage East Berliners from attempting to cross into the western zone, before the construction of the Berlin Wall, 1961.



The Soviet-occupied eastern zone of Germany became in 1949 the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or the DDR, also commonly known as East Germany). Walter Ulbricht (1893–1973), who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union, returned to Berlin with the Red Army and became secretary of the Communist Party. He remained, for all practical purposes, head of state until his forced retirement in 1971.

The GDR took over the administration of the eastern zone in 1955 from the Soviets, although its government continued to follow Soviet instructions. The Communist Party controlled most facets of cultural life. Many writers and artists left for West Germany, although the talented playwright Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) remained.

Eastern Europe under the Soviet Shadow

As the Red Army stood near, the states of Eastern Europe fell under the domination of Soviet-backed Communist parties. The Bulgarian Communist Party had about 14,000 members in late 1944 and 422,000 in 1946; that of Poland 20,000 in mid-1944 and 300,000 a year later. Moreover, the Soviet Union at first went along with the tide of Eastern European nationalism, supporting, for example, the annexation of Transylvania by Romania, at the expense of Hungary. During 1945–1946, coalition governments (in which Communists participated) took over large estates and distributed land to peasants, transferring about half of the land of Poland and a third of that of Hungary.

From the beginning, parties that had collaborated with the Nazis and other right-wing groups were excluded from power. The Communists eliminated coalition partners, as in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, including socialist and peasant agrarian parties, or absorbed them. Thus, coalition governments elected or otherwise constituted at the end of the war disappeared one by one until the Communists controlled each state. In Hungary in 1947, two years after the Communist Party had been roundly defeated in elections, the Communists ousted the Smallholders, or Peasant Party, which had won 57 percent of the vote. In neighboring Romania, King Michael was forced out in similar circumstances. Bulgarian Communists won a contested victory in a plebiscite that established a "People's Republic," which quickly became a single-party state. After the first election in post-war Poland, where no party had collaborated with the Germans, Communists gradually pushed aside the Socialists, who constituted the other major party. The Soviets completely destroyed the Polish People's Party in Poland, as they did the Smallholders Party in Hungary. Thereafter, Communist governments controlled the bureaucracies that increased in size with state management of the economy—above all, the police—and implemented strict censorship. In what were rapidly becoming Soviet "satellite" states, the Communists benefited from the fact that the Nazis had decimated the political elites of Eastern Europe and the Balkans during the war.

Czechoslovakia alone in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans had not become a dictatorship between the wars. In the first post-war elections there in May 1946, Communists won more than a third of the vote. Two non-Communists, Eduard Beneš (1884–1948) and Jan Masaryk (1886–1948), served as president and foreign minister, respectively, in a coalition government. But in 1948 the Communists seized power, shutting down other political parties. Masaryk died after he jumped—or was pushed—from his office window.

From Moscow, Stalin engineered purges that swept away even loyal party members in the Eastern European nations. Political arrests in Hungary have been estimated at 200,000, at 180,000 in Romania, and 80,000 in tiny Albania. Widely publicized trials (including those of popular Catholic prelates in Hungary and Czechoslovakia), prison sentences, labor camps, and many executions followed. In six years, the Communists in Hungary executed perhaps a thousand political opponents among the more than 1.3 million people hauled before tribunals (from a population of 9.5 million). Purges included not only fascists but many Social Democrats and even Communists thought to oppose Stalinism. Stalin also tightened Moscow's grip on the fourteen non-Russian republics in the Soviet Union, purging "bourgeois nationalists" in several of them.

The Soviet Union and Its Satellites in the Post-War Era

Rebuilding the Soviet economy after World War II was a monumental task. After the Soviet Union's decidedly Pyrrhic victory, those who had managed to flee the war zones returned to devastated cities. Successive years of harvest failure from 1946 to 1947 compounded the extreme suffering. The highly centralized planning of the fourth Five-Year Plan, which began in 1945, allowed the Soviets to concentrate on key industries like coal and steel. Soviet planners benefited from the commandeering of industrial capital goods from Germany and Eastern Europe. Large-scale industrial production exceeded pre-war levels in 1950 by a comfortable margin, although such results were only modestly reflected in the quality of life of Soviet citizens.

