Chapter 28

Redefining the West After World War II

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Introduction

On August 13, 1961 East German workers built a barbed-wire fence dividing East and West Berlin. In some cases the dividing line ran right through apartment buildings. For several weeks the windows of these buildings provided a view between East and West Berlin though which people tried to escape the communist world. Like the people jumping through these windows to the west, Europeans found themselves caught between the influence of the United States and the Soviet Union in the decades of the Cold War.

II. The Cold War, the West and the World

A. Introduction

In the 1950s the possibility of a Third World War fought with nuclear weapons loomed over Europe.


In 1949–50 western fears of communist expansionism were heightened by the communist victory in China and the North Korean invasion of South Korea. The Korean War globalized the Cold War. North Korea was supplied by Soviet arms and Chinese communist soldiers. South Korea was assisted by a UN-sponsored force made up mostly of American troops. After three years of fighting, the war had stalemated. The existence of nuclear weapons on both sides imposed restraint since neither Stalin was willing to send the Red Army against U.S. nuclear power nor was Truman willing to start a nuclear confrontation. Fearful that the Korean War was the first step in Soviet aggression, Europeans leaders pushed for the transformation of NATO into a coordinated fighting force.

C. Bridges and Brinkmanship: The Cold War, 1953-1963

The decade after the death of Stalin Cold War politics oscillated between periods of bridge building and periods of brinkmanship. In 1953 the Eisenhower administration committed the U.S. to roll back communism and threatened nuclear retaliation against communist aggression. For his part, Khrushchev convinced allies and foes of the Soviet nuclear superiority. The realization by Eisenhower and Khrushchev that the hydrogen bomb made total war unwinnable led to a summit in 1955 and visits by Khrushchev to England (1956) and the U.S. (1958) and a Soviet suspension of nuclear testing. This
bridge building between east and west was interrupted in 1956 by the Soviet invasion of Hungary and in 1960 by the downing of a U.S. spy plane over Soviet territory. This last incident initiated a period of brinkmanship that would characterize the early 1960s. Both sides increased military spending. Most people expected the city of Berlin to be the starting point for a nuclear war. Since the end of World War II the city had been divided into an eastern occupation zone controlled by the Soviet Union and East Germany and a western occupation zone controlled by the U.S. and its allies. East Germans regularly crossed into the western sector to escape communist control. In 1961 the Soviet Union and East Germany decided to stop the crossing and build the Berlin Wall around the western zone. While western governments increased defense spending and civil defense preparedness, war did not break out. The next danger point was the Cuba Missile Crisis in October 1962. In 1959 Fidel Castro had liberated Cuba from the U.S. backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Over the next two years, Castro drew closer to the Soviet Union which offered Cuba substantial economic and military aid. In 1962, U.S. spy planes found evidence that the Soviet Union was building nuclear bases in Cuba. The U.S. had nuclear bases in the Soviet border country of Turkey. Over a week of crisis, secret diplomatic negotiations reached a compromise between the two superpowers. The Soviet Union withdrew its missiles from Cuba and the U.S. guaranteed that it would not invade Cuba and removed its missiles from Turkey. The Cuban Missile Crisis marked a turning point in Cold War politics. Both superpowers agreed to an above ground Nuclear Test Band Treaty and a communications “hotline” to encourage personal consultation in future crisis.

D. Breaking the Blocks: The Cold War After the Crisis

The decade after the Cuban Missile Crisis was a period of bridge building. During the crisis European political leaders on both sides of the Iron Curtain found themselves powerless. The crisis accelerated efforts by the West European leaders to open diplomatic and economic relations with the Soviet Union and its satellites. After 1969, the new West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, initiated a new Ostpolitik with the east. In 1972 East and West Germany recognized each other. Brandt resolved the Berlin crisis, by recognizing that East Berlin would remain part of East Germany and the East German government guaranteed West Germans to have access to West Berlin. Growing economic problems in both superpowers led them to embrace détente as an effort to stabilize superpower relations. With both powers holding enough weapons to destroy the world several times, they agreed in 1972 to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks freezing the weapons at the current balance. The same period witnessed the division of the Communist world. China and the Soviet Union were at odds over Mao’s industrialization programs. In 1960 Khrushchev suspended economic aid to China, In 1963 China refused to sign the Test-Band Treaty and exploded its own nuclear bomb in 1964. By the end of the 1960s China and the Soviet Union faced each other across an armed border. In 1971 the U.S. took advantage of these Sin-Soviet hostilities to improve relations with China. U.S. President Richard Nixon lifted travel and trade restrictions with China and announced that he would visit China.

