Europe and the Western Hemisphere Since 1945

CHAPTER OUTLINE
AND FOCUS QUESTIONS

Recovery and Renewal in Europe
What problems have the nations of Western Europe faced since 1945, and what steps have they taken to try to solve these problems? What problems have Eastern European nations faced since 1989?

Emergence of the Superpower: The United States
What political, social, and economic changes has the United States experienced since 1945?

The Development of Canada
What political, social, and economic developments has Canada experienced since 1945?

Latin America Since 1945
What problems have the nations of Latin America faced since 1945, and what role has Marxist ideology played in their efforts to solve these problems?

Society and Culture in the Western World
What major social, cultural, and intellectual developments have occurred in Western Europe and North America since 1945?

CRITICAL THINKING

What were the similarities and differences between the major political, economic, and social developments in the first half of the twentieth century and those in the second half of the century?

THE END OF WORLD WAR II in Europe had been met with great joy. One visitor in Moscow reported, "I looked out of the window [at 2:00 A.M.]; almost everywhere there were lights in the windows—people were staying awake. Everyone embraced everyone else; someone sobbed aloud." But after the victory parades and celebrations, Europeans awoke to a devastating realization: their civilization was in ruins. Almost 40 million people (both soldiers and civilians) had been killed over the last six years. Massive air raids and artillery bombardments had reduced many of the great cities of Europe to heaps of rubble. The Polish capital of Warsaw had been almost completely obliterated. An American general described Berlin: "Wherever we looked, we saw desolation. It was like a city of the dead. Suffering and shock were visible in every face. Dead bodies still remained in canals and lakes and were being dug out from under bomb debris." Millions of Europeans faced starvation as grain harvests were only half what they had been in 1939. Millions were also homeless.

Yet by 1970, Europe had not only recovered from the devastating effects of World War II but had experienced an economic resurgence that seemed nothing less than miraculous. Economic growth and virtually full employment continued so long that the first postwar recession, in 1973, came as a shock. It was short-lived, however, and economic growth resumed. Important to this economic expansion was the creation of the welfare state—a prominent social development in postwar Europe. After the collapse of Communist governments in the revolutions of 1989, a number of Eastern European states sought to create market economies and join the military and economic unions first formed by Western European states.

The most significant development after 1945 was the emergence of the United States as the world’s richest and
most powerful nation. American prosperity reached new heights in the two decades after World War II, but a series of economic and social problems—including racial tensions and staggering budget deficits—left an imposing array of obstacles.

Latin America, to the south of the United States, had its own unique heritage. Although some Latin Americans in the nineteenth century had looked to the United States as a model for their own development, in the twentieth century many strongly criticized the United States for its military and economic domination of their countries. And even though they had escaped the turmoil of World War II, many Latin American countries struggled with economic and political instability in the postwar years.

Toward the end of the century, as the West adjusted from Cold War to post–Cold War realities, other changes were also shaping the Western outlook. The demographic face of European countries changed as massive numbers of immigrants introduced greater ethnic diversity. New artistic and intellectual currents, the continued advance of science and technology, the coming to grips with environmental problems, the surge of the women’s liberation movement—all reflected a vibrant, ever-changing world. At the same time, a devastating series of terrorist attacks made the Western world vividly aware of its vulnerability to international terrorism.

Recovery and Renewal in Europe

FOCUS QUESTIONS: What problems have the nations of Western Europe faced since 1945, and what steps have they taken to try to solve these problems? What problems have Eastern European nations faced since 1989?

All the nations of Europe faced similar problems at the end of World War II. First and foremost, they needed to rebuild their shattered economies. Remarkably, within a few years after the defeat of Germany and Italy, an incredible economic revival brought renewed growth to Western Europe.

Western Europe: The Triumph of Democracy

With the economic aid of the Marshall Plan, the countries of Western Europe recovered relatively rapidly from the devastation of World War II. Between the early 1950s and the late 1970s, industrial production surpassed all previous records, and Western Europe experienced virtually full employment.

FRANCE: FROM DE GAULLE TO NEW UNCERTAINTIES The history of France for nearly a quarter-century after the war was dominated by one man—Charles de Gaulle (SHAHL duh GOHL) (1890–1970). The founding of the Fourth Republic, with a parliamentary system based on parties that de Gaulle considered weak, led him to withdraw for a while from politics. In 1958, however, frightened by the bitter divisions within France caused by the Algerian crisis (see Chapter 29), the panic-stricken leaders of the Fourth Republic offered to let de Gaulle take over the government and revise the constitution.

De Gaulle’s constitution for the Fifth Republic greatly enhanced the power of the president, who now had the right to choose the prime minister, dissolve parliament, and supervise both national defense and foreign policy. Once elected to that office, de Gaulle sought to return France to the status of a great power. With that goal in mind, he invested heavily in the nuclear arms race. France exploded its first nuclear bomb in 1960. Nevertheless, de Gaulle did not really achieve his ambitious goals; in truth, France was too small for such global ambitions.

During de Gaulle’s presidency, the French gross domestic product experienced an annual increase of 5.5 percent, greater than that of the United States. France became a major industrial producer and exporter, particularly in such areas as automobiles and armaments. But the expansion of traditional industries, such as coal, steel, and railroads, which had all been nationalized, led to large government deficits. The cost of living rose faster in France than in the rest of Europe. Increased dissatisfaction led to a series of student protests in May 1968, followed by a general strike by the labor unions. Although he restored order, de Gaulle became discouraged, resigned from office in April 1969, and died the next year.

The worsening of France’s economic situation in the 1970s brought a political shift to the left. By 1981, the Socialists had
become the dominant party in the National Assembly, and the Socialist leader, François Mitterrand (frªnh-SWAH MEE-tayr-rahn) (1916–1995), was elected president. Mitterrand passed a number of measures to aid workers: a higher minimum wage, expanded social benefits, a mandatory fifth week of paid vacation for salaried workers, and a thirty-nine-hour workweek. The victory of the Socialists led them to enact some of their more radical reforms: the government nationalized the steel industry, major banks, the space and electronics industries, and important insurance firms.

The Socialist policies largely failed to work, however, and within three years, a decline in support for the Socialists caused the Mitterrand government to reprivatize portions of the economy. But France’s economic decline continued. In 1993, French unemployment stood at 10.6 percent, and in the elections in March of that year, the Socialists won only 28 percent of the vote; a coalition of conservative parties ended up with 80 percent of the seats. The move to the right was strengthened when the conservative mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac (ZHAK shee-RAK) (b. 1932), was elected president in May 1995 and reelected in 2002. As high unemployment rates fueled resentment against foreign-born residents, many French voters called for restrictions on all new immigration. Chirac himself pursued a plan of sending illegal immigrants back to their home countries.

In the fall of 2005, however, antiforeign sentiment provoked a backlash of its own as young Muslims in the crowded suburbs of Paris rioted against dismal living conditions and the lack of employable opportunities for foreign residents in France. After the riots subsided, government officials promised to adopt measures to respond to the complaints, but tensions between the Muslim community and the remainder of the French population have become a chronic source of social unrest throughout the country—an unrest that Nicolas Sarkozy (nee-kohl-AH sar-koh-ZEE) (b. 1955), elected president in 2007, promised to address but without much success. In 2009, unemployment among those under age twenty-five was almost 22 percent, but in the suburbs that are home to many Muslims, youth joblessness exceeded 50 percent.

**FROM WEST GERMANY TO ONE GERMANY** As noted in Chapter 26, the three Western zones of Germany were unified as the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. Konrad Adenauer (AD-uh-now-ur) (1876–1967), the leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), served as chancellor from 1949 to 1963 and became the Federal Republic’s “founding hero.” Adenauer sought respect for postwar Germany by cooperating with the United States and the other Western European nations.

Adenauer’s chancellorship is largely associated with the resurrection of the West German economy, even today regarded as a modern miracle. Although West Germany had only 52 percent of the territory of prewar Germany, by 1955 the West German gross domestic product exceeded that of prewar Germany. Real wages doubled between 1950 and 1965. Unemployment fell from 8 percent in 1950 to 0.4 percent in 1965.

After the Adenauer era, German voters moved politically from the center-right of the Christian Democrats to center-left politics; in 1969, the Social Democrats became the leading party. The first Social Democratic chancellor was Willy Brandt (VIH-ee BRAHNT) (1913–1992), who was especially successful with his “opening toward the east”—known as Ostpolitik (OHST-pooh-lee-tek)—for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1972. On March 19, 1971, Brandt worked out the details of a treaty with East Germany (the former Russian zone) that led to greater cultural, personal, and economic contacts between West and East Germany.

In 1982, the Christian Democratic Union of Helmut Kohl (HEL-moot KOHL) (b. 1930) formed a new center-right government. Kohl was a clever politician who benefited greatly from an economic boom in the mid-1980s and the 1989 revolution in East Germany, which led in 1990 to the long-awaited reunification of the two Germanies, making the new restored Germany, with its 79 million people, the leading power in Europe.

But the excitement over reunification soon dissipated as new problems arose. All too soon, the realization set in that the revitalization of eastern Germany would take far more money than was originally thought, and Kohl’s government was soon forced to face the politically undesirable task of raising taxes substantially. Moreover, the virtual collapse of the economy in eastern Germany led to extremely high levels of unemployment and severe discontent. East Germans were also haunted by another memory from their recent past. The opening of the files of the secret police—the Stasi (SHTAH-see)—revealed that millions of East Germans had spied on their neighbors and colleagues, and even their spouses and parents, during the Communist era (see the Film & History feature on p. 824). A few senior Stasi officials were put on trial for their past actions, but many Germans preferred simply to close the door on that unhappy period in their lives and face the challenges of the future.

As the century neared its close, then, Germans struggled to cope with the challenge of building a united nation. To reduce the debt incurred for economic reconstruction in the east, the government threatened to cut back on many of the social benefits West Germans had long been accustomed to receiving. This in turn sharpened resentments that were already beginning to emerge between western and eastern Germany.

In 1998, voters took out their frustrations at the ballot box. Helmut Kohl’s conservative coalition was defeated, and a new prime minister, Social Democrat Gerhard Schröder (GAYR-hahr SHRUR-duh) (b. 1944), came into office. But Schröder had little success at solving Germany’s economic woes, and as a result of elections in 2005, Angela Merkel (AHNG-uh-luh MERK-uhhl) (b. 1954), leader of the Christian Democrats, became the first female chancellor in German history. Merkel pursued health care reform and new energy policies at home while taking a leading role in the affairs of the European Union. After new elections in 2009, she began a second term as Germany’s chancellor.

**THE DECLINE OF GREAT BRITAIN** The end of World War II left Britain with massive economic problems. In elections held immediately after the war, the Labour Party overwhelmingly
FILM & HISTORY


Directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, The Lives of Others, which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, is a German film (Das Leben der Anderen) that brilliantly re-creates the depressing debilitation of East German society under its Communist regime, and especially the Stasi, the secret police. Georg Dreyman (Sebastian Koch) is a successful playwright in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Although he is a dedicated socialist who has not offended the authorities, they try to determine whether he is completely loyal by wiretapping his apartment, where he lives with his girlfriend, Christa-Maria Sieland (Martina Gedeck), an actress in some of Dreyman’s plays. Captain Gerd Wiesler (Ulrich Mühe) of the Stasi takes charge of the spying operation. He is the epitome of the perfect functionary—a cold, calculating, dedicated professional who is convinced he is building a better society and is only too eager to fight the “enemies of socialism.” But as he listens to the everyday details of Dreyman’s life, Wiesler begins to develop a conscience and becomes sympathetic to the writer. After a close friend of Dreyman’s commits suicide, Dreyman turns against the Communist regime and writes an article on the alarming number of suicides in East German society for Der Spiegel, a West German magazine. Though the article is published anonymously, Lieutenant Colonel Grubitz (Ulrich Tukur), Wiesler’s boss, suspects that Dreyman is the author. His girlfriend is brought in for questioning and provides some damning information about Dreyman’s involvement. Horrified by what she has done, she commits suicide, but Wiesler, who is now determined to save Dreyman, fudges his reports and protects him from being arrested. Wiesler’s boss suspects what Wiesler has done and demotes him. The film ends after the fall of the Berlin Wall when the new German government opens the Stasi files. When Dreyman reads his file, he realizes how Wiesler saved him and writes a book dedicated to him.

The film brilliantly re-creates the stifling atmosphere of East Germany under Communist rule. The Stasi had about 90,000 employees but also recruited a network of hundreds of thousands of informers who submitted secret reports on their friends, family, bosses, and coworkers. Some volunteered the information, but as the film makes clear, others were bribed or blackmailed into collaborating with the authorities. As the movie demonstrates, the Stasi were experts at wiretapping dwellings and compiling detailed written reports about what they heard, including conversations, arguments, jokes, and even sexual activities. Ironically, Ulrich Mühe, who plays Captain Wiesler in the film, was an East German who himself had been spied on by the Stasi.

The Lives of Others has been praised by East Germans for accurately depicting the drab environment of their country and the role of the Stasi in fostering a society riddled by secrecy, fear, and the abuse of power. The dangers of governments that monitor their citizens are apparent and quite relevant in an age of legislation infringing on personal privacy in an attempt to fight terrorism. The police state is revealed for what it is, a soulless, hollow world with no redeeming features or values.

defeated Churchill’s Conservatives. Labour had promised far-reaching reforms, particularly in the area of social welfare, and in a country with a tremendous shortage of consumer goods and housing, its platform was quite appealing. The new Labour government under Clement Attlee (1883–1967) proceeded to turn Britain into a modern welfare state.

The process began with the nationalization of the Bank of England, the coal and steel industries, public transportation, and public utilities, such as electricity and gas. In 1946, the new government established a comprehensive social security program and nationalized medical insurance, thereby enabling the state to subsidize the unemployed, the sick, and the aged. The health act established a system of socialized medicine that forced doctors and dentists to work with state hospitals, although private practices could be maintained. The British welfare state became the model for most European nations after the war.