Once they recovered from being forced to contribute resources to Soviet economic growth and from buying Soviet products at inflated prices, the Communist states of Eastern Europe benefited from Soviet technological assistance. Yet they were prevented from importing technology from the West and had to export raw materials and manufactured goods to the Soviet Union at below market prices. In 1949, the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies formed the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, which sought to coordinate economic planning. Industrial production rose most rapidly in Eastern Europe in the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia. Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia also developed manufacturing bases.

The economic development of the German Democratic Republic, now-
ever short on freedom, was at first impressive. Before Soviet occupation, the
eastern zone of Germany had had a small industrial base, but this industrial
infrastructure had suffered the Soviet extraction of raw materials and
machinery. The collectivization of industrial production then proceeded
rapidly, and by 1952 the state employed three of every four workers. Despite
the loss of many skilled workers to the German Federal Republic, East Ger-
many emerged with the strongest economy of the Soviet Union's Eastern
bloc; only Hungary boasted a similar standard of living by the 1960s. Steel
production and shipbuilding, particularly, expanded rapidly in the 1950s
and 1960s, as the German Democratic Republic fulfilled its assigned role in
the Soviet government's plan for economic development in the Communist
states. Nonetheless, to many East Germans conditions of life seemed more
attractive in West Germany. Hundreds of thousands of people voted with
their feet and left for West Germany.

The planned economies of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European
allies could count some accomplishments, although adequate attention to
the desires of their citizens was not one of them. The Soviet gross national
product, which had stood at 36 percent of that of the United States in
1957, rose to about 50 percent of that of its rival in 1962, and it edged
closer in the subsequent two decades. Yet the Soviet economy remained
haunted by daunting inefficiency. The housing shortage remained acute
into the 1960s, and families still had long waits for better apartments.

While Stalin promoted economic growth in the Communist states of
Eastern Europe, economic policies furthered a division of labor whereby
some of the Soviet satellite states produced agricultural products and others
manufactured particular goods. The Soviet Union used the Eastern Europe-
an economies to further Soviet economic interests through unfavorable
trade arrangements. One by one, beginning with Bulgaria and Czechoslova-
kia in 1949, the states of Eastern Europe launched five-year plans based on
the Soviet model. However, consumer goods of all kinds were de-emphasized
until the mid-1950s, sacrificed, as had been the case in the Soviet Union
before the war, to the drive for heavy industrialization that gave birth to enor-
mous plants that produced steel and iron.

The collectivization of agriculture began in earnest, but this at first sharply
reduced productivity. Like peasants in the Soviet Union during the early
1930s, hundreds of thousands of peasants in Eastern Europe resisted by
rebellion, arson, sabotage, and simply by dragging their feet. Yet gradually
there were increases in productivity. By the mid-1960s, state farms
accounted for more than 80 percent of the land in the German Democratic
Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. In Poland, in sharp con-
trast, more than 85 percent of the land remained in private hands because
the Polish Communist leadership feared open popular resistance to massive
agricultural collectivization.

In Yugoslavia, Communist leader Tito refused to permit Soviet domination of his multinational country. In 1948, Tito broke with the Soviet Union. Over the next decades, Yugoslavia received millions of dollars in Western aid. The Yugoslav economy remained "mixed" in the sense that the private sector coexisted with state planning. Workers were permitted more self-administration through workers' councils or committees. In the 1950s, the collectivization of agriculture, which had begun after the war, was abandoned, with farmers retaking their old plots. Yugoslavia's economy improved, despite shortages and great inequalities among its six republics.

In the Soviet Union, Stalin had emerged from the war with his authority within the Communist Party unchallenged and with enormous prestige. But weakened by arteriosclerosis, Stalin's paranoia became virtually psychotic as he ordered more purges in the name of the Communist Party. The ruthless Lavrenty Beria (1899–1953), head of the omnipresent secret police, used a gold-plated phone to order arrests. Between 1948 and 1952, some prominent Jewish intellectuals and artists were tried and executed or simply disappeared, targeted because some were believed to have had contacts with the West. In 1953, Stalin died. Beria's subsequent arrest, trial, and execution signaled an end to the Stalinist period.

