

## Western Europe 1965-1985

In the late 1960s, the Western world was rocked by a variety of protest movements → strong anti-war sentiments – Vietnam

### Protests

- Sexual Protest
  - WWI opened a significant crack in the rigid code of manners and morals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century
  - After WWII, changes in morals and manners were more extensive and noticeable → gave rise to what critics called the **permissive society**
  - Sweden took the lead on this
    - Sex education in schools and decriminalization of homosexuality were two aspects of Sweden's liberal legislation
  - Gay rights movement emerged in California in 1969 and spread to France, Italy, and Britain by 1970
  - Introduction of the birth control