Despite economic problems, however, brought the Conservatives back into power from 1951 to 1964. Although the British economy had recovered from the war, its slow
rate of improvement reflected a long-term economic decline. The war had cost Britain much of its prewar revenues from abroad but left a burden of debt from innumerable international commitments. And as the influence of the United States and the Soviet Union continued to rise, Britain’s ability to play the role of a world power declined substantially. Between 1964 and 1979, Conservatives and Labour alternated in power, but neither party was able to heal Britain’s ailing economy.

In 1979, the Conservatives returned to power under Margaret Thatcher (b. 1925), who became the first woman prime minister in British history. Thatcher pledged to lower taxes, reduce government bureaucracy, limit social welfare, restrict union power, and end inflation. The “Iron Lady,” as she was called, did break the power of the labor unions. Although she did not eliminate the basic components of the social welfare system, she used austerity measures to control inflation. “Thatcherism,” as her economic policy was termed, improved the British economic situation, but at a price. The south of England, for example, prospered, but the old industrial areas of the Midlands and north declined and were beset by high unemployment, poverty, and sporadic violence.

Thatcher dominated British politics in the 1980s. But in 1990, Labour’s fortunes revived when Thatcher’s government attempted to replace local property taxes with a flat-rate tax payable by every adult to a local authority. Many British citizens argued that this was nothing more than a poll tax that would allow the rich to get away with paying the same rate as the poor. In 1990, after antitax riots broke out, Thatcher’s popularity plummeted, and a revolt within her own party forced her to resign as prime minister. She was replaced by John Major (b. 1943), but his government failed to capture the imagination of most Britons. In new elections on May 1, 1997, the Labour Party won a landslide victory. The new prime minister, Tony Blair (b. 1953), was a moderate whose youthful energy immediately instilled a new vigor on the political scene. Adopting centrist policies reminiscent of those followed by President Bill Clinton in the United States, his party dominated British politics into the new century. Blair was one of the prominent leaders who joined an international coalition against terrorism after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001. Four years later, his support of the U.S. war in Iraq when a majority of Britons opposed it caused his popularity to plummet, although the failure of the Conservative Party to field a popular candidate kept him in power until the summer of 2007, when he stepped down and allowed the Labour leader Gordon Brown (b. 1951) to become prime minister.

In 2010, in the wake of climbing unemployment and a global financial crisis, the thirteen-year rule of Britain’s Labour Party ended when Conservative Party candidate David Cameron (b. 1966) became prime minister on the basis of a coalition with the Liberal Democrats. Cameron has promised to decrease the government debt by reducing government waste and welfare benefits, cutting social services, and introducing legislation to overhaul Britain’s health care system.

**Eastern Europe After Communism**

The fall of Communist governments in Eastern Europe during the revolutions of 1989 (see Chapter 27) brought a wave of euphoria to Europe. The new structures meant an end to a postwar European order that had been imposed on unwilling peoples by the victorious forces of the Soviet Union. In 1989 and 1990, new governments throughout Eastern Europe worked diligently to scrap the remnants of the old system.
and introduce the democratic procedures and market systems they believed would revitalize their scarred lands. But this process proved to be neither simple nor easy.

Most Eastern European countries had little or virtually no experience with democratic systems. Then, too, ethnic divisions, which had troubled these areas before World War II and had been forcibly submerged under Communist rule, re-emerged with a vengeance. Finally, the rapid conversion to market economies also proved painful. The adoption of “shock therapy” austerity measures caused much suffering. Unemployment, for example, climbed above 13 percent in Poland in 1992.

Nevertheless, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, many of these states, especially Poland and the Czech Republic, were making a successful transition to both free markets and democracy. In Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski (kwaḥsh-nyef-skee) (b. 1954), a former Communist, was elected president in November 1995 and pushed Poland toward an increasingly prosperous free market economy. His successor, Lech Kaczyński (LEK kuh-ZIN-skee) (1949–2010), emphasized the need to combine modernization with tradition. In Czecho-Slovakia, the shift to non-Communist rule was complicated by old problems, especially ethnic issues. Czechs and Slovaks disagreed over the makeup of the new state but were able to agree to a peaceful division of the country. On January 1, 1993, Czecho-Slovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Václav Havel (VAHT-slahf HAH-vul) (b. 1936) was elected the first president of the new Czech Republic (see the box on p. 827). In Romania, the current president, Traian Băsescu (trih-YAHHN buh-SES-koo) (b. 1951), leads a country that is just beginning to experience economic growth and the rise of a middle class.

The revival of the post–Cold War Eastern European states is evident in their desire to join both NATO and the European Union (EU), the two major Cold War institutions of Western European unity (see “The Unification of Europe” later in this chapter). In 1997, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary became full members of NATO. In 2004, ten nations—including Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—joined the EU, and Romania and Bulgaria were added in 2007.

Not everyone is convinced that European integration is a good thing. Eastern Europeans fear that their countries will be dominated by investments from their prosperous neighbors, while their counterparts in Western Europe are concerned about a possible influx of low-wage workers from the new member countries. The global financial crisis of 2008–2009 also added to the economic problems of Eastern European countries.

THE DISINTEGRATION OF YUGOSLAVIA From its creation in 1918, Yugoslavia had been an artificial entity. Strong leaders—especially the dictatorial Marshal Tito after World War II—had managed to hold together the six disparate republics and two autonomous provinces that made up the country. After Tito’s death in 1980, however, no successor emerged, and eventually Yugoslavia was caught up in the reform movements sweeping through Eastern Europe. After negotiations among the six republics failed, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence in June 1991. This action was opposed by Slobodan Milošević (sluh-BOH-dahn mih-LOH-suh-vich) (1941–2006), the leader of the republic of Serbia. He asserted that these republics could be independent only if new border arrangements were made to accommodate the Serb minorities in those republics who did not want to live outside the boundaries of Serbia. Serbian forces attacked both new states; although unsuccessful against Slovenia, they captured one-third of Croatia’s territory.

The international recognition of independent Slovenia and Croatia in 1992 and of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina soon thereafter did not deter the Serbs, who now turned their guns on Bosnia. By mid-1993, Serbian forces had acquired 70 percent of Bosnian territory. The Serbian policy of ethnic cleansing—killing or forcibly removing Bosnian Muslims from their lands—revived memories of Nazi atrocities in World War II. This account by one Muslim survivor from the town of Srebrenica (sreb-bruh-NEET-suh) is eerily reminiscent of the activities of the Nazi Einsatzgruppen (see Chapter 25):

When the truck stopped, they told us to get off in groups of five. We immediately heard shooting next to the trucks. . . . About ten Serbs with automatic rifles told us to lie down on the ground face first. As we were getting down, they started to shoot, and I fell into a pile of corpses. I felt hot liquid running down my face. I realized that I was only grazed. As they continued to shoot more groups, I kept on squeezing myself in between dead bodies.

Almost eight thousand men and boys were killed in the Serbian massacre at Srebrenica. Nevertheless, despite worldwide outrage, European governments failed to take a forceful stand against the Serbs’ actions, leaving the Muslim population of Bosnia in desperate straits. At long last, as the fighting spread, European nations and the United States began to intervene to stop the bloodshed, and in the fall of 1995, a fragile cease-fire agreement was reached. An international peacekeeping force was stationed in the area to maintain tranquility.

Peace in Bosnia, however, did not bring peace to Yugoslavia. A new war erupted in 1999 over Kosovo (KAWSS-suh-voh), which had been made an autonomous province within the Serbian republic in 1974. Kosovo’s inhabitants were mainly ethnic Albanians. But the province was also home to a Serbian minority. In 1989, Yugoslav president Milošević stripped Kosovo of its autonomous status. Four years later, some groups of ethnic Albanians founded the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and began a campaign against Serbian rule in Kosovo. When Serb forces began to massacre ethnic Albanians in an effort to crush the KLA, the United States and its NATO allies mounted a bombing campaign that forced Milošević to stop. In elections held in the fall of 2000, Milošević himself was ousted from power and was later put on trial by an international tribunal for crimes against humanity for his ethnic cleansing policies. He died in prison in 2006 before his trial could be completed.

Troops from the European Union remain in Bosnia to keep the peace. NATO military forces were also brought into
Václav Havel: The Call for a New Politics

In attempting to deal with the world’s problems, some European leaders have pointed to the need for a new perspective, especially a moral one, if people are to live in a sane world. These two excerpts are taken from speeches by Václav Havel, who was elected president of Czechoslovakia at the end of 1989. The first is from his inaugural address as president on January 1, 1990; the second is from a speech given to the U.S. Congress.

Václav Havel, Address to the People of Czechoslovakia, January 1, 1990

But all this is still not the main problem [the environmental devastation of the country by its Communist leaders]. The worst thing is that we live in a contaminated moral environment. We fell morally ill because we became used to saying something different from what we thought. We learned not to believe in anything, to ignore each other, to care only about ourselves. Concepts such as love, friendship, compassion, humility, or forgiveness lost their depth and dimensions, and for many of us they represented only psychological peculiarities, or they resembled gone-astray greetings from ancients, a little ridiculous in the era of computers and spaceships. Only a few of us were able to cry out loud that the powers that be should not be all-powerful, and that special farms, which produce ecologically pure and top-quality food just for them should send their produce to schools, children’s homes and hospitals if our agriculture was unable to offer them to all. The previous regime—armed with its arrogant and intolerant ideology—reduced man to a force of production and nature to a tool of production. In this it attacked both their very substance and their mutual relationship. It reduced gifted and autonomous people, skillfully working in their own country, to nuts and bolts of some monstrously huge, noisy, and stinking machine, whose real meaning is not clear to anyone.

Václav Havel, Speech to Congress, February 21, 1990

For this reason, the salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart, in the human power to reflect, in human meekness and in human responsibility.

Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better in the sphere of our being as humans, and the catastrophe toward which this world is headed—be it ecological, social, demographic or a general breakdown of civilization—will be unavoidable. . . .

We are still a long way from that “family of man.” In fact, we seem to be receding from the ideal rather than growing closer to it. Interests of all kinds—personal, selfish, state, nation, group, and if you like, company interests—still considerably outweigh genuinely common and global interests. We are still under the sway of the destructive and vain belief that man is the pinnacle of creation and not just a part of it and that therefore everything is permitted . . . .

In other words, we still don’t know how to put morality ahead of politics, science and economics. We are still incapable of understanding that the only genuine backbone of all our actions, if they are to be moral, is responsibility.

Responsibility to something higher than my family, my country, my company, my success—responsibility to the order of being where all our actions are indelibly recorded and where and only where they will be properly judged.

The interpreter or mediator between us and this higher authority is what is traditionally referred to as human conscience.

Q How different is Havel’s view of politics from the views of mainstream politicians? What broader forces working in modern European society do you believe shaped Havel’s thinking? How can Havel’s view of our common humanity and responsibility to conscience help revitalize Western civilization?

Kosovo while United Nations officials worked to set up democratic institutions there. In 2004, Yugoslavia ceased to exist when the new national government under Vojislav Kostunica (VOH-yee-slav kuh-STOO-nit-suh) (b. 1944) officially renamed the truncated country Serbia and Montenegro. Two years later, Montenegrins voted in favor of independence. Thus, by 2006, all six republics cobbled together to form Yugoslavia in 1918 were once again independent nations. Kosovo unilaterally proclaimed its independence from Serbia in 2008 and was recognized by most other world nations as the seventh sovereign state to emerge from the former Yugoslavia.

The New Russia

Soon after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, a new era began in Russia with the presidency of Boris Yeltsin (YELT-sun) (1931–2007). A new constitution created a two-chamber parliament and established a strong presidency. During the mid-1990s, Yeltsin sought to implement reforms that would place Russia on a firm course toward a pluralistic political system and a market economy. But the new post-Communist Russia remained as fragile as ever. Burgeoning economic inequality and rampant corruption aroused widespread criticism and shook the confidence of the Russian
people in the superiority of the capitalist system over the one that existed under Communist rule. A nagging war in the Caucasus—where the people of Chechnya (CHECH-nee-uh) sought national independence from Russia—drained the government budget and exposed the decrepit state of the once vaunted Red Army. In presidential elections held in 1996, Yeltsin was reelected although his precarious health raised serious questions about his ability to govern.

**THE PUTIN ERA** At the end of 1999, Yeltsin suddenly resigned and was replaced by Vladimir Putin (VLAD-ih-meer POO-tin) (b. 1952), a former member of the KGB. Putin vowed to strengthen the role of the central government in managing the affairs of state. During the succeeding months, the parliament approved his proposal to centralize power in the hands of the federal government in Moscow. The new president also vowed to return the breakaway state of Chechnya to Russian authority and to adopt a more assertive role in international affairs. Fighting in Chechnya continued throughout 2000, nearly reducing the republic’s capital city of Grozny (GRAWZ-nee) to ruins. In July 2001, Putin launched reforms, which included the unrestricted sale and purchase of land and tax cuts aimed at boosting economic growth and budget revenues. Although Russia soon experienced a budget surplus and a growing economy, serious problems remained.

Putin attempted to deal with the chronic problems in Russian society by centralizing his control over the system and by silencing critics—notably in the Russian media. Although he was criticized in the West for these moves, many Russians expressed sympathy with Putin’s attempts to restore a sense of pride and discipline in Russian society.

In 2008, Dmitry Medvedev (di-MEE-tree mehd-VYEH-dehh) (b. 1965) became president of Russia when Putin could not run for reelection under Russia’s constitution. Instead, Putin became prime minister, and the two men have since shared power.

**The Unification of Europe**

As we saw in Chapter 26, the divisions created by the Cold War led the nations of Western Europe to seek military security by forming the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. The destructiveness of two world wars, however, caused many thoughtful Europeans to consider the need for some additional form of unity.

In 1957, France, West Germany, the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg), and Italy signed the Treaty of Rome, which created the European Economic Community (EEC). The EEC eliminated customs barriers for the six member nations and created a large free-trade area protected from the rest of the world by a common external tariff. All the member nations benefited economically. In 1973, Great Britain, Ireland, and Denmark gained membership in what now was called the European Community (EC). Greece joined in 1981, followed by Spain and Portugal in 1986. In 1995, Austria, Finland, and Sweden also became members of the EC.