The Soviet Union entered a period of "collective leadership," a concept that had been abandoned during Stalin's personal dictatorship. Decisions were made by the fourteen members of the Presidium (a permanent executive committee) of the Communist Party, which included Georgy Malenkov (1902–1988), a pragmatist who had been trained as an engineer and who believed that Stalin's dictatorship had hampered the Soviet economy. Meanwhile, the coarse, rotund Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971), the son of a miner in a family of peasants, advanced within the Communist Party. He was part of a "technocratic" faction, but he was also a successful party organizer. In 1955, Khrushchev, with support from within the Soviet bureaucracy, won the upper hand in his struggle with Malenkov for power. While maintaining an emphasis on heavy industry, Khrushchev also concentrated on planning and investing in Soviet agriculture, a sector that had never recovered from the effects of forced collectivization. He understood that the production of consumer goods would have to take a more prominent place in economic planning. The quality of life for most Soviet citizens began to improve gradually, although not as fast as that of highly placed Communist Party members, who sported cars and comfortable country houses.

The Soviet people were largely unaware of the power struggles fought in secrecy within the Kremlin. Like Western "sovietologists"—specialists who studied the Soviet Union—they could only chart the waxing and waning of party leaders' authority by their ranking or the omission of their names on official lists, or by their placement among the gray heads on the giant reviewing stand in Red Square during the annual May Day military parade.

In February 1956, Khrushchev denounced Stalin's cult of personality and his ruthless purges in an unpublished but widely cited speech delivered at the Twentieth Party Congress. Such direct criticism was unprecedented in the history of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev accepted the fact that different paths to socialism could exist in different countries. He allowed the national republics within the Soviet Union more authority over their own affairs and gave intellectuals and artists in the republics more freedom to develop non-Russian cultural interests. A brief relaxation of censorship permitted the publication of books that offered brutally frank critiques of the Stalin years.

However, the strict centralization of government and its domination by the Communist Party continued. The party's authority over the republics remained for the most part in the hands of ethnic Russians. The thaw in censorship soon ended. Censors banned *Doctor Zhivago* (completed in 1956 and translated in 1958) by Boris Pasternak (1890–1960). Published in Italy and winning the Nobel Prize for literature, it offered a nuanced picture of tsarist Russia and therefore implicitly stood as a criticism of the Soviet regime. Soviet artists and filmmakers, too, were reined in, although some remained daring and imaginative within the confines of official toleration.

As the Soviet Union's economic difficulties continued and the sixth Five-Year Plan floundered badly, Khrushchev blamed its failure on excessive centralization of planning and administration. His political rivals, however, blamed him. In 1957, Khrushchev ousted Malenkov, Vyacheslav Molotov, and the premier, Nikolai Bulganin (1895–1975), from key party positions.

CHANGING CONTOURS OF LIFE

Since World War II, the economic transformations in Europe have engendered several major social changes. Trade and technology led to an increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of global economies. The workforce changed as the percentage of population working the land fell sharply and more and more women began to work outside the home in careers that had traditionally been off-limits to them. Consumerism began to thrive, and goods that might have been considered luxury items just a few decades earlier became readily available.

Intellectual Currents in the Post-War Era

Outside of a sense of relief, there seemed little about which to be optimistic at the end of World War II. The British writer George Orwell summed up the general feeling when he wrote, "Since about 1930, the world had given no reason for optimism whatsoever. Nothing in sight except a welter of lies, cruelty, hatred, and ignorance." Unlike the period immediately following World War I, few people now believed that another total war was inconceiv-

able. Many writers and artists seemed overwhelmed with pessimism, even hopelessness, in the face of the atomic age and the Cold War (see Chapter 28). Claiming “alienation” from the society they increasingly criticized, many Western intellectuals withdrew into introspection. However, for some, communism still seemed to offer a plan for the harmonious organization of society.

French existentialism became an influential cultural current during the first two decades following the war. The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) believed that in the wake of the unparalleled destruction of World War II, the absurdity of life was the most basic discovery one could make. Denying the existence of God, existentialists like Sartre posited that life has no meaning. Their conclusion was that a person could only truly find any fulfillment while living “a suspended death” by becoming aware of his or her freedom to choose and to act. Sartre titled one of his plays *Huis clos* (*No Exit*), as he believed there was nothing beyond this life. Sartre’s novels glorify the individual spirit seeking freedom, not through Enlightenment rationalism, but rather through a comprehension of life’s irrationality. However, Sartre believed that violent revolution could free the individual from the human condition by allowing him or her to find truth by redefining reality. To this end, he joined the French Communist Party when the war was over. However, existentialism slowly lost its grip on French intellectual life, at least in part because of growing disillusionment with the Soviet Union among many leftist intellectuals.