III. Imperial Encounters: Decolonization in a Cold War Context
A. Introduction

In the 1950s and 1960s the Soviet Union and the United States used economic and military aid and covert action to draw the newly independent states into their camp.

B. The End of Empire

World War II strengthened the nationalist movements in the colonies while eroding the economic and military resources needed by the European governments to hold their colonies. The European empires were not committed to decolonization and hoped to use their colonies to enhance their power in the new international order. The British empire opted for power sharing agreements and cracking down on nationalists rather than granting immediate independence. The result was that in the end nationalist leaders went from prison to become heads of government. France also resisted decolonization. In 1954 the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu in North Vietnam, but continued to resist the nationalist movement in Algeria. The Algerian War divided France and nearly plunged the country into civil war. Algeria became independent in 1962. Decolonization of Algeria resulted in the return of the white population to France along with 80,000 Algerians who had been tied to the French presence. Decolonization influenced the American Civil Rights Movement whose leaders could compare their struggle for rights with the struggle for colonial independence in Africa.

C. Imperialist Legacy

After decolonization the legacy of imperialism lingered on. In Rhodesia and South Africa the white settlers remained in control. In 1948 the Afrikaner National Party came to power in South Africa an imposed policies of apartheid which denied black South Africans basic civil rights. The economic legacy of imperialism is known as neo-colonialism. Although the Europeans’ imperial powers left, the economies of the former colonies continued to be involved in a dependent relationship with the West. The former colonies continued to produce raw materials for export, while they became dependent on the importation of manufactured goods. Democratic forms of government failed to take root in the former colonies. Within a few years military governments came to power in most former colonies.

D. Cold War Empires

Both superpowers played a role in the conflicts that broke out in the former colonies. The Soviet Union and the United States used military and economic aid and covert action to foster friendly governments in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In the Middle East the U.S. replaced France and England as the regional power broker, forcing both former colonial powers to back down in their attempt to keep control of the Suez Canal. In Vietnam the U.S. intervened directly in the war between the communist north and the anti-communist south. By 1966, 429,000 American soldiers were fighting in Vietnam. Many of the new nations tried to remain outside the orbit of either superpower. They came to be collectively known as the Third World. In 1955 the first conference of non-aligned nations was held in Indonesia. None of these non-aligned nations was able to hold much power.

IV. After Stalin: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the 1950s and 1960s
A. Introduction

Because of the Cold War division, Eastern and Western Europe followed separate courses. Both lived under the threat of nuclear war.

B. The Soviet Union: From Stalinization to Stagnation

Stalin died in 1953. His successor, Nikita Khrushchev, was determined to set communism on a new course. In a “Secret Speech” at the Communist Party’s Twentieth Party Congress in February 1963, he denounced Stalin’s crimes. The de-Stalinization campaign brought greater openness to communist countries. The governments allowed greater freedom of speech and publication. Dissent and debate reappeared. Four and a half million prisoners were released from the slave labor camps (Gulag). Political and cultural repression continued and in 1959 there were still at least a million prisoners in the Gulag. Religious persecution worsened under Khrushchev. De-Stalinization failed to resolve the economic weaknesses of the Soviet Union. Projects to increase agricultural production through greater mechanization, use of chemical fertilizers, and irrigation produced environment disasters. Khrushchev’s reforms unsettled many high-ranking officials and, as a result, in 1964 Khrushchev was forced out of office. His successor, Leonid Brezhnev, brought stability. He retained Khrushchev’s policies of free higher education, improving living standards, and greater availability of consumer goods. Growth in industrial production and labor productivity declined in the 1960s and stagnated in the 1970s. Brezhnev returned to rigid censorship and repression of dissents. However, dissents continued to make their voices heard by reviving the practice of self-publishing (samizdat) and circulating copies made by hand or duplicated on typewriters. Nationalism among non-Russians continued as a source of discontent inflamed by the immigration of Russians to areas inhabited by non-Russians.