**THE EUROPEAN UNION** The European Community was an economic union, not a political one. By 2000, the EC contained 370 million people and constituted the world’s largest single trading entity, transacting one-fourth of the world’s commerce. In the 1980s and 1990s, the EC moved toward
Emergence of the Superpower: The United States

At the end of World War II, the United States emerged as one of the world’s two superpowers. As its Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union intensified, the United States directed much of its energy toward combating the spread of communism throughout the world. With the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s, the United States became the world’s foremost military power.

American Politics and Society Through the Vietnam Era

Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal of the 1930s initiated a basic transformation of American society that included a dramatic increase in the role and power of the federal government, the rise of organized labor as a significant force in the economy and politics, a commitment to the welfare state, a grudging acceptance of ethnic minorities, and a willingness to experiment with deficit spending as a means of spurring the economy. The New Deal in American politics was bolstered by the election of Democratic presidents—Harry Truman in 1948, John F. Kennedy in 1960, and Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964. Even the election of a Republican president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, in 1952 and 1956 did not significantly alter the fundamental direction of the New Deal. As Eisenhower observed in 1954, “Should any political party attempt to abolish Social Security and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history.”

The economic boom after World War II fueled confidence in the American way of life. A shortage of consumer goods during the war left Americans with both surplus income and the desire to purchase these goods after the war. Then, too, the development of organized labor enabled more and more workers to get the wage increases that spurred the growth of the domestic market. Between 1945 and 1973, real wages grew an average of 3 percent a year, the most prolonged advance in U.S. history.

Starting in the 1960s, problems that had been glossed over earlier came to the fore. The decade began on a youthful and optimistic note when John F. Kennedy (1917–1963), age forty-three, became the youngest elected president in the history of the United States and the first one born in the twentieth century. His own administration, cut short by an assassin’s bullet on November 22, 1963, focused primarily on foreign affairs. Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon B. Johnson (1908–1973), who...
won a new term as president in a landslide in 1964, used his stunning mandate to pursue the growth of the welfare state begun in the New Deal. Johnson’s programs included health care for the elderly and the War on Poverty, to be fought with food stamps and the Job Corps.

Johnson’s other domestic passion was achieving equal rights for black Americans. In August 1963, the eloquent Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968), a Baptist minister and leader of a growing movement for racial equality, led the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom to dramatize black Americans’ desire for treatment no different from that accorded to whites. This march and King’s impassioned plea for racial equality had an electrifying effect on the American people. President Johnson pursued the cause of civil rights. As a result of his initiative, Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which created the machinery to end segregation and discrimination in the workplace and in public accommodations. The Voting Rights Act the following year eliminated obstacles to black participation in elections in southern states. But laws alone could not guarantee the “Great Society” that Johnson envisioned, and soon the administration faced bitter unrest.

In the North and the West, blacks had had voting rights for many years, but local patterns of segregation resulted in considerably higher unemployment rates for blacks (and Hispanics) than for whites and left blacks segregated in huge urban ghettos. In these ghettos, the calls for militant action by radical black nationalist leaders, such as Malcolm X (1925–1965) of the Black Muslims, attracted more attention than the nonviolent appeals of Martin Luther King. In the summer of 1965, race riots broke out in the Watts district of Los Angeles, leading to thirty-four deaths and the destruction of more than one thousand buildings. When King was assassinated in 1968, more than one hundred cities erupted in rioting, including Washington, D.C., the nation’s capital. The combination of riots and extremist comments by radical black leaders led to a “white backlash” and a severe racial division in America. Antiwar protests also divided the American people after President Johnson committed American troops to a costly war in Vietnam (see Chapter 26). Teach-ins, sit-ins, and occupations of university buildings alternated with more radical demonstrations that increasingly led to violence. The killing of four student protesters at Kent State University in 1970 by the Ohio National
Guard shocked both activists and ordinary Americans, and thereafter the vehemence of the antiwar movement began to subside. But the combination of antiwar demonstrations and riots in the cities caused many people to call for “law and order,” an appeal used by Richard Nixon (1913–1994), the Republican presidential candidate in 1968. Nixon’s election in 1968 started a shift to the right in American politics.

The Shift Rightward After 1973

Nixon eventually ended U.S. involvement in Vietnam by gradually withdrawing American troops. Politically, he pursued a “southern strategy,” carefully calculating that “law and order” issues would appeal to southern whites. The Republican strategy, however, also gained support among white Democrats in northern cities, where court-mandated busing of students to distant neighborhoods to achieve racial integration of the public schools had provoked a white backlash.

As president, Nixon was paranoid about conspiracies and resorted to subversive methods of gaining political intelligence on his political opponents. Nixon’s zeal led to the Watergate scandal—a botched attempt to plant listening devices in the Democratic National Headquarters and the ensuing cover-up. Although Nixon repeatedly denied involvement in the affair, secret tapes he made of his own conversations in the White House revealed otherwise. On August 9, 1974, Nixon resigned in disgrace, an act that saved him from almost certain impeachment and conviction.

After Watergate, American domestic politics focused on economic issues. Gerald Ford (1913–2006) became president when Nixon resigned, only to lose in the 1976 election to the former governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter (b. 1924), who campaigned as an outsider against the Washington establishment. By 1980, the Carter administration faced two devastating problems. High inflation and a decline in average weekly earnings were causing a perceptible drop in American living standards. At the same time, a crisis abroad had erupted when fifty-three Americans were taken hostage by the Iranian government of Ayatollah Khomeini and held for nearly fifteen months (see Chapter 29). Carter’s inability to gain the release of the American hostages led to perceptions at home that he was a weak president. His overwhelming loss to Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) in the election of 1980 brought forward the chief exponent of right-wing Republican policies.

The Reagan Revolution, as it has been called, sent U.S. policy in a number of new directions.

Reversing decades of changes, Reagan cut back on the welfare state by decreasing spending on food stamps, school lunch programs, and job programs. At the same time, his administration fostered the largest peacetime military buildup in American history. Total federal spending rose from $631 billion in 1981 to over $1 trillion by 1986. But instead of raising taxes to pay for the new expenditures, Reagan convinced Congress that massive tax cuts would supposedly stimulate rapid economic growth and produce new revenues. Reagan’s policies seemed to work in the short run as the United States experienced an economic upturn that lasted until the end of the 1980s. But the administration’s spending policies also produced record government deficits, which loomed as an obstacle to long-term growth. In 1980, the total government debt was around $930 billion; by 1988, the total debt had almost tripled, reaching $2.6 trillion.

The inability of Reagan’s successor, George H. W. Bush (b. 1924), to deal with the deficit problem, coupled with an economic downturn, led to the election of a Democrat, Bill Clinton (b. 1946), in November 1992. The new president was a southerner who claimed to be a new Democrat, one who favored a number of the Republican policies of the 1980s—a clear indication that this Democratic victory had by no means ended the rightward drift in American politics. In fact, Clinton’s reelection in 1996 was due in part to his adoption of conservative policies.

President Clinton’s political fortunes were aided considerably by a lengthy economic revival. A steady reduction in the annual government budget deficit strengthened confidence in the performance of the national economy. Much of...
Clinton’s second term, however, was overshadowed by charges of misconduct stemming from the president’s affair with a White House intern. After a bitter partisan struggle, the U.S. Senate acquitted the president on two articles of impeachment brought by the House of Representatives. But Clinton’s problems helped the Republican candidate, George W. Bush (b. 1946), win the presidential election in 2000. Although Bush lost the popular vote to Al Gore, he narrowly won the electoral vote after a highly controversial victory in the state of Florida decided ultimately by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The first four years of Bush’s administration were largely occupied with the war on terrorism and the U.S.-led war on Iraq. The Department of Homeland Security was established after the 2001 terrorist assaults to help protect the United States from future terrorist acts. At the same time, Bush pushed tax cuts through Congress that mainly favored the wealthy and helped produce record deficits reminiscent of the Reagan years. Environmentalists were especially disturbed by the Bush administration’s efforts to weaken environmental laws and impose regulations that would benefit American corporations. In November 2004, after a highly negative political campaign, Bush was narrowly elected to a second term. Thereafter, Bush’s popularity plummeted drastically as discontent grew over the Iraq War and financial corruption in the Republican Party, as well as the administration’s poor handling of relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina devastated the city of New Orleans and other areas of Louisiana and Mississippi in 2005.

The many failures of the Bush administration led to the lowest approval ratings for a modern president and opened the door for a dramatic change in American politics. The new and often inspiring voice of Barack Obama (b. 1961), who campaigned on a platform of change “we can believe in” and ending the war in Iraq, led to an overwhelming Democratic victory in the elections of 2008. The Democrats were also aided by the dramatic collapse of the American financial system in the fall of 2008. Obama moved quickly in 2009 to deal with the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. At the same time, Obama emphasized the need to deal with the health care crisis, climate change, the decline in the educational system, and failed economic policies.

The Development of Canada

FOCUS QUESTION: What political, social, and economic developments has Canada experienced since 1945?

Canada’s development in the postwar years has paralleled that of the United States. For twenty-five years after World War II, Canada experienced extraordinary economic prosperity as it set out on a path of industrial development. Canada had always had a strong export economy based on its abundant natural resources. Now it also developed electronic, aircraft, nuclear, and chemical engineering industries.
on a large scale. Much of the Canadian growth, however, was financed by capital from the United States, which resulted in American ownership of Canadian businesses. Though many Canadians welcomed the economic growth, others feared American economic domination of Canada and its resources.

A notable feature of Canada’s postwar history has been its close relationship with the United States. In addition to fears of economic domination, Canadians have also worried about playing a subordinate role politically and militarily to the neighboring superpower. Canada agreed to join NATO in 1949 and even sent military contingents to fight in Korea the following year. But to avoid subordination to the United States or any other great power, Canada has consistently and actively supported the United Nations. Nevertheless, concerns about the United States have not kept Canada from maintaining a special relationship with its southern neighbor.

For three decades after 1945, the Liberal Party largely dominated Canadian politics and created Canada’s welfare state by enacting a national social security system (the Canada Pension Plan) and a national health insurance program. The most prominent Liberal government was that of Pierre Trudeau (PYAY tru-DOH) (1919–2000), who came to power in 1968. A French Canadian, Trudeau did not harbor separatist sentiments and was dedicated to Canada’s federal union. In 1968, his government passed the Official Languages Act, which created a bilingual federal civil service and encouraged the growth of French culture and language in Canada. Although Trudeau’s government vigorously pushed an industrialization program, high inflation and Trudeau’s efforts to impose the will of the federal government on the powerful provincial governments alienated voters and weakened his government.

Economic recession in the early 1980s brought Brian Mulroney (b. 1939), leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, to power in 1984. Mulroney’s government sought greater privatization of Canada’s state-run corporations and negotiated a free-trade agreement with the United States. Bitterly resented by many Canadians, the agreement cost Mulroney’s government much of its popularity. In 1993, the ruling Conservatives were overwhelmingly defeated, and the Liberal leader, Jean Chrétien (ZHAHN kray-TEN) (b. 1934), became prime minister. Chrétien’s conservative fiscal policies, combined with strong economic growth, enabled his government to have a budgetary surplus by the late 1990s and led to another Liberal victory in the elections of 1997. Charges of widespread financial corruption in the government, however, led to a Conservative victory early in 2006, and Stephen Harper (b. 1959) became the new prime minister. Harper’s government collapsed in March 2011, but elections held in May resulted in Harper remaining as prime minister. The government has also faced an ongoing crisis over the French-speaking province of Quebec. In the late 1960s, the Parti Québécois (par-TEE kay-bek-KWAH), headed by René Lévesque (ruh-NAY lay-VEK) (1922–1987), campaigned on a platform of Quebec’s secession from the Canadian confederation. In 1970, the party won 24 percent of the popular vote in Quebec’s provincial elections. To pursue their dream of separation, some underground separatist groups even used terrorist bombings and kidnapped two prominent government officials. In 1976, the Parti Québécois won Quebec’s provincial elections and in 1980 called for a referendum that would enable the provincial government to negotiate Quebec’s independence from the rest of Canada. Voters in Quebec narrowly rejected the plan in 1995, however, and debate over the province’s future continues to divide Canada.

**Latin America Since 1945**

**FOCUS QUESTION:** What problems have the nations of Latin America faced since 1945, and what role has Marxist ideology played in their efforts to solve these problems?

In many Latin American countries, the Great Depression of the 1930s had created political instability that led to military coups and militaristic regimes (see Chapter 24). But the depression also resulted in the transformation of Latin America from a traditional to a modern economic structure. Since the nineteenth century, Latin Americans had exported raw materials, especially minerals and foodstuffs, while buying the manufactured goods of the industrialized countries in Europe and the United States. As a result of the depression, however, exports were cut in half, and the revenues available to buy...
manufactured goods declined. This encouraged many Latin American countries to develop industries to produce goods that were formerly imported. Due to a shortage of capital in the private sector, governments often invested in the new industries, thus leading, for example, to government-run steel industries in Chile and Brazil.

Despite these developments, in the 1960s Latin American countries still found themselves dependent on the United States, Europe, and now Japan, especially for the advanced technology needed for modern industries. Because of the great poverty in much of Latin America, domestic markets were limited in size, and many Latin American countries failed to find markets abroad for their products. These failures led to instability and a new reliance on military regimes, especially to curb the power of the new industrial middle class and working classes, which had increased in size and power as a result of industrialization. In the 1960s, repressive military regimes in Chile, Brazil, and Argentina abolished political parties and repeatedly returned to export-import economies financed by foreigners. They also invited multinational companies to come in. The companies that accepted the invitations did so primarily to take advantage of Latin America’s raw materials and abundant supply of cheap labor, and thus only contributed to the ongoing dependency of Latin America on the industrially developed nations.