The Algerian-born French writer Albert Camus (1913–1960) shared Sartre’s view of mankind’s tragic situation, but broke with Sartre in 1952 over the latter’s enthusiasm for Stalin’s Soviet Union. Camus’s answer to the dark world of brutality reflected by the war (during which he participated in the resistance) and the frustrations of the post-war period was for the individual to search for meaning in life by choosing a path of action—even revolt—against absurdity, irrationality, and tyrannies of all kinds. The rebel should act, according to Camus, from a personal sense of responsibility and moral choice independent of belief in God or in a political system. Confronting the arrival of murderous disease in the Algerian city of Oran, Dr. Rieux, the central figure in Camus’s *The Plague* (1947), does not believe in God or absolute standards of morality, but he nonetheless helps people respond to the epidemic.

The “theater of the absurd,” which also reflected intellectuals’ reaction to the horrors of the war, was centered in Paris from 1948 to about 1968. It offered highly unconventional and anti-rational plays. The Irish-born Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) and other playwrights sought to shock audiences with provocative themes and by stringing together seemingly unrelated events and dialogue to demonstrate that existence is without purpose—absurd. They rejected plots, conventional settings, and individual identities. Their clownish, mechanical characters are perpetual exiles alienated in a bizarre, nightmarish world that makes no sense. The lack of causality in these plays is a



A gathering of intellectuals after the war, including Jean-Paul Sartre (seated left), Albert Camus (seated center), Pablo Picasso (standing with arms folded), and Simone de Beauvoir (to the far right and standing next to some of Picasso's work).

commentary on life itself. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (begun in 1948 but not published in French until 1952 and in English two years later) tells a disconnected tale of two old derelicts, Vladimir and Estragon (although they call themselves by childish nicknames). They meet night after night in anticipation of the arrival of a certain Godot (perhaps intended to be a diminutive of God), though it is never clear what difference in their lives his arrival would ever make, if any. He never comes, so we never know.

Anti-Americanism emerged as a current among many European intellectuals in the post-war period. This reflected hostility to U.S. foreign and nuclear policy during the Cold War and fear of American domination of NATO. The U.S. placement of nuclear weapons in Western Europe, beginning in West Germany in 1955, generated both anti-nuclear organizations and protests. Intellectuals also criticized U.S. culture as reeking of vulgar materialism. There was an economic dimension to this struggle, as U.S. companies and products dramatically augmented their presence in Western Europe. None generated more controversy than Coca-Cola. During the early 1950s, the French government feared the competition that Coke could give the wine industry. Encouraged by the powerful wine lobby, the French government tried—ultimately without success—to keep Coke from the French market.

Yet Europe also continued to embrace some aspects of U.S. culture. World War II brought only a brief hiatus in the export to Europe of Hollywood films, which audiences flocked to see. American film stars became those of the continent (at the same time, some European actors and actresses, such as Richard Burton, Marlene Dietrich, Sophia Loren, Audrey Hepburn, and Elizabeth Taylor became stars in the United States). Yet Western European filmmakers made important contributions to cinema. While most American film producers emphasized light entertainment (such as westerns and war movies with special effects), Italy's Federico Fellini (*La Strada*, 1956, and *La Dolce Vita*, 1959) and Sweden's Ingmar Bergman (*The Seventh Seal*, 1956) turned out serious art films. French New Wave directors, including Jean-Luc Godard (*Breathless*, 1959) and François Truffaut (*400 Blows*, 1959), rebelled against traditional cinematographic techniques, using innovations such as jump cuts and disruptive editing to create a sense of dislocation. Their experimental films explored human relationships and often portrayed antiheroes. In contrast, the English producer and director Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980) frightened and intrigued generations of audiences with riveting suspense films like *Psycho* (1960).