C. Diversity and Dissent in Eastern Europe

In Eastern Europe various states developed along different parts despite the uniformity imposed by Soviet style communist regimes. In Poland protests in 1956 brought back to power Wladislaw Gomulka who had been purged in 1951. He abandoned collectivization, but kept Poland in the Warsaw Pact. The de-Stalinization reforms in Hungary under Imre Nagy slowed down collectivization and industrialization. When Hungary attempted to leave the Warsaw Pact, however, Soviet troops invaded and crushed all resistance. Nagy’s successor, Janos Kadar, who had been purged by Stalin, allowed greater economic freedom and initiative then other Eastern European countries. Romania experienced one-person dictatorships under Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceausescu. Except in Romania, the standard of living improved, there was greater availability of consumer goods, and educational opportunities increased.

D. Prague 1968: The Destruction of Socialism with a Human Face

During the 1960s reform efforts emerged within the Czechoslovakian Communist Party. In 1968 these efforts merged with popular protest to produce a revolution within the Party that brought to power Alexander Dubcek. He began to expand basic freedoms and decentralize the economy. The result was the “Prague Spring”. Dubcek assured Brezhnev that he would not attempt to leave the Warsaw Pact. As Czech reform ideas began to produce calls for reform in surrounding countries, including the Soviet Union,
the members of the other members of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia and crushed the Prague Spring. Brezhnev proclaimed the Brezhnev Doctrine stipulating the Red Army would be used to stomp out revolution in any eastern European country.

V. The West: Integration and Affluence

A. Introduction

Cold War concerns helped shape postwar society in Western Europe. Material prosperity returned to western European economy.

B. The Triumph of Political Consensus

In Western Europe and the U.S., the Cold War constricted political debate. In the U.S. charges by Senator Joseph McCarthy about communist infiltration of the State Department, the entertainment industry, and the universities produced mass–hysteria. The Communist Party was outlawed in West Germany in 1956. In France and Italy, the Communist Party drew 20-30% of the vote, but remained out of power. The Cold War put pressure on Social Democrats to abandoned Marxist ideology. At the same time, the discrediting of the extreme right by World War II, led the Christian Democratic Parties to abandon authoritarianism. The result was that the Social Democratic Party and Christian Democratic Party agreed on the viability of parliamentary democracy and the need to use the power of government to improve the lives of the people. Post-war governments guaranteed adequate income and medical care to its citizens.

C. Economic Integration: The Common Market

The idea of a European union first appeared during World War II as people looked for ways to ensure peace. After the war, two events occurred that pushed the idea of greater European unity. First was the common opposition to Stalin. Second, was the Marshal Plan that required recipients to develop transnational institutions to oversee the distribution of American aid. Both Socialists and Christian Democrats promoted the idea of European economic unity. In 1952, France, Germany and the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg) created the Coal and Steel Community joining together their coal and steel industries. Their success led them to form the European Economic Community in 1957 creating a Common Market. The rapid expansion of trade among the members produced a flourishing economy. By contrast, Britain stayed out to preserve its preferential ties to the former colonies and struggled to compete.

D. The Age of Affluence

After years of depression and war-time rationing, the political consensus and economic expansion gave Europeans economic security which led to a spending spree. Many people were now able to buy homes and furnish them with the latest appliances.

VI. Culture and Society in the Age of Expansion

A. Introduction
The new affluence brought Europeans new possibilities as well as fear that materialism could restrict opportunities. Several cultural currents responded to the need to make sense of the new materialism.