In the 1970s, Latin American regimes grew even more dependent, borrowing from abroad, especially from banks in Europe and the United States, to maintain their failing economies. Between 1970 and 1982, debt to foreigners increased from $27 billion to $315 billion. By 1982, a number of governments announced that they could no longer pay interest on their debts to foreign banks, and their economies began to crumble.

The debt crisis was paralleled by a movement toward democracy during the 1980s. In part, some military leaders were simply unwilling to deal with the monstrous debt problems. At the same time, many people realized that military power without popular consent was incapable of providing a strong state. Then, too, there was a swelling of popular support for basic rights and free and fair elections. By the 1980s and early 1990s, democratic regimes were in place everywhere except Cuba, some of the Central American states, Chile, and Paraguay. At the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first, a noticeable political trend in Latin America was the election of left-wing governments, evident in the election of Hugo Chávez (OO-goh CHAH-vez) (b. 1954) in Venezuela in 1998, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil in 2002, Michelle Bachelet in Chile in 2006, and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua in 2007.

The United States has also played an important role in Latin America since 1945. For years, the United States had intervened militarily in Latin American affairs, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean, a region it considered its “backyard” and thus of strategic importance. As Chapter 24 described, in the 1920s the United States became the leading investor in Latin America, replacing Great Britain. By investing directly in Latin American firms, Americans succeeded in gaining control of a large portion of Latin America’s export industries. Thus, copper mining in Chile and Peru and the oil industry in Bolivia, Mexico, and Peru came under American control, and the American-owned United Fruit Company gained a virtual monopoly over the banana trade in a number of Central American nations, turning them into “banana republics.” The control of these industries by American investors reinforced a growing nationalist sentiment in Latin America against the United States as a neo-imperialist power.

But the United States also tried to pursue a new relationship with Latin America. In 1948, the nations of the Western Hemisphere formed the Organization of American States (OAS), which was intended to eliminate unilateral interference by one state in the internal or external affairs of any other state. But as the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified, American policymakers grew anxious about the possibility of Communist regimes arising in Central America and the Caribbean and returned to a policy of unilateral action when they believed that Soviet agents were attempting to establish Communist governments. Especially after the success of Castro in Cuba (see the next section), the desire of the United States to prevent “another Cuba” largely determined American policy toward Latin America until the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. The United States provided massive military aid to anti-Communist regimes, regardless of their nature.

The Threat of Marxist Revolutions

Until the 1960s, Marxism played little role in the politics of Latin America. The success of Fidel Castro in Cuba and his espousal of Marxism, however, opened the door for other Marxist movements that aimed to gain the support of peasants and industrial workers and bring radical change to Latin America.

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION  A dictatorship, headed by Fulgencio Batista (full-JEN-ee-oh bah-TEES-tuh) (1901–1973) and closely tied economically to U.S. investors, had ruled Cuba since 1934. In the 1950s, Batista’s government came under attack by a strong opposition movement, led by Fidel Castro (hee-DELL KASS-truh) (b. 1926) and assisted by Ernesto “Ché” Guevara (er-NAY-stoh CHAY guh-VAHR-uh) (1928–1967), an Argentine who believed in the need for revolutionary upheaval (see the box on p. 835). When their initial assaults brought little success, Castro’s forces turned to guerrilla warfare. Batista’s regime responded with such brutality that he alienated his own supporters. The dictator fled in December 1958, and Castro’s revolutionaries seized Havana on January 1, 1959.

Relations between Cuba and the United States quickly deteriorated when the Soviet Union early in 1960 agreed to buy Cuban sugar and provide $100 million in credits. On March 17, 1960, President Eisenhower directed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to “organize the training of Cuban exiles, mainly in Guatemala, against a possible future day
Castro’s Revolutionary Ideals

On July 26, 1953, Fidel Castro and a small group of supporters launched an ill-fated attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba. Castro was arrested and put on trial. This selection is taken from the speech he made in his defense, in which he discussed the goals of the revolutionaries.

Fidel Castro, “History Will Absolve Me”

I stated that the second consideration on which we based our chances for success was one of social order because we were assured of the people’s support. When we speak of the people we do not mean the comfortable ones, the conservative elements of the nation, who welcome any regime of oppression, any dictatorship, and despotism, prostrating themselves before the master of the moment until they grind their foreheads into the ground. When we speak of struggle, the people means the vast unredeemed masses, to whom all make promises and whom all deceive; we mean the people who yearn for a better, more dignified, and more just nation; who are moved by ancestral aspirations of justice, for they have suffered injustice and mockery, generation after generation; who long for great and wise changes in all aspects of their life; people, who, to attain these changes, are ready to give even the very last breath of their lives—when they believe in something or in someone, especially when they believe in themselves.

In the brief of this cause there must be recorded the five revolutionary laws that would have been proclaimed immediately after the capture of the Moncada barracks and would have been broadcast to the nation by radio. . . .

The First Revolutionary Law would have returned power to the people and proclaimed the Constitution of 1940 the supreme Law of the land, until such time as the people should decide to modify or change it. . . .

The Second Revolutionary Law would have granted property, not mortgageable and not transferable, to all planters, subplanters, lessees, partners, and squatters who hold parcels of five or less caballerias of land [total of 166 acres], and the state would indemnify the former owners on the basis of the rental which they would have received for these parcels over a period of ten years.

The Third Revolutionary Law would have granted workers and employees the right to share 30 percent of the profits of all the large industrial, mercantile, and mining enterprises, including the sugar mills. . . .

The Fourth Revolutionary Law would have granted all planters the right to share 55 percent of the sugar production and a minimum quota of forty thousand arrobas [total of 500 tons] for all small planters who have been established for three or more years.

The Fifth Revolutionary Law would have ordered the confiscation of all holdings and ill-gotten gains of those who had committed frauds during previous regimes, as well as the holdings and ill-gotten gains of all their legatees and heirs. . . .

Furthermore, it was to be declared that the Cuban policy in the Americas would be one of close solidarity with the democratic people of this continent, and that those politically persecuted by bloody tyrants Oppressing our sister nations would find generous asylum, brotherhood, and bread in [Cuba]. Not the persecution, hunger, and treason that they find today. Cuba should be the bulwark of liberty and not a shameful link in the chain of despotism.

What did Fidel Castro intend to accomplish by his revolution in Cuba? On whose behalf did he fight this revolution?

When they might return to their homeland.”

As arms from Eastern Europe began to arrive in Cuba, the United States cut its purchases of Cuban sugar, and the Cuban government retaliated by nationalizing U.S. companies and banks. In October 1960, the United States declared a trade embargo of Cuba, which drove Castro closer to the Soviet Union. In December 1960, Castro declared himself a Marxist.

On January 3, 1961, the United States broke diplomatic relations with Cuba. The new U.S. president, John F. Kennedy, supported a coup attempt against Castro’s government, but the landing of 1,400 CIA-assisted Cuban exiles in Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on April 17, 1961, turned into a military disaster. The Soviets then attempted to install nuclear missiles in the country, an act that led to a showdown with the United States (see Chapter 26). As its part of the bargain to defuse the missile crisis, the United States agreed not to invade Cuba.

But the missile crisis affected Cuba in another way as well. Castro realized that the Soviet Union had been unreliable. If revolutionary Cuba was to be secure, the Cubans would have to instigate social revolution in the rest of Latin America. Castro judged Bolivia, Haiti, Venezuela, Colombia, Paraguay, and a number of Central American states to be especially open to radical revolution. He believed that once guerrilla wars were launched, peasants would flock to the movement and overthrow the old regimes. Guevara began a guerrilla war in Bolivia but was caught and killed by the Bolivian army in the fall of 1967. The Cuban strategy had failed.

Nevertheless, Castro’s socialist revolution proceeded within Cuba, with mixed results. The Cuban Revolution did secure some social gains for the Cuban people, especially in health care and education. The regime provided free medical services for all citizens, and the population’s health improved noticeably. Illiteracy was wiped out by developing new schools and establishing teacher-training institutes that tripled the number of teachers within ten years. The theoretical equality of women in Marxist thought was put into practice in Cuba by new laws, such as the
family code, which stated that husband and wife were equally responsible for the economic support of the family and household, as well as for child care. Such laws led to improvements but fell short of creating full equality for women.

Eschewing rapid industrialization, Castro encouraged agricultural diversification, but the Cuban economy continued to rely heavily on the production and sale of sugar. Economic problems forced the Castro regime to depend on Soviet subsidies and the purchase of Cuban sugar by Soviet bloc countries. After the collapse of these Communist regimes in 1989, Cuba lost their support. Although economic conditions continued to decline, Fidel Castro remained in power until illness forced him to resign the presidency in 2008, when his brother, Raúl Castro (rah-OOL KASS-troh) (b. 1931), succeeded him.

**CHILE’S MARXIST ADVENTURE** Another challenge to U.S. influence in Latin America came in 1970 when the Marxist Salvador Allende (sahl-vah-DOR ah-YEN-day) (1908–1973) was elected president of Chile and attempted to create a socialist society by constitutional means. Chile suffered from a number of economic problems. Wealth was concentrated in the hands of large landowners and a few large corporations. Inflation, foreign debts, and a decline in the mining industry (copper exports accounted for 80 percent of Chile’s export income) caused untold difficulties. Right-wing control of the government had failed to achieve any solutions, especially since foreign investments were allowed to expand. There was already growing resentment of U.S. corporations, especially Anaconda and Kennecott, which controlled the copper industry.

In the 1970 elections, a split in the moderate forces enabled Allende to become president of Chile as head of a coalition of Socialists, Communists, and Catholic radicals.

Allende increased the wages of industrial workers and began to move toward socialism by nationalizing the largest domestic and foreign-owned corporations. Nationalization of the copper industry—essentially without compensation for the owners—caused the Nixon administration to cut off all aid to Chile, creating serious problems for the Chilean economy. At the same time, the government offered only halfhearted resistance to radical workers who were beginning to take control of the landed estates.

In response, the upper and middle classes organized strikes against the government (with support from the American CIA). Allende attempted to stop the disorder by bringing three military officers into his cabinet. They succeeded in ending the strikes, but when Allende’s coalition increased its vote in the congressional elections of March 1973, the Chilean army, under the direction of General Augusto Pinochet (aw-GOO-stoh pin-noh-chet or pee-noh-CHAY) (1915–2006), decided on a coup d’etat. In September 1973, Allende and thousands of his supporters were killed. Contrary to the expectations of many right-wing politicians, the military remained in power and set up a dictatorship. The regime moved quickly to outlaw all political parties and restore many nationalized industries to their original owners. By the mid-1980s, the regime’s horrible abuses of human rights led to growing unrest against the government.

In 1989, free elections produced a new president, Patricio Aylwin (pa-TREES-yoh YL-win) (b. 1918), who advocated free market economics. Despite some economic improvement, unemployment remained high. Early in 2004, Chile entered into a free-trade agreement with the United States in the hopes of boosting economic growth. In 2006, Michelle Bachelet (mih-SHELL BAHSH-uh-let) (b. 1951), a moderate Socialist running on a platform of increasing social welfare measures for the nation’s poor, became the first woman to be elected president of Chile. In January 2010, following divisions in the Socialist Party, Chileans elected center-right National Renewal Party candidate Sebastián Piñera (say-bahs-TYAHHN peen-YAIR-uh) (b. 1949). A Harvard-educated billionaire, Piñera promised to uphold the social economic policies of the Socialists, while being tougher on crime.

**NICARAGUA: FROM THE SOMOZAS TO THE SANDINISTAS** During the early twentieth century, the United States intervened in Nicaraguan domestic affairs on several occasions, and U.S. marines even remained there for long periods of time. After the leader of the U.S.-supported National Guard, Anastasio Somoza (ah-nahs-TAH-see-oh suh-MOH-suh) (1896–1956), seized control of the government in 1937, his family remained in power for forty-three years. U.S. support for the Somoza military regime enabled the family to overcome its opponents while enriching themselves at the expense of the state.

Opposition to the regime finally arose from Marxist guerrilla forces known as the Sandinista National Liberation Front. By mid-1979, military victories by the Sandinistas (san-duh-NEES-tuhb) left them in virtual control of the country. Inheriting a poverty-stricken nation, the Sandinistas organized a provisional government aligned with the Soviet Union. The Reagan and Bush administrations, believing that Central America faced the danger of another Communist state,

Nationalism and the Military: The Examples of Argentina and Brazil
The military became the power brokers of twentieth-century Latin America. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, Latin American armies portrayed themselves as the guardians of national honor and orderly progress.

ARGENTINA Juan Perón (WAHN puh-ROHN) (1895–1974) first rose to prominence as a member of the military regime that had seized power in Argentina in 1943. As labor secretary in the military government, he used his position to curry favor with the workers. But as Perón grew more popular, other army officers began to fear his power and arrested him. An uprising by workers forced the officers to back down, and in 1946, Perón was elected president.

To please his chief supporters—labor and the urban middle class—Perón pursued a policy of increased industrialization. At the same time, he sought to free Argentina from foreign investors. The government bought the railways; took over the banking, insurance, shipping, and communications industries; and assumed regulation of imports and exports. But Perón’s regime was also authoritarian. His wife, Eva Perón (1919–1952), organized women’s groups to support the government, while Perón assembled fascist gangs, modeled after Hitler’s Brown Shirts, that used violence to intimidate his opponents. But growing corruption in the Perón government and the alienation of more and more people by the regime’s excesses encouraged the military to overthrow him in September 1955. Perón went into exile in Spain.

Overwhelmed by problems, however, military leaders eventually decided to allow Perón to return. Reelected president in September 1973, Perón died a year later. In 1976, the military installed a new regime. Tolerating no opposition, the military leaders encouraged the “disappearance” of their opponents. Perhaps 30,000 people, including 6,000 leftists, were killed as a result.

But economic problems remained. To divert people’s attention, the military regime invaded the Falkland Islands off the coast of Argentina in April 1982. Great Britain, which had controlled the islands since the nineteenth century, sent ships and troops to defend the islands. When the Argentine forces surrendered to the British in July, angry Argentinians denounced the military regime. The loss discredited the military and opened the door to civilian rule. In 1983, Raúl Alfonsín (rah-OOL al-fahn-SEEN) (b. 1927) of the Radical Party was elected president and tried to restore democratic practices. In elections in 1989, the Perónist Carlos Saúl Menem (KAHR-lohs sah-OOL MEN-ern) (b. 1930) won. This peaceful transfer of power gave hope that Argentina was moving on a democratic path. Despite problems of foreign debt and inflation, Argentina has witnessed economic growth since 2003, first under the government of President Nestor Kirchner (NAY-stor KEERCH-nehr) (1950–2010) and then under his wife, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (kris-TEE-nuh fahr-NAHN-des day KEERCH-nehr) (b. 1953), who in 2007 became the first woman to be elected president of Argentina.

BRAZIL After the military put an end to the authoritarian regime of Getúlio Vargas (zhii-TOO-lyoo VAHR-guhs) (1882–1954) in 1945, Brazil established a republic. Over the next two decades, various democratically elected presidents (including Vargas himself) struggled to solve Brazil’s economic problems, especially its soaring inflation, but with little success. Finally, in the spring of 1964, the military decided to intervene and took over the government.

Unlike previous interventions by military leaders in politics, this time the armed forces remained in direct control of the country for twenty years. The military set course on a new economic direction, cutting back somewhat on state control of the economy and emphasizing market forces. Beginning in 1968, the new policies seemed to work, and Brazil experienced an “economic miracle” as it moved into self-sustaining economic growth, generally the hallmark of a modern economy. Economic growth
Growing conflict between government authorities and university students in Mexico came to a violent and bloody climax on October 2, 1968, when army troops killed and wounded large numbers of students in Mexico City. This excerpt is taken from an account of the events by the student National Strike Council.

**National Strike Council, Events of October 2–3**

After an hour and a half of a peaceful meeting attended by ten thousand people and witnessed by scores of domestic and foreign reporters, a helicopter gave the army the signal to attack by dropping flares into the crowd. Simultaneously, the plaza was surrounded and attacked by members of the army and all police forces, using weapons of every caliber, up to 9 mm.

The local papers have given the following information about the attack, confirmed by firsthand witnesses:

1. Numerous secret policemen had infiltrated the meeting in order to attack it from within, with orders to kill. They were known to each other by the use of a white handkerchief tied around their right hands.
2. High caliber weaponry and expansion bullets were used. Seven hours after the massacre began, tanks cleaned up the residential buildings of Nonoalco-Tlaltelolco with short cannon blasts and machine-gun fire.
3. On the morning of October 3, the apartments of supposedly guilty individuals were still being searched, without a search warrant.
4. Doctors in the emergency wards of the city hospitals were under extreme pressure, being forced to forgo attention to the victims until they had been interrogated and placed under guard. Various interns who attended the demonstration for the purpose of giving medical aid had since disappeared.

6. The results of this brutal military operation include hundreds of dead (including women and children), thousands of wounded, an unwarranted search of all the apartments in the area, and thousands of violent arrests. Those arrested were taken to various illegal locations, such as Military Camp No. 1. It should be added that members of the National Strike Council who were captured were stripped and herded into a small archaeological excavation at Tlaltelolco, converted for the moment into a dungeon. Some of them were put up against a wall and shot.

7. Onesimo Mason, the general who directed the operation, praised the preparedness of his men, in contrast to the obvious lack of preparedness on the part of the students.

All this has occurred only ten days before the start of the Olympics. The repression is expected to become even greater after the Games, in view of the fact that national public opinion and the protest from the provinces are unified against a regime whose only interest lies in demonstrating its power to control. Already individual liberties have been suspended, and restricted zones have been created where all vehicles are searched at gunpoint and personal identification is demanded. The Secretary of Defense declared that the friendly disposition of the regime will solve the conflict.

**WE ARE NOT AGAINST THE OLYMPIC GAMES. WELCOME TO MEXICO.**

**Q** Why did the Mexican army attack this peaceful student protest? Do you think that the timing of the Olympic Games in Mexico City was a factor? How does this event compare with what happened at Kent State University in 1970 and with the 1989 student protests in Tiananmen Square?

also included the economic exploitation of the Amazon basin, which the regime opened to farming; some experts believe that the resulting destruction of the extensive Amazon rain forests, which is still going on, poses a threat to the ecological balance not only of Brazil but of the earth itself. Rapid economic growth had additional drawbacks. Ordinary Brazilians hardly benefited at all as the gulf between rich and poor, always wide, grew even wider. In 1960, the wealthiest 10 percent of Brazil’s population received 40 percent of the nation’s income; in 1980, they received 51 percent. Then, too, rapid development led to an inflation rate of 100 percent a year, while an enormous foreign debt added to the problems. By the early 1980s, the economic miracle was turning into a nightmare. Overwhelmed, the generals retreated and opened the door for a return to democracy in 1985.

The new democratic government faced herculean obstacles—massive foreign debt, runaway inflation, and a lack of social consensus. Nevertheless, by the 1990s, some stability was maintained as Brazil became committed to democratic elections. The enduring gulf between rich and poor helped lead to the election in 2002 of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (LWEES ee-NAH-syoh LOO-uh duh-SEEL-vuh) (b. 1945), who pursued a policy of increased trade and social reforms while continuing to increase exports. Despite economic growth, problems of crime and poor education still persisted in Brazil. In October 2010, Lula’s chief of staff, Dilma Rousseff (DIL-muh ROO-seff) (b. 1947), became the first woman to be elected president of Brazil.

**The Mexican Way**

During the 1950s and 1960s, Mexico’s ruling party (the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI) focused on a balanced industrial program. Fifteen years of steady economic growth
combined with low inflation and real gains in wages for more
and more people made those years seem a golden age in
Mexico’s economic development. But at the end of the 1960s,
the true nature of Mexico’s domination by one party became
apparent with the student protest movement. On October 2,
1968, a demonstration of university students in Tlatelolco
(tuh-lahl-teh-LOH-koh) Square in Mexico City was met by
police forces, who opened fire and killed hundreds of stu-
dents (see the box on p. 838). Leaders of the PRI became con-
cerned about the need to change the system.

The next two presidents, Luis Echeverría (loo-EES eh-
cheh-vahr-REE-uh) (b. 1922), who was elected in 1970, and
José López Portillo (hoh-SAY LOH-pehz pohr-TEE-yoh)
(b. 1920), who was elected in 1976, introduced political
reforms. Rules for the registration of political parties were
eased, making their growth more likely, and greater freedom
of debate in the press and universities was allowed. But eco-


demic problems continued to trouble Mexico. In the late
1970s, vast new reserves of oil were discovered. As the sale
of oil abroad increased dramatically, the government became
even more dependent on oil revenues. When world oil prices
dropped in the mid-1980s, Mexico was no longer able to
make payments on its foreign debt, which had reached $80
billion in 1982. The government was forced to adopt new
economic policies, including the increased sale of publicly
owned companies to private parties.

The debt crisis and rising unemployment increased dissat-
sisfaction with the government, which was especially evident
in the 1988 election, when the PRI’s choice for president, Carlos
Salinas (KAHR-lohs sah-LEE-nahs) (b. 1948), who was
expected to win in a landslide, won by only a 50.3 percent
majority. Increasing dissatisfaction with the government’s
economic policies finally led to the unthinkable: in 2000, Vi-
cente Fox (vee-SEN-tay FOKS) (b. 1942) defeated the PRI
candidate for the presidency. Despite high hopes, Fox’s presi-
dency failed to deal with police corruption and bureaucratic
inefficiency in the government. His successor, Felipe Cal-
derón (feh-LEE-pay kahl-duh-ROHN) (b. 1962), has made
immigration reform a major priority, with little success. He
has also waged war on Mexico’s powerful drug cartels.

Society and Culture in the Western World

FOCUS QUESTION: What major social, cultural, and
intellectual developments have occurred in Western
Europe and North America since 1945?

Socially, culturally, and intellectually, the post–World War II
Western world has been marked by much diversity, and although
many trends represent a continuation of prewar modern develop-
ments, they have affected society in unpredictable ways.

The Emergence of a New Society

During the first decades after World War II, such products of
new technologies as computers, television, jet planes, contra-
ceptive devices, and new surgical techniques all dramatically
altered the pace and nature of human life. The rapid changes
in society were fueled by scientific advances and vigorous
economic growth. Called a technocratic society by some and
the consumer society by others, postwar Western society
has been characterized by an evolving social structure and
new movements for change.

European society was dramatically altered after 1945.
Especially noticeable were the changes in the middle class. As
large companies and government agencies began employing
large numbers of white-collar supervisory and administrative
personnel, people in managerial and technological occupations
greatly augmented the ranks of such traditional middle-
class groups as businesspeople and professionals in law, medi-
cine, and academia. In both Eastern and Western Europe, the
new managers and experts were very much alike. Every-
where their positions depended on specialized knowledge
acquired through higher education, and everywhere they
focused on the effective administration of their corporations.

A SOCIETY OF CONSUMERS

Changes also occurred among
the traditional lower classes. Especially noticeable was the
dramatic shift of people from rural to urban areas. The num-
ber of people in agriculture declined drastically; by the 1950s,
the number of farmers throughout most of Europe had
dropped by 50 percent. Nor did the size of the industrial
working class expand. In West Germany, industrial workers
made up 48 percent of the labor force throughout the 1950s
and 1960s. Thereafter, the number of industrial workers

CHRONOLOGY Latin America Since 1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juan Perón becomes president of Argentina</td>
<td>1946</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of the Organization of American States</td>
<td>1948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castro’s forces seize Cuba</td>
<td>1959</td>
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<td>Bay of Pigs invasion</td>
<td>1961</td>
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<td>Cuban Missile Crisis</td>
<td>1962</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile</td>
<td>1973</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perón returns to power</td>
<td>1973</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandinistas establish provisional government in Nicaragua</td>
<td>1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>Falklands War</td>
<td>1982</td>
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<tr>
<td>Election of Carlos Salinas in Mexico</td>
<td>1988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Election of Vicente Fox in Mexico</td>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election of Michelle Bachelet as the first woman president of Chile</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| Election of Christina Fernández de Kirchner as the first woman presi
dent of Argentina                                                   | 2007 |
| Raúl Castro becomes president of Cuba                               | 2008 |
| Election of Dilma Rousseff as the first woman president of Brazil    | 2010 |
began to dwindle as the number of white-collar service employees increased. At the same time, a substantial increase in their real wages enabled the working classes to aspire to the consumption patterns of the middle class. Buying on the installment plan, introduced in the 1930s, became widespread in the 1950s and gave workers a chance to imitate the middle class by buying such products as televisions, washing machines, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, and stereos. But the most visible symbol of mass consumerism was the automobile. Before World War II, cars were reserved mostly for the European upper classes. In 1948, there were 5 million cars in all of Europe, but by 1957, the number had tripled. By the 1960s, there were almost 45 million cars.

Rising incomes, combined with shorter working hours, created an even greater market for mass leisure activities. Between 1900 and 1980, the workweek was reduced from sixty hours to a little more than forty hours, and the number of paid holidays increased. All aspects of popular culture—music, sports, media—became commercialized and offered opportunities for leisure activities.

Another very visible symbol of mass leisure was the growth of tourism. Before World War II, most persons who traveled for pleasure were from the upper and middle classes. After the war, the combination of more vacation time, increased prosperity, and the flexibility provided by package tours with their lower rates and budget-priced accommodations enabled millions to expand their travel possibilities.

A Revolt in Sexual Mores

The permissive society was yet another label critics applied to postwar Europe. World War I had seen the first significant crack in the rigid code of manners and morals of the nineteenth century. Subsequently, the 1920s had witnessed experimentation with drugs, the appearance of hardcore pornography, and a new sexual freedom (police in Berlin, for example, issued cards that permitted female and male homosexual prostitutes to ply their trade). But these indications of a new attitude appeared mostly in major cities and touched only small numbers of people. After World War II, changes in manners and morals were far more extensive and far more noticeable.

Sweden took the lead in the propagation of the so-called sexual revolution of the 1960s, but the rest of Europe and the United States soon followed. Sex education in the schools and the decriminalization of homosexuality were but two aspects of Sweden’s liberal legislation. The introduction of the birth control pill, which became widely available by the mid-1960s, gave people more freedom in sexual behavior. Meanwhile, sexually explicit movies, plays, and books broke new ground in the treatment of once hidden subjects. Cities like Amsterdam, which allowed open prostitution and the public sale of hard-core pornography, attracted thousands of curious tourists.

The new standards were evident in the breakdown of the traditional family. Divorce rates increased dramatically, especially in the 1960s, while the incidence of premarital and extramarital sexual experiences also rose substantially. A survey in the Netherlands in 1968 revealed that 78 percent of men and 86 percent of women had participated in extramarital sex.

Youth Protest and Student Revolt

The 1960s also saw the emergence of a drug culture. Marijuana, though illegal, was widely used by college and university students. For young people more interested in higher levels of consciousness, Timothy Leary, who had done research at Harvard on the psychedelic effects of LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide), became the high priest of hallucinogenic experiences.

New attitudes toward sex and the use of drugs were only two manifestations of a growing youth movement in the 1960s that questioned authority and fostered rebellion against the older generation. Spurred by opposition to the Vietnam War and a growing political consciousness, the youth rebellion became a full-fledged protest movement by the second half of the 1960s (see the box on p. 841).
Before World War II, higher education had remained largely the preserve of Europe’s wealthier classes. After the war, European states began to foster greater equality of opportunity in higher education by eliminating fees, and universities experienced an influx of students from the middle and lower classes. Enrollments grew dramatically; in France, 4.5 percent of young people went to a university in 1950. By 1965, the figure had increased to 14.5 percent.

But there were problems. Overcrowded classrooms, professors who paid little attention to students, administrators who acted in an authoritarian fashion, and an education that to many seemed irrelevant to the modern age led to an outburst of student revolts in the late 1960s. One of the major issues that mobilized youthful European protesters was the United States’ war in Vietnam, which they viewed as an act of aggression and imperialism. In 1968, demonstrations broke out in universities in Italy, France, and Britain. In part, these were an extension of the protests against the Vietnam War in American universities in the mid-1960s. In London, 30,000 demonstrators took to the streets protesting America’s involvement in Vietnam. But student protests in Europe also backfired in that they provoked a reaction from people who favored order over the lawlessness of privileged young people.

As Pier Paolo Pasolini (PYER PAH-loh pah-SOH-lee-nee) 

**“The Times They Are A-Changin’”: The Music of Youthful Protest**

In the 1960s, the lyrics of rock music reflected the rebellious mood of many young people. Bob Dylan (b. 1941), a vastly influential performer and recording artist, expressed the feelings of the younger generation. His song “The Times They Are A-Changin’,” released in 1964, has been called an “anthem for the protest movement.”

**Bob Dylan, “The Times They Are A-Changin’”**

Come gather ‘round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You’ll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you
Is worth savin’
Then you better start swimmin’
Or you’ll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin’

Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won’t come again
And don’t speak too soon
For the wheel’s still in spin
And there’s no tellin’ who
That it’s namin’
For the loser now
Will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin’

Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don’t stand in the doorway

Don’t block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There’s a battle outside
And it is rarin’
It’ll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin’

Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don’t criticize
What you can’t understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road
Is rapidly agin’
Please get out of the new one
If you can’t lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin’

The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is
Rapidly fadin’
And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are a-changin’

What prompted the student campus revolts of the 1960s? According to Bob Dylan, who and what are causing the problem?
(1922–1975), an Italian poet and intellectual, wrote, “Now all the journalists of the world are licking your arses . . . but not me, my dears. You have the faces of spoiled brats, and I hate you, like I hate your fathers. . . . When yesterday at Valle Giulia [in Rome] you beat up the police, I sympathized with the police because they are the sons of the poor.”

There were other reasons for the student radicalism besides protesting the Vietnam War. Some students were genuinely motivated by a desire to reform the university. They also attacked other aspects of Western society, such as its materialism, and expressed concern about becoming cogs in the large and impersonal bureaucratic jungles of the modern world. For many students, the calls for democratic decision making in the universities were a reflection of their deeper concerns about the direction of Western society.

**Women in the Postwar Western World**

Despite their enormous contributions to the war effort, women at the end of World War II were removed from the workforce to free up jobs for the soldiers returning home. After the horrors of war, people seemed willing for a while to return to traditional family practices. Female participation in the workforce declined, and birthrates began to rise, creating a “baby boom.” The boost in the birthrate lasted until the early 1960s, when family size began to decline primarily because of the widespread practice of birth control. Invented in the nineteenth century, the condom was already in wide use, but the development in the 1960s of oral contraceptives, known as birth control pills, provided a reliable means of birth control that quickly spread to all Western countries.

The trend toward smaller families contributed to changes in women’s employment in both Europe and the United States, mainly because women now needed to devote far fewer years to rearing children. That led to a large increase in the number of married women in the workforce. At the beginning of the twentieth century, even working-class wives tended to stay at home if they could afford to do so. In the postwar period, this was no longer the case. In the United States, for example, married women made up about 15 percent of the female labor force in 1900; by 1970, their number had increased to 62 percent.

But the increased presence of women in the workforce did not change some old patterns. Working-class women in particular still earned salaries lower than those of men performing equivalent work. In the 1960s, women earned only 60 percent of men’s wages in Britain, 50 percent in France, and 63 percent in West Germany. In addition, women still tended to enter traditionally female jobs. As one Swedish woman guidance counselor remarked in 1975, “Every girl now thinks in terms of a job. This is progress. They want children, but they don’t pin their hopes on marriage. They don’t intend to be housewives for some future husband. But there has been no change in their vocational choices.” Many European women also still faced the double burden of earning income on the one hand and raising a family and maintaining the household on the other. Such inequalities led increasing numbers of women to rebel.

**THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT: THE QUEST FOR LIBERATION**

The participation of women in World Wars I and II helped them achieve one of the major aims of the nineteenth-century feminist movement—the right to vote. Already after World War I, many governments acknowledged the contributions of women to the war effort by granting them the franchise. Sweden, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Austria, and Czechoslovakia did so in 1918, followed by the United States in 1920. Women in France and Italy did not obtain the vote until 1945. After World War II, European women tended to fall back into the traditional roles expected of them, and little was heard of feminist concerns. But by the late 1960s, women began to assert their rights again and speak as feminists. Along with the student upheavals of the late 1960s came renewed interest in feminism, or the **women’s liberation movement**, as it was now called. Increasingly, women protested that the acquisition of political and legal equality had not brought true equality with men:

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We are economically oppressed: in jobs we do full work for half pay; in the home we do unpaid work full-time. We are commercially exploited by advertisement, television, and the press;
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*The Women’s Liberation Movement.* In the late 1960s, as women began once again to assert their rights, a revived women’s liberation movement emerged. Feminists in the movement maintained that women themselves must alter the conditions of their lives. During this women’s liberation rally, some women climbed the statue of Admiral Farragut in Washington, D.C., to exhibit their signs.
The Voice of the Women’s Liberation Movement

Simone de Beauvoir was an important figure in the emergence of the postwar women’s liberation movement. This selection is taken from her book *The Second Sex*, in which she argued that women have been forced into a position subordinate to men.

**Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex**

Now, woman has always been man’s dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality. And even today woman is heavily handicapped, though her situation is beginning to change. Almost nowhere is her legal status the same as man’s, and frequently it is much to her disadvantage. Even when her rights are legally recognized in the abstract, long-standing custom prevents their full expression in the mores. In the economic sphere men and women can almost be said to make up two castes; other things being equal, the former hold the better jobs, get higher wages, and have more opportunity for success than their new competitors. In industry and politics men have a great many more positions and they monopolize the most important posts. In addition to all this, they enjoy a traditional prestige that the education of children tends in every way to support, for the present enshrines the past—and in the past all history has been made by men. At the present time, when women are beginning to take part in the affairs of the world, it is still a world that belongs to men—they have no doubt of it at all and women have scarcely any. To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to a deal—this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste. Man-the-sovereign will provide woman-the-liege with material protection and will undertake the moral justification of her existence; thus, she can evade at once both economic risk and the metaphysical risk of a liberty in which ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. Indeed, along with the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his subjective existence, there is also the temptation to forgo liberty and become a thing. This is an inauspicious road, for he who takes it—passive, lost, ruined—becomes henceforth the creature of another’s will, frustrated in his transcendence and deprived of every value. But it is an easy road; on it one avoids the strain involved in undertaking an authentic existence. When man makes of woman the Other, he may, then, expect her to manifest deep-seated tendencies toward complicity. Thus, woman may fail to lay claim to the status of subject because she lacks definite resources, because she feels the necessary bond that ties her to man regardless of reciprocity, and because she is often very well pleased with her role as the Other.

Now, what peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman is that she—a free and autonomous being like all human creatures—nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other.

*Q* What did Simone de Beauvoir mean by the “second sex”? By “the Other”? What is the difference between being a “thing” and having an “authentic existence”? According to de Beauvoir, how do women fall prey to the former?

legally we often have only the status of children. We are brought up to feel inadequate, educated to narrower horizons than men. This is our specific oppression as women. It is as women that we are, therefore, organizing.5

These were the words of a British Women’s Liberation Workshop in 1969.

Of great importance to the emergence of the postwar women’s liberation movement was the work of a Frenchwoman, Simone de Beauvoir (see-MUHN duh boh-VWAR) (1908–1986). Born into a Catholic middle-class family and educated at the Sorbonne in Paris, de Beauvoir supported herself as a teacher and later as a novelist and writer. De Beauvoir believed that she lived a “liberated” life for a twentieth-century European woman, but for all her freedom, she still came to perceive that as a woman she faced limits that men did not. In 1949, she published her highly influential work *The Second Sex*, in which she argued that as a result of male-dominated societies, women had been defined by their differences from men and consequently received second-class status (see the box above).

Another important influence in the growth of the women’s movement in the 1960s was Betty Friedan (free-DAN) (1921–2006). A journalist and the mother of three children, Friedan grew increasingly uneasy with her attempt to fulfill the traditional role of the “ideal housewife and mother.” In 1963, she published *The Feminine Mystique*, in which she analyzed the problems of middle-class American women in the 1950s and argued that women were being denied equality with men. *The Feminine Mystique* became a best-seller and made Friedan a celebrity.

**TRANSFORMATION IN WOMEN’S LIVES** To ensure the natural replacement of a country’s population, women need to produce an average of 2.1 children each. Many European countries fall short of this mark; their populations stopped growing in the 1960s, and the trend has continued since then.
By the 1990s, among the nations of the European Union, the average number of children per woman of childbearing age was 1.4. At 1.31 in 2009, Spain’s rate is among the lowest in the world.

At the same time, the presence of women in the workforce has continued to rise. In Britain, for example, the number of women in the labor force went from 32 percent to 44 percent between 1970 and 1990. Moreover, women have entered new employment areas. Greater access to universities and professional schools has enabled women to take jobs in law, medicine, government, business, and education. In the Soviet Union, for example, about 70 percent of doctors and teachers were women. Nevertheless, economic inequality still often prevails; women are paid lower wages than men for comparable work and receive fewer promotions to management positions.

Feminists in the women’s liberation movement came to believe that women themselves must transform the fundamental conditions of their lives. Women sought and gained a measure of control over their own bodies by seeking to legalize both contraception and abortion. From the 1960s and 1970s, hundreds of thousands of women in Europe worked to repeal laws that prohibited contraception and abortion and began to meet with success. Even in Catholic countries, where the church remained strongly opposed to both procedures, legislation allowing contraception and abortion was passed in the 1970s and 1980s.

As more women became activists, they also became involved in new issues. In the 1980s and 1990s, women faculty in universities concentrated on developing more enlightened cultural attitudes through the new academic field of women’s studies. Such courses, which stressed the role and contributions of women in history, mushroomed in colleges and universities on both sides of the Atlantic.

Other women began to try to affect the political environment by allying with the antinuclear movement. In 1981, a group of women in Britain protested American nuclear missiles by chaining themselves to the fence of an American military base. Thousands more joined in creating a peace camp around the military compound. Enthusiasm ran high; one participant said, “I'll never forget that feeling; it'll live with me forever... As we walked round, and we clasped hands... it was for women; it was for peace; it was for the world.”

Some women joined the ecological movement. As one German writer who was concerned with environmental issues said, it is women “who must give birth to children, willingly or unwillingly, in this polluted world of ours." Especially prominent was the number of women members in the Green Party in Germany (see “The Environment and the Green Movements” later in this chapter).

Women in the West have also reached out to work with women from the rest of the world in international conferences to change the conditions of their lives. Between 1975 and 1995, the United Nations held conferences in Mexico City, Copenhagen, Nairobi, and Beijing. These meetings made the differences between women from Western and non-Western countries very clear. Whereas women from Western countries spoke of political, economic, cultural, and sexual rights, women from developing countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia focused on bringing an end to the violence, hunger, and disease that haunt their lives. Despite these differences, these meetings demonstrated that women in both developed and developing nations were organizing to increase awareness of women’s issues among all people, male and female.

### The Growth of Terrorism

Acts of terror by individuals and groups opposed to governments have become a frightening aspect of modern Western society. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, small bands of terrorists used assassination, indiscriminate killing of civilians, the taking of hostages, and the hijacking of airplanes to draw attention to their demands or to destabilize governments in the hope of achieving their political goals. Terrorist acts garnered considerable media attention. When Palestinian terrorists kidnapped and killed eleven Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972, hundreds of millions of people watched the drama unfold on television. Indeed, some observers believe that media exposure has been an important catalyst for some terrorist groups.

Motivations for terrorist acts vary considerably. Left- and right-wing terrorist groups flourished in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but terrorist acts have also stemmed from militant nationalists who wish to create separatist states. Most prominent was the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which resorted to vicious attacks against the ruling government and innocent civilians in Northern Ireland.

Although left- and right-wing terrorist activities declined in Europe in the 1980s, international terrorism continued. Angered by the loss of their territory to Israel, some militant Palestinians responded with a policy of terrorist attacks against Israel’s supporters. Palestinian terrorists operated throughout Europe and America, attacking both Europeans and American tourists; Palestinian terrorists massacred vacationers at airports in Rome and Vienna in 1985. State-sponsored terrorism was often an integral part of international terrorism. Militant governments, especially in Iran, Libya, and Syria, assisted terrorist organizations that launched attacks on Europeans and Americans. On December 21, 1988, Pan American flight 103 from Frankfurt to New York exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 passengers and crew members. A massive investigation revealed that the bomb responsible for the explosion had been planted by two Libyan terrorists.

### TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES

One of the most destructive acts of terrorism occurred on September 11, 2001, in the United States. Terrorists hijacked four commercial jet airplanes after takeoff from Boston, Newark, and Washington, D.C. The hijackers flew two of the airplanes directly into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, causing these buildings, as well as a number of surrounding buildings, to collapse. A third hijacked plane slammed into the Pentagon near Washington, D.C. The fourth plane, apparently headed for Washington, crashed instead in an isolated area of Pennsylvania. In total, nearly
three thousand people were killed, including everyone aboard the four airliners.

These coordinated acts of terror were carried out by hijackers connected to an international terrorist organization known as al-Qaeda, run by Osama bin Laden (1957–2011). A native of Saudi Arabia of Yemeni extraction, bin Laden used an inherited fortune to set up terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, under the protection of the nation’s militant fundamentalist Islamic rulers known as the Taliban.

U.S. President George W. Bush vowed to wage a lengthy and thorough war on terrorism and worked to create a coalition of nations to assist in ridding the world of al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. Within weeks of the attack on America, U.S. and NATO air forces began bombing Taliban-controlled command centers, airfields, and al-Qaeda hiding places in Afghanistan. On the ground, Afghan forces, assisted by U.S. special forces, pushed the Taliban out and gained control of the country by the end of November 2001. A democratic multiethnic government was installed but has faced problems from revived Taliban activity (see Chapter 29).

THE WEST AND ISLAM One of the major sources of terrorist activity against the West, especially the United States, has come from parts of the Muslim world. The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which the United States has steadfastly supported Israel, has certainly fed anti-Western and especially anti-American feelings among many Muslims. In 1979, the revolution in Iran that led to the overthrow of the Western-oriented shah and the establishment of a new Islam-based government also stoked anti-Western sentiment (see Chapter 29).

The involvement of the United States in the liberation of Kuwait in the Persian Gulf War in 1991 also had unexpected consequences in the relationship of Islam and the West. After Iraq invaded Kuwait, the United States stationed forces in Saudi Arabia, the location of many sacred Islamic sites. The presence of American forces was considered an affront to Islam by certain anti-Western Islamic groups, especially that of Osama bin Laden and his followers. These anti-Western attitudes came to be shared by a number of radical Islamic groups, as is evident in the 2004 bombing in Madrid and the 2005 bombing on subway trains in London.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 (see Chapter 29) further inflamed Islamic groups against the United States and the West. Although there was no evidence of a relationship between al-Qaeda terrorists and the regime of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, this claim was one of the excuses used by the United States to launch a preemptive war against Iraq. Although many Iraqis welcomed the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, the subsequent
Guest Workers and Immigrants
As the economies of the Western European countries revived in the 1950s and 1960s, a severe labor shortage forced them to rely on foreign workers. Thousands of Turks and eastern and southern Europeans relocated to Germany, North Africans to France, and people from the Caribbean, India, and Pakistan to Great Britain. Overall, there were probably 15 million guest workers in Europe in the 1980s.

Although these workers had been recruited for economic reasons, their presence caused social and political problems for their host countries. The concentration of guest workers in certain cities and even certain sections of those cities often created tensions with the local native populations. Foreign workers constituted almost one-fifth of the population in the German cities of Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart. Having become settled in their new countries, many were unwilling to leave, even after the end of the postwar boom in the early 1970s led to mass unemployment.

In the 1980s, there was an influx of other refugees, especially to West Germany, which had liberal immigration laws that permitted people seeking asylum from political persecution to enter the country. During the 1970s and 1980s, West Germany absorbed more than a million refugees from Eastern Europe and East Germany. In 1986 alone, 200,000 political refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka entered the country. Other parts of Europe saw a similar influx of foreigners. Between 1992 and 2002, London and the southeast region of England witnessed an increase of 700,000 new foreigners, primarily from Yugoslavia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. A survey in 1998 showed that English was not the first language of one-third of inner-city children in London.

This great influx of foreigners, many of them nonwhite, has strained not only the social services of European countries but also the patience of native residents who oppose making their countries ethnically diverse. Antiforeign sentiment, increased by growing unemployment, has been encouraged by new right-wing political parties that cater to people’s complaints. Thus, the National Front in France, organized by Jean-Marie Le Pen (ZHAHNH-muh-REE leh PEN) (b. 1928), and the Republican Party in Germany, led by Franz Schönhuber (FRAHNTS SHURN-hoo-bur) (1923–2005), a former SS officer, advocate restricting all new immigration and limiting the assimilation of settled immigrants. Much more frightening, however, have been organized campaigns of violence, especially against African and Asian immigrants, by radical right-wing groups.

Even nations that have been especially tolerant in opening their borders to immigrants and seekers of asylum are changing their policies. In the Netherlands, 19 percent of the people have a foreign background, representing almost 180 nationalities. In 2004, however, the Dutch government passed tough new immigration laws, including a requirement that newcomers pass a Dutch language and culture test before being admitted to the Netherlands.

Sometimes these policies have been aimed at religious practices. Another effect of the influx of foreigners into Europe has been a dramatic increase in the number of Muslims. Although Christians still constitute a majority (though many no longer practice their faith), the number of Muslims has mushroomed in France, Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. It has been estimated that at least 15 million Muslims were living in European Union nations at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In some nations, concern that Muslim immigration will result in the erosion of national values has led to attempts to restrict the display of Islamic symbols. In 2004, France enacted a law prohibiting female students from wearing a headscarf (hijab) to school. Article 1 stated: “In public elementary, middle and high schools, the wearing of signs or clothing which conspicuously manifest students’ religious affiliations is prohibited.” The law further clarified “conspicuous” to mean “a large cross, a veil, or a skullcap.” Small religious symbols, such as small crosses or medallions, were not included. Critics of this law argue that it will exacerbate ethnic and religious tensions in France, while supporters stress that it upholds the tradition of secularism and equality for women in France (see the box on p. 847).

The Environment and the Green Movements
Beginning in the 1970s, environmentalism has become a major issue on the European political agenda. By that time, serious ecological problems had become all too apparent. Air pollution, produced by nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide emissions from road vehicles, power plants, and industrial factories, was causing respiratory illnesses and having corrosive effects on buildings and monuments. Many rivers, lakes, and seas had become so polluted that they posed serious health risks. Dying forests and disappearing wildlife alarmed more and more people. The opening of Eastern Europe after the revolutions of 1989 brought to the world’s attention the incredible environmental destruction of that region caused by unfettered industrial pollution.

Environmental concerns have forced the major political parties in Europe to advocate new regulations for the protection of the environment. The Soviet nuclear power disaster at Chernobyl in Ukraine in 1986 made Europeans even more aware of potential environmental hazards, and 1987 was touted as the “year of the environment.” Many European states established government ministries to oversee environmental issues.

Growing ecological awareness also gave rise to Green movements and Green Parties that emerged throughout Europe in the 1970s. Most visible was the Green Party in Germany, which was officially organized in 1979 and had elected forty-two delegates to the West German parliament by 1987. Green Parties have also competed successfully in Sweden, Austria, and Switzerland.
The banning of headscarves in schools was preceded by a debate on the secular state in France. Secularism in France extends beyond the separation of church and state: while recognizing the right to religious expression, French law dictates that religious expression must remain in the private sphere. Before the law was enacted, President Jacques Chirac set up the Stasi Commission (named after its chair, Bernard Stasi) to interview school, religious, and political leaders on the issue. The commission decided in favor of prohibiting all conspicuous religious symbols in schools.

The first selection is taken from a speech by President Chirac, who favored the ban. The second is taken from interviews with French Muslim women, many of them from the Maghreb (the Arabic term for Northwest Africa). Many of these women questioned how the law protects their individual rights and freedom of religious expression.

French President Jacques Chirac on Secularism in French Society

The debate on the principle of secularism goes to the very heart of our values. It concerns our national cohesion, our ability to live together, our ability to unite on what is essential. . . . Many young people of immigrant origin, whose first language is French, and who are in most cases of French nationality, succeed and feel at ease in a society which is theirs. This kind of success must also be made possible by breaking the wall of silence and indifference which surrounds the reality of discrimination today. I know about the feeling of being misunderstood, of helplessness, sometimes even of revolt, among young French people of immigrant origin whose job applications are rejected because of the way their names sound, and who are too often confronted with discrimination in the fields of access to housing or even simply of access to leisure facilities. . . . All of France’s children, whatever their history, whatever their origin, whatever their beliefs, are the daughters and sons of the republic. They have to be recognized as such, in law but above all in reality. By ensuring respect for this requirement, by reforming our integration policy, by our ability to bring equal opportunities to life, we shall bring national cohesion to life again. We shall also do so by bringing to life the principle of secularism, which is a pillar of our constitution. It expresses our wish to live together in respect, dialogue and tolerance. Secularism guarantees freedom of conscience. It protects the freedom to believe or not to believe. . . . We also need to reaffirm secularism in schools, because schools must be preserved absolutely. . . .

There is of course no question of turning schools into a place of uniformity, of anonymity, where religious life or belonging would be banned. It is a question of enabling teachers and head teachers, who are today in the front-line and confronted with real difficulties, to carry out their mission serenely with the affirmation of a clear rule. Until recently, as a result of a reasonable custom which was respected spontaneously, nobody ever doubted that pupils, who are naturally free to live their faith, should nevertheless not arrive in schools, secondary schools or A-level colleges, in religious clothes. It is not a question of inventing new rules or of shifting the boundaries of secularism. It is a question of expressing, with respect but clearly and firmly, a rule which has been part of our customs and practices for a very long time. I have consulted, I have studied the report of the Stasi Commission, I have examined the arguments put forward by the National Assembly committee [on secularism], by political parties, by religious authorities, by major representatives of major currents of thought. In all conscience, it is my view that the wearing of clothes or of symbols which conspicuously demonstrate religious affiliations must be banned in state schools.

North African Women in France Respond to the Headscarf Ban

Labiba (Thirty-Five-Year-Old Algerian)

I don’t feel that they should interfere in the private life of people in the respect that we’re in a secular country; France shouldn’t take a position toward one religion to the detriment of another. . . . I think that in a secular school, we should all be secular, otherwise we need to have religious school and then everyone is free to wear what he wants.

Nour (Thirty-Four-Year-Old Algerian)

Honestly, you know the secular school, it doesn’t miss celebrating Easter, and when they celebrate Easter, it doesn’t bother me. My daughter comes home with painted Easter eggs and everything; it’s pretty; it’s cute. There are classes that are over 80 percent Maghrebin in the suburbs, and they celebrate Easter, they celebrate Christmas, you see? And that’s not a problem for the secular school. And I don’t find that fair.

I find that when it’s Ramadan, they should talk about Ramadan. Honestly, me, it wouldn’t be a problem. On the contrary, someone who comes into class . . . with a veil, that would pose a question actually, that we could discuss in class, to know why this person wears the veil. So why punish them, amputate them from that part of their culture without discussing it? Why is it so upsetting to have someone in class who

(Continued)
At a given time an adolescent want to affirm himself, to show that he’s someone, that he’s an individual, so he thinks, I’d say, he thinks that it’s by his clothes that he shows that he comes from somewhere, that he’s from someone. So then, I think you should let them do it, and afterwards, by themselves, people come back to who they really are.

Q. What were the perspectives of the French president and the French Muslim women who were interviewed? How do they differ? Do you think there might be a way to reconcile the opposing positions? Why or why not?

Although the Green movements and parties have played an important role in making people aware of ecological problems, they have not supplanted the traditional political parties, as some political analysts in the mid-1980s forecast. For one thing, the coalitions that made up the Greens found it difficult to agree on all issues and tended to splinter into different cliques. Moreover, traditional political parties have co-opted the environmental issues of the Greens. By the 1990s, more and more European governments were beginning to sponsor projects to safeguard the environment and clean up the worst sources of pollution.

GREEN URBAN PLANNING By the beginning of the twenty-first century, many European cities began to recognize the need for urban sustainability. Many cities have enacted laws that limit the amount of new construction, increase the quantity and quality of green spaces within the city, and foster the construction of new public transportation systems. The use of such alternatives as rail, metro, bus, and bicycle has created more options for public transportation (see the comparative illustration on p. 849). In Stockholm, Sweden, 70 percent of all trips are made by public transit. Moreover, the emphasis on public transportation has served to limit the growth of urban sprawl. Many cities, such as Vienna, where 50 percent of the city’s land is in green space, are also enacting new laws to protect urban parks and forests.

Western Culture Since 1945

Intellectually and culturally, the Western world since World War II has been notable for its diversity and innovation. Especially since 1970, new directions have led some observers to speak of a “Postmodern” cultural world.

POSTWAR LITERATURE One of the most original trends in postwar literature was known as the Theater of the Absurd. Its most famous proponent was the Irishman Samuel Beckett (1906–1990), who lived in France. In Beckett’s play Waiting for Godot (1952), the action on the stage is not drawn from real life. Two men talk as they wait for someone with whom they may or may not have an appointment. No background information on the two men is provided. During the course of the play, nothing seems to happen. The audience is never told if the action in front of them is real or imagined. Unlike traditional theater, suspense is maintained not by having the audience wonder what is going to happen next but by having them wonder what is happening now.

The Theater of the Absurd reflected its time. The immediate postwar period was a time of disillusionment with fixed ideological beliefs in politics or religion. The same disillusionment that inspired the existentialism of Albert Camus (ahl-BAYR ka-MOO) (1913–1960) and Jean-Paul Sartre (ZHAHNH-POHL SAR-truh) (1905–1980), with its sense of the world’s meaninglessness, underscored the bleak worldview of absurdist drama and literature. The starting point of the existentialism of Sartre and Camus was the absence of God in the universe. Although the death of God was tragic, it meant that humans had no predetermined destiny and were utterly alone in the universe, with no future and no hope. As Camus expressed it:

A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity.

According to Camus, then, the world was absurd and without meaning; humans, too, are without meaning and purpose. Reduced to despair and depression, humans have but one source of hope—their own existence.

POSTMODERNISM The term Postmodern covers a variety of intellectual and artistic styles and ways of thinking prominent since the 1970s. In the broadest sense, Postmodernism rejects the modern Western belief in an objective truth and instead focuses on the relative nature of reality and knowledge.

While existentialism wrestled with notions of meaning and existence, a group of French philosophers in the 1960s...
attempted to understand how meaning and knowledge operate through the study of language and signs. **Poststructuralism**, or **deconstruction**, formulated by Jacques Derrida (ZHAAHK DEH-ree-duh) (1930–2004), holds that culture is created and can therefore be analyzed in a variety of ways, according to the manner in which people create their own meaning. Hence there is no fixed truth or universal meaning.

Michel Foucault (mih-SHELL foo-KOH) (1926–1984) drew on Derrida to explore relationships of power. Believing that “power is exercised rather than possessed,” Foucault argued that the diffusion of power and oppression marks all relationships. For example, any act of teaching entails components of assertion and submission, as the student adopts the ideas of the person in power. Therefore, all norms are culturally produced and entail some degree of power struggle.

Postmodernism was also evident in literature. In the Western world, the best examples were found in Latin America, in a literary style called **magic realism**, and in Central and Eastern Europe. Magic realism combined realistic events with dreamlike or fantastic backgrounds. One of the finest examples of magic realism can be found in the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, written by Gabriel García Márquez (gahb-ree-EL gar-SEE-uh MAHR-kes) (b. 1928), a Colombian who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982. The novel is the story of the fictional town of Macondo as seen by several generations of the Buendias, its founding family. The author slips back and forth between fact and fantasy. Villagers are not surprised when a local priest rises into the air and floats. But when wandering gypsies introduce these villagers to magnets, telescopes, and magnifying glasses, the villagers are dumbfounded by what they see as magic. According to the author, fantasy and fact depend on one’s point of view.

The other center of Postmodernism was in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in the work of Milan Kundera (MEE-lahn koon-DAYR-uh) (b. 1929) of Czechoslovakia. Like the magic realists of Latin America, Kundera blended fantasy with realism. Unlike the magic realists, though, Kundera used fantasy to examine moral issues and remained
optimistic about the human condition. Indeed, in his first novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, published in 1984, Kundera does not despair because of the political repression in his native land that he so aptly describes, but allows his characters to use love as a way to a better life. The human spirit can be diminished but not destroyed.

**Trends in Art**

Following the war, the United States dominated the art world, much as it did the world of popular culture. New York City replaced Paris as the artistic center of the West. The Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney Museum of Modern Art, together with New York’s numerous art galleries, promoted modern art and helped determine artistic tastes throughout much of the world. One of the styles that became synonymous with the emergence of the New York art scene was **Abstract Expressionism**.

Dubbed “action painting” by one critic, Abstract Expressionism was energetic and spontaneous, qualities evident in the enormous canvases of Jackson Pollock (1912–1956). In such works as *Lavender Mist* (1950), paint seems to explode, enveloping the viewer with emotion and movement. Pollock’s swirling forms and seemingly chaotic patterns broke all conventions of form and structure. His drip paintings, with their total abstraction, were extremely influential with other artists, and he eventually became a celebrity. Inspired by Native American sand painters, Pollock painted with the canvas on the floor. He explained, “On the floor I am more at ease. I feel nearer, more a part of the painting, since this way I can walk around it, work from four sides and be literally in the painting. When I am in the painting, I am not aware of what I am doing. There is pure harmony.”

The early 1960s saw the emergence of Pop Art, which took images of popular culture and transformed them into works of fine art. Andy Warhol (1930–1987), who began as an advertising illustrator, was the most famous of the pop artists. Warhol adapted images from commercial art, such as cans of Campbell’s soup, and photographs of such celebrities as Marilyn Monroe. Other artists drew their inspiration from comic strips. Derived from mass culture, these works were mass-produced and deliberately “of the moment,” expressing the fleeting whims of popular culture.

Postmodernism’s eclectic commingling of past tradition with Modernist innovation became increasingly evident in architecture. One example is provided by Charles Moore (1929–1993). His *Piazza d’Italia* (1976–1980) in New Orleans is an outdoor plaza that combines classical Roman columns with stainless steel and neon lights. This blending of modern-day materials with historical references distinguished the Postmodern architecture of the late 1970s and 1980s from the Modernist glass box.


Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the art and music industries increasingly adopted the techniques of marketing and advertising. With large sums of money invested in painters and musicians, pressure mounted to achieve critical and commercial success. Negotiating the distinction between art and popular culture was essential as many people equated merit with sales or economic value rather than aesthetic considerations.

In the art world, Neo-Expressionism reached its zenith in the mid-1980s. The economic boom and free spending of the Reagan years contributed to a thriving art scene in the United States. Neo-Expressionist artists like Anselm Kiefer (An-selm KEEF-uhr) (b. 1945) became increasingly popular as the art market soared. Born in Germany the year the war ended, Kiefer combines aspects of Abstract Expressionism, collage, and German Expressionism to create works that are stark and haunting.

**The World of Science and Technology**

Many of the scientific and technological achievements since World War II have revolutionized people’s lives. During World War II, university scientists were recruited to work for their governments and develop new weapons and practical instruments of war. British physicists played a crucial role...
in the development of an improved radar system that helped defeat the German air force in the Battle of Britain in 1940. German scientists created self-propelled rockets as well as jet airplanes to keep Hitler’s hopes alive for a miraculous turnaround in the war. The computer, too, was a wartime creation. The British mathematician Alan Turing designed a primitive computer to assist British intelligence in breaking the secret codes of German ciphering machines. The most famous product of wartime scientific research was the atomic bomb, created by a team of American and European scientists under the guidance of the physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer. Many wartime devices were created for destructive purposes, but computers and breakthrough technologies such as nuclear energy were soon adapted for peacetime uses.

The sponsorship of research by governments and the military during World War II created a new scientific model. Science had become very complex, and only large organizations with teams of scientists, huge laboratories, and complicated equipment could undertake large-scale scientific projects. The requisite facilities were so expensive that they could be provided only by governments or large corporations.

There was no more stunning example of how the new scientific establishment operated than the space race of the 1960s. The announcement by the Soviets in 1957 that they had sent the first space satellite, Sputnik, into orbit around the earth spurred the United States to launch an ambitious project to land a manned spacecraft on the moon within a decade. Massive amounts of government money financed the scientific research and technological advances that attained this goal in 1969.

In 2004, two vehicles sent by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) arrived on the planet Mars. These Mars rovers, called Spirit and Opportunity, landed three weeks apart on different parts of the planet. Both contained instruments that determine the chemical content of rocks. Based on the minerals found in Mars rocks, NASA scientists were able to conclude that the now barren planet once had generous supplies of water. NASA plans additional missions to Mars to help prepare for the eventual landing of humans on the planet.

The postwar alliance of science and technology led to an accelerated rate of change that has become a fact of life in Western society (see the comparative essay “From the Industrial Age to the Technological Age” on p. 852). One product of this alliance—the computer—may yet prove to be the most revolutionary of all the technological inventions of the twentieth century. Early computers, which required thousands of vacuum tubes to function, were large and hot and took up considerable space. The development of the transistor and then the silicon chip produced a revolutionary new approach to computer design. With the invention in 1971 of the microprocessor, a machine that combines the equivalent of thousands of transistors on a single, tiny silicon chip, the road was open for the development of the personal computer. By the 1990s, the personal computer had become a regular fixture in businesses, schools, and homes. The Internet—the world’s largest computer network, launched in the 1980s by the U.S. government—provides millions of people around the world with quick access to immense quantities of information, as well as rapid communication and commercial transactions. By 2000, an estimated 500 million people were using the Internet.

Despite the marvels produced by science and technology, some people came to question the underlying assumption of this alliance—that scientific knowledge gave human beings the ability to manipulate the environment for their benefit. They maintained that some technological advances had far-reaching side effects damaging to the environment. The chemical fertilizers, for example, that were touted for producing larger crops wreaked havoc with the ecological balance of streams, rivers, and woodlands.

Varieties of Religious Life

Existentialism was one response to the despair generated by the apparent collapse of civilized values in the twentieth century. A revival of religion was another. Ever since the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, Christianity had been on the defensive. But in the twentieth century, a number of religious leaders attempted to bring new life to the faith.

In the Catholic Church, attempts at religious renewal came from two charismatic popes—John XXIII and John Paul II. Pope John XXIII (1881–1963) reigned for only a short time (1958–1963) but sparked a dramatic revival of Catholicism when he summoned the twenty-first ecumenical council of the church. Known as Vatican Council II, it liberalized a number of Catholic practices. The Mass was henceforth to be celebrated in the vernacular languages rather than Latin. New avenues of communication with other Christian faiths were also opened for the first time since the Reformation.

John Paul II (1920–2005), who had been the archbishop of Krakow in Poland before his elevation to the papacy in 1978, was the first non-Italian to be elected pope since the sixteenth century. Although he alienated a number of people by reasserting traditional Catholic teaching on such issues as birth control, women in the priesthood, and clerical celibacy, John Paul’s numerous travels around the world helped strengthen the Catholic Church throughout the non-Western world. A strong believer in social justice, the charismatic John Paul II was a powerful figure reminding Europeans of their spiritual heritage and the need to temper the pursuit of materialism with spiritual concerns.

FUNDAMENTALISM Despite the revival of religion after World War II, church attendance in Europe and the United States declined dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of growing secular attitudes. Yet even though the numbers of regular churchgoers in established Protestant and Catholic churches continued to decline, the number of fundamentalist churches and churchgoers has been growing, especially in the United States.

Fundamentalism was originally a movement within Protestantism that arose early in the twentieth century. Its goal was to maintain a strict traditional interpretation of the Bible and the Christian faith, especially in opposition to the theory of Darwinian evolution and secularism. In the 1980s and
As many observers have noted, a key aspect of the world economy is that it is in the process of transition to what has been called a “postindustrial age,” characterized by a system that is not only increasingly global in scope but also increasingly technology-intensive. Since World War II, a stunning array of technological changes—especially in transportation, communications, space exploration, medicine, and agriculture—have transformed the world in which we live. Technological changes have also raised new questions and concerns and led to unexpected results. Some scientists have worried that genetic engineering might accidentally result in new strains of deadly bacteria that cannot be controlled outside the laboratory. Some doctors have recently raised the alarm that the overuse of antibiotics has created supergerms that are resistant to antibiotic treatment. The Technological Revolution has also led to the development of more advanced methods of destruction. Most frightening have been nuclear weapons.

The transition to a technology-intensive postindustrial world, which the futurist Alvin Toffler has dubbed the Third Wave (the first two being the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions), has produced difficulties for people in many walks of life—for blue-collar workers, whose high wages price them out of the market as firms begin to move their factories abroad; for the poor and uneducated, who lack the technical skills to handle complex tasks in the contemporary economy; and even for some members of the middle class, who have been fired or forced into retirement as their employers seek to reduce payrolls or outsource jobs to compete in the global marketplace.

It is now increasingly clear that the Technological Revolution, like the Industrial Revolution that preceded it, will entail enormous consequences and may ultimately give birth to a new era of social and political instability. The success of advanced capitalist states in the post–World War II era has been built on a broad consensus on the importance of two propositions: (1) the need for high levels of government investment in education, communications, and transportation as a means of meeting the challenges of continued economic growth and technological innovation and (2) the desirability of cooperative efforts in the international arena as a means of maintaining open markets for the free exchange of goods.

In the twenty-first century, these assumptions are increasingly under attack as citizens refuse to support education and oppose the formation of trading alliances to promote the free movement of goods and labor across national borders. The breakdown of the public consensus that brought modern capitalism to a pinnacle of achievement raises serious questions about the likelihood that the coming challenges of the Third Wave can be successfully met without a growing measure of political and social tension.

Q What is implied by the term Third Wave, and what challenges does the Third Wave present to humanity?

THE GROWTH OF ISLAM Fundamentalism, however, was not unique to Protestantism. In Islam, the term fundamentalism is used to refer to a return to traditional Islamic values, especially in opposition to a perceived weakening of moral strictures due to the corrupting influence of Western ideas and practices. After the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the term was also applied to militant Islamic movements, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, that favored militant action against Western influence.

Despite wariness about Islamic radicalism in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Islam is growing in both Europe and the United States, thanks primarily to the migration of people from Muslim countries. As Muslim communities became established in France, Germany, Britain, Italy, and Spain during the 1980s and 1990s, they built mosques for religious worship and religious education.

The Explosion of Popular Culture Especially since World War II, popular culture has played an important role in helping Western people define themselves. It also reflects the economic system that supports it, for this
Western Europe reinvented itself in the 1950s and 1960s as a remarkable economic recovery fostered a new optimism. Western European states embraced political democracy, and with the development of the European Community, many of them began to move toward economic unity. A new European society also emerged after World War II. White-collar workers increased in number, and installment plan buying helped create a consumer society. The welfare state provided both pensions and health care. Birth control led to smaller families, and more women joined the workforce.

Although many people were optimistic about a “new world order” after the collapse of communism, uncertainties still prevailed. Germany was successfully reunited, and the European Union became even stronger with the adoption of a common currency in the euro. Yugoslavia, however, disintegrated into warring states that eventually all became independent, and ethnic groups that had once been forced to live under distinct national banners began rebelling to form autonomous states. Although some were successful, others were brutally repressed.

In the Western Hemisphere, the United States and Canada built prosperous economies and relatively stable communities in the 1950s, but there, too, new problems, including ethnic, racial, and linguistic differences, along with economic difficulties, dampened the optimism of earlier decades. Although some Latin American nations shared in the economic growth of the 1950s and 1960s, it was not accompanied by political stability. Not until the 1980s did democratic governments begin with consistency to replace oppressive military regimes.

While the “new world order” was fitfully developing, other challenges emerged. The arrival of many foreigners, especially in Western Europe, not only strained the social services of European countries but also led to antiforeign sentiment and right-wing political parties that encouraged it. Environmental abuses led to growing threats not only to Europeans but also all humans. Terrorism, especially that caused by some parts of the Muslim world, emerged as a threat to many Western states. Since the end of World War II, terrorism seems to have replaced communism as the number one enemy of the West. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a major realization has been the recognition that the problems afflicting the Western world have become global problems.
CHAPTER TIMELINE

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CHAPTER REVIEW

Upon Reflection

Q What were the major successes and failures of the Western European democracies between 1945 and 2010?

Q What directions did Eastern European nations take after they became free from Soviet control? Why did they react as they did?

Q What role did popular culture play in the Western world after 1945?

Key Terms

- welfare state (p. 824)
- socialized medicine (p. 824)
- ethnic cleansing (p. 826)
- consumer society (p. 839)
- permissive society (p. 840)
- women’s liberation movement (p. 842)
- guest workers (p. 846)
- existentialism (p. 848)
- Postmodernism (p. 848)
- poststructuralism (deconstruction) (p. 849)
- Abstract Expressionism (p. 850)
- fundamentalism (p. 851)

Suggested Reading