In France, some films took subjects from recent and sometimes painful history, notably Gilles Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (1961), in which appeared some actual participants of the Algerian insurrection (see pp. 1169–1171), to which the film is sympathetic. Marcel Orphuls's documentary about collaboration and resistance in World War II France, *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1969), helped spur the rethinking of the extent of French collaboration with the Nazis during the Vichy years.

Intellectuals of the left were preoccupied by the possibilities of social liberation. Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), a black French social critic from Martinique, explored the revolutionary potential of the Third World, some of which were unaligned in the Cold War, in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). The French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–) espoused cultural relativism, moving anthropology away from a Western-centered view of “peripheral” or “underdeveloped” regions with his work on Brazil and Southeast Asia. Lévi-Strauss's interest in how communities behave, too, led away from the emphasis on the individual that characterized both Freudianism and existentialism.

Intellectuals in the Soviet Union were stymied by the state. Writers, artists, and filmmakers confronted a state apparatus that made the costs of free expression so high that voluntary adherence to state-dictated norms followed. “Socialist realism” (art and literature of generally horrendous quality, intended to inspire the population by showing smiling Soviet citizens at work; see Chapter 25) was the only authorized form of artistic expression; the works of most Western artists were condemned as tools of capitalism. Art was intended to encourage devotion to and sacrifice for the state. Stalin gave official approval to the crackpot theories of the geneticist Trofim Lysenko (1898–1976), who insisted that knowledge or beliefs that were experienced

by one generation could be genetically inherited. Stalin's particular interest in this theory was that it suggested that party members who learned official orthodoxy and experienced conformity in social behavior would pass on the same characteristics to their offspring.

Advances for Women

In the decades following World War II, the status of women gradually improved, although their situation varied across the continent. While women lost some skilled jobs to men returning from service after the war, economic expansion and the creation of more white-collar jobs provided new employment possibilities. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) helped mobilize movements for the rights of women in the United States and, more slowly, in Europe. In Western countries, the important contribution of working women made it difficult to continue to deny half the population the right to vote. After the war, women received the suffrage in France, Italy, Belgium, and Portugal. Women probably were more equal in the countries of the Soviet bloc (where there were no free elections) in terms of employment opportunities, although in practice this often meant that they bore the dual burden of wage earning and domestic duties. In the Soviet Union and Sweden, women made up more than half of all employees, and more than a third in every European country. In Western Europe, more and more middle-class women began to work full-time. Beginning in 1977, French women no longer needed their husbands' permission to work. In Communist countries, women more easily entered the medical profession, but men dominated the state bureaucracies. Women were most successful in reaching rough equality in the Scandinavian countries, least so in the Mediterranean lands where traditional biases remained difficult to overcome.

At the same time, the number of female university students rose dramatically, and so did the number of women in the professions. Women received legal protection against job discrimination in England in the late 1960s, and in France the government created a Ministry for the Status of Women.

Feminism, reviving during the 1968 protests, helped the cause of women's rights. Gradually, the percentage of women serving in legislatures increased. Moreover, gays and lesbians gained more rights beginning in the 1970s, even if some countries retained laws permitting discrimination against them.

Catholicism in Modern Europe

Like the nations of Western Europe, the Catholic Church, for centuries a major force in European life, has been forced to confront pressure for change. Within the Catholic Church, a liberal current of thought and action developed in response to some of the social problems of modern life. "Worker

priests" entered factories in the 1950s, trying to win back workers to the Church while supporting their demands for better working conditions, until the pope condemned the movement. The election in 1958 of the more liberal Pope John XXIII signaled a new direction, marked by the opening of dialogue with other religions. Pope John presided over a council (Vatican II) that undertook significant changes in Church practices, allowing the Mass to be said in local languages and appointing more cardinals from other places than Europe and North America, without altering dogma.

Pope John's successor Paul VI continued the move toward ecumenism, visiting Istanbul and Jerusalem to meet with leaders of the Eastern Orthodox churches. But several notable theologians who challenged Church doctrine drew the wrath of Rome. In 1978, Paul died, as did his successor, John Paul I, after only two months on the throne of Saint Peter. The puffs of white smoke rising from the Vatican chimney then announced the first non-Italian pope since the sixteenth century, the Polish-born Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla, 1920–2005; succeeded by Benedict XVI). While remaining conservative on matters of faith and doctrine, the new pope traveled far and wide across the world, calling for social justice. He became a symbol of hope for millions of oppressed people. If the percentages of Catholics practicing their religion fell rapidly in France, Italy, and Spain, the Catholic Church retained particular allegiance in Poland, Croatia, Portugal, and Ireland. Yet even these solidly Catholic countries legalized divorce, despite ecclesiastical opposition.

An industrial chaplain speaks with a factory worker in Scotland, in an effort to liberalize the Catholic Church and bring it into modern life.



Europe rapidly urbanized following World War II. In the German industrial Rhineland, it became difficult to tell where one city ended and another began. Giant cities like London and Paris engulfed their surrounding regions. In Eastern Europe, the population living in cities increased from 37.5 million at the end of the 1940s to 58 million twenty years later.

The necessity of housing millions of new urban residents contributed to a uniformity of architectural style. Tall, drab, uniform towers filled with small apartments sprang up in and around major urban centers, providing adequate lodging, but not much more, in cramped quarters with thin walls. Commuting became a fact of urban life in much of Europe. By the 1980s, almost 20 percent of the French population resided in Paris and its surroundings. Of this 20 percent, only about 3 million lived in the City of Light itself, the rest inhabiting sprawling suburbs.

In the early 1960s, the Soviets began to build new suburbs and satellite towns to accommodate the population seeking to live in Moscow, which grew from 2 million in 1926 to more than 5 million in 1959. Leningrad's population increased from 1.7 million to 3.3 million during the same period.

Rapid urban growth, closely tied to the concentration of large-scale industries, posed problems of health and safety. Factories increasingly polluted the air of industrial regions. Moreover, the number of cars on the road increased from 5 million in 1948 to 44 million in 1965. The construction of new freeways and toll roads could not begin to keep up with the increase in traffic. The traffic jam in Europe began, as cities became increasingly clogged with automobiles, which also polluted the air. Nonetheless, projects of urban renewal enhanced the quality of life in cities and towns. West German, Belgian, French, and Dutch cities, among others, sported shining urban centers, with some streets reserved for beleaguered pedestrians tired of dodging onrushing cars and the aggressive chaos of honking horns.

Living Better

The transportation and communications revolutions made the world a much smaller place. With a gradual reduction in the workday and higher wages, families had more time and money for leisure. Travel became an essential part of life. Air travel gradually linked European cities to each other and to other continents. With the introduction of the passenger jet in the late 1950s, the airplane replaced the passenger ship for cross-Atlantic travel. The era of the shipboard romance was over.

The rapid rise of international tourism offers another example of economic globalization. Jumbo jets greatly increased the number of passengers who could be squeezed into a single plane, reducing the cost of tickets. The era of the charter flight began in the 1960s. Tourists from the United States and, beginning in the 1980s, from Japan, arrived in Europe

in droves. North American, Asian, and African destinations became more common for Europeans.

The French and British governments collaborated on the development of the supersonic Concorde, which, in the late 1970s, began to fly a small number of extremely wealthy passengers from Paris and London to New York and Washington, D.C., in three hours and fifteen minutes, less than half the time of a regular jet. However, an aging fleet, a disastrous crash near a Paris airport, and years of financial losses ended supersonic travel by Concorde in 2003. Far more successful, the first high-speed trains (the TGVs) began service in France in 1981. They carry passengers in comfort at speeds well over 170 miles per hour. Other countries, too, developed fast trains. In 1994, the "Chunnel" opened, a thirty-mile tunnel linking France and Great Britain by trains running under the English Channel, putting London little more than two hours away from Paris and Brussels.

Beginning in the 1960s, millions of Europeans began to take to the road, above all in July and August, many heading toward the sunny beaches of southern Europe. Paid vacations became an expected part of the "good life." Tourism became essential to the economies of France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Greece.

American consumerism and popular culture found increasing favor in European societies. Supermarkets began to put many small grocery stores out of business. American words and terms crept into European languages. Tennis shoes and tee-shirts swept Europe, and so did American television shows. By the late 1970s, McDonald's had begun to dot European capitals and gradually smaller cities as well. In the 1980s, EuroDisney (now called Disneyland-Paris), opened its doors outside of Paris. One French theatrical director called it "a cultural Chernobyl" (referring to the nuclear accident in Ukraine in 1986). In the first decade of the new century, Starbuck's cafés began to arrive in Europe in increasing numbers.

Communications also underwent an amazing revolution in Europe as elsewhere. Household telephones became more common in the 1960s in most of Western Europe. Forty years later, cell phones had taken over, increasingly putting telephone booths out of business. (Reacting to the annoyance of people shouting into portable phones on trains and street corners and in restaurants, or while driving, one wag noted that he had had great faith in humanity until the arrival of the cell phone.) The cost of transatlantic phone calls fell rapidly with the advent of optical fiber in the 1980s. Then in the 1990s the computer revolution and the Internet put a world of information at the fingertips of Europeans, as well as people almost everywhere.

Television helped shape a mass consumer culture, catapulting entertainers to fame and making household names of politicians who could be heard instead of simply imagined. The first television sets had been viewed at the World's Fair in New York City in 1939. By the late 1960s, a majority of Western European households had a television, and by the mid-1970s, relatively



Delivering Coca-Cola in Venice.

few were without one. In the mid-1980s, the U.S.-based CNN network began to reach across the world. Just as television coverage of dramatic news events could be seen around the world, so sports took on an increasingly global dimension as well (above all, the World Cup and the Olympics, but also games of the National Basketball Association, with the globalization of that sport).

The era of television and radio ended the great age of the newspaper. During the first years after the war, Europeans read more—and arguably better—newspapers than ever before or since. As Europeans increasingly received their news and their entertainment from television and radio, however, newspapers merged and many folded. With the exception of the stately, serious dailies like *Le Monde* of Paris, the British *Manchester Guardian*, the German *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, and *La Stampa* of Milan, an increasing number of tabloid papers relied upon sensationalism, scandals, and the proclamation of juicy unsubstantiated rumor as truth to attract readers. In the Soviet Union, where the state was the only source of printed news, more than 7 million copies of *Pravda* were printed every day.

Credit cards and then personal computers transformed the way people make purchases. In the context of the ongoing revolution in communications, the advent of computer viruses demonstrated the extent to which the world has become increasingly interconnected. The apparent vulnerability of even the most sophisticated computer systems to knowledgeable hackers has led to fears for national security systems. In this way, too, Europe entered a new era.

Oil and the Global Economy

The Six-Day Arab-Israeli War of 1967 and the 1973 Yom Kippur War both resulted in easy Israeli victories over their Arab rivals. Israel now held all of Jerusalem, a holy city for Christians, Jews, and Arabs, and occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While the United States has almost always supported Israeli actions, the plight of the stateless Palestinian people has attracted the attention of Arab states, in particular. In 1973, following a short, unsuccessful war against Israel by its Arab neighbors, the oil-producing Arab states began an embargo of the supply of oil from the Middle East; it was undertaken by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The Arab oil embargo led to a rapid rise in the price of oil and contributed to the high inflation that undermined Western economies for the rest of the 1970s. Dependency on oil led states to urge people to consume less gasoline (for example, by encouraging greater use of public transportation and, in the United States, by reducing speed limits). Britain and Norway each began to extract oil in the stormy North Sea. Some European countries, especially France, had already begun to develop nuclear installations to generate more energy.

The oil crisis helped bring an end to what had been a long period of relative prosperity and stability. The subsequent rising energy prices undermined

British motorists waiting for gasoline during the Arab oil embargo in 1973. The sign on the left indicates that French motorists are welcome to wait as well.



the ability of European states to support their extensive social services. The oil crisis also helped cause the economic recession that gripped Western Europe from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. Inflation, which had been at modest levels during the 1950s and 1960s but had been accentuated by the U.S. war in Vietnam, then began to soar. The oil embargo brought unemployment, which also strained European welfare budgets.

CONCLUSION

The end of World War II engendered two major changes that largely defined international politics for the next decades. First, the post-war division of Europe into zones of U.S. influence in the West and Soviet domination in the East brought a Cold War between the two superpowers, in which Western European states, Soviet Eastern European and Balkan satellites, and so-called Third World, or unaligned countries, most of them underdeveloped, became caught up. Second, sacrifices made by the colonies of the European great powers during the war—including military service and considerable loss of life—encouraged national liberation movements. These movements and the resistance they encountered from colonial powers led to a dramatic period of decolonization.