B. Cultural Encounters: Americanization and Immigration

One of the most important cultural trends of postwar Europe was the Americanization of European culture. The U.S. dominated scientific research. It also dominated popular culture. The film and television industry was dominated by American films and programs. American music took over the airwaves. Many Europeans were troubled by the Americanization of European culture. However, adoption of American culture also meant transforming it. For example, the Beatles adopted American rock and roll and mixed it with their own styles to transform popular music in Europe and America. A second cultural trend was the growing presence of peoples in the periphery of southern Europe and the formed colonies in European industrialized countries. They provided the labor for the most dangerous and dirtiest jobs. At first they had come as single men who returned to their native countries. By the 1960s, they were coming as families. Their presence complicated domestic politics and raised troublesome questions about national and ethnic identity.

C. The Second Sex?

In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex* as a critique of gender division of society. Changes in the postwar years reinforced domesticity. In the postwar years women began marrying younger as well as having fewer children. Religious cultures of the 1950s, in particular the devotion to Mary, reinforced the maternal identity of women. The maternal image of women was reinforced also by the popular culture in the television programming which portrayed women as staying at home and presiding over an array of new machines that made her life easier. Also, the threatening destruction of a nuclear war made families more important. However, over the two postwar decades, the new prosperity also pushed women into higher education and the labor force. In part the expanding list of household necessities required women to work to pay for them. Women’s salary remained substantially lower than men’s.

D. High Culture in the Age of Consumption

Postwar culture continued many of the trends of the prewar years. Existentialist concerns about man living in a world without meaning requiring him to create his own meaning prevailed through the 1950s in the literature and the arts. The 1960s brought a post-modernist retreat from dealing with the horrors of World War II and the concerns of the Cold War. In its place appeared a concern with the effects of consumer abundance. This was shown in pop art which reflected the material rather than the spiritual. In the social thought the existentialist concerns about creating meaning were replaced by structuralism. The leading figure in the new movement was Claude Levi-Strauss. He argued that the myths of all cultures had the same “deep structures” and repeated patterns that give order to culture. Structuralists were interested in the web or structure that dictates how people understand the world.

E. Science and Religion in an Age of Mass Consumption
In science, the development of penicillin, new vaccines, and organ transplants made a long healthy life appear more possible. The Cold War inspired space race put a man in the moon in 1968 freeing man for the first time from the physical confines of the earth. In religion, the first decade and a half after the war saw an increase in participation in religious life. The 1960s saw a reversal and dramatic decline in religious activities. For the Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council called by Pope John XIII introduced important changes in religious practice including the use of vernacular languages in the worship services. Vatican II reaffirmed traditional church doctrines on clerical celibacy. Following the council, Pope Paul VI reaffirmed church teaching on contraception in *Humanae Vitae*.

F. 1968 and the End of the Post War Era

The year 1968 saw challenges to established norms in both eastern and western Europe. In the 1960s “New Left” thinkers began warning about the expansion of the state that threaten the individuality of the ordinary citizen. In eastern Europe the Prague Spring challenged Soviet domination. In western Europe, the U.S. and around the world students protestors influenced by New Left thinkers demanded the right for ordinary people to participate in the structures that determined their lives. The protestors moved beyond universities and began challenging the Cold War. They drew inspiration from Third World revolutionaries such as Ernesto Che Guevara and Frantz Fanon. The student protestors focused on economic and political issues such as environmentalism and feminism. After the protests subsided in the early 1970s, some groups became frustrated over the failure to bring about change and turned to terrorism.
TIMELINE

Insert the following events into the timeline. This should help you to compare important historical events chronologically.

Cuban Missile Crisis
Khrushchev begins De-Sterilization
The Second Sex published
Second Vatican Council Convened
EEC Formed
Prague Spring

1949
1956
1957
1962
1963
1968

TERMS, PEOPLE, EVENTS

The following terms, people, and events are important to your understanding of the chapter. Define each one.

Marshall Plan  Wladislaw Gomulka  brinkmanship
Common Market  Nikita Khrushchev  Brezhnev Doctrine
Konrad Adenaur  Imre Nagy  Berlin Wall
Charles de Gaulle  Simone de Beauvoir  Leonid Brezhnev
détente  samizdat  de-stalinization
Willy Brandt  Ostpolitik  apartheid
Third World  John XXIII  European Economic Community
pop art  structuralism  Humanae Vitae
neo-colonialism  Alexander Dubcek  Claude Levi-Strauss
Prague Spring  Christian Democratic parties  existentialism
Vatican II  New Left
MAP EXERCISE

The following exercise is intended to clarify the geophysical environment and the spatial relationships among the important objects and places mentioned in the chapter.

1. Locate the following places on the map:

   The 6 countries that were the original members of the EEC in 1957
   Hungary
   Czechoslovakia
   Poland
   Romania
MAKING CONNECTIONS

The following questions are intended to emphasize important ideas within the chapter.

1. What place did eastern and western European have in the Cold War? How was the Cold War globalized?

2. How did Social Democrats and Christian Democrats change their positions after the war? What social programs did they implement to improve the quality of life?

3. What was Ostpolitik? How did it relate to the position of European countries in the Cold War?

4. What was détente? How was it related changes in the two superpowers?

5. What was neo-colonialism?

6. How did de-Stalinization affect eastern Europe and Russia?

7. How did American culture impact European culture after World War II? How did the growing affluence change European behavior?

DOCUMENTS QUESTIONS

The following questions test your ability to interpret the primary source documents in the textbook.

1. According to Frantz Fanon, how did colonizing capitalist behave toward the colonized peoples?

2. How does the standard of living enjoyed by the character Arthur and his family compare with their life before the war?

PUTTING LARGER CONCEPTS TOGETHER

1. Discuss de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union giving your own views on what plans might have worked better.

2. What changes were made within the Roman Catholic Church during the years of the Cold War? What impact did these have on society?
SELF-TEST OF FACTUAL INFORMATION

1. Which of the following events globalize the Cold War in the early 1950s?
   a. Hungarian Revolution
   b. Korean War
   c. Prague Spring
   d. Cuban Missile Crisis

2. The first nuclear test-ban treaty was signed in
   a. 1956.
   b. 1962.
   c. 1963.
   d. 1968.

3. Which of the following is an example of brinkmanship during the Cold War?
   a. Dien Bien Phu
   b. Ostopilitik
   c. Détente
   d. Cuban Missile Crisis

4. In the Brezhnev Doctrine, the Soviet Union
   a. accepted the nuclear dominance of the United States and promised to lessen nuclear tension.
   b. promised to permit political deviation from Communism in nations of the Warsaw Pact.
   c. promised to use the Red Army to stomp out in Communist countries of Eastern Europe.
   d. offered to end the Cold War.

5. Which of the following leaders led Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring take place?
   a. Władysław Gomułka
   b. Alexander Dubček
   c. Imre Nagy
   d. Willy Brandt
6. Which of the following was NOT a factor in the political success of the Christian Democratic Parties?
   
   a. abandoning Marxism.
   b. strong anticommunist position.
   c. abandoning of authoritarianism.
   d. They were based on religion rather than class.

7. Which of the following best describes the welfare state?
   
   a. states in which the entire population required government assistance
   b. states with social programs intended to provide security from the challenges of health and unemployment
   c. states that guaranteed equality to everyone, regardless of sex or age
   d. states that insisted on free-market economics and generally left social programs up to local communities

8. Which of the following promoted economic unity by joining the economy of six European countries into a Free Trade zone?
   
   a. Marshall Plan
   b. The Warsaw Pact
   c. European Economic Community
   d. The Eastern Bloc

9. Which of the following Pope sought to modernize the Catholic Church by convening the Second Vatican Council?
   
   a. Pius XI
   b. Pius XII
   c. John XXIII
   d. Paul IV

10. Which of the following was NOT a feature of postwar Europe culture?
    
    a. Americanization of popular culture
    b. a concern with the structures that define the world
    c. mass consumption
    d. emphasis on thrift and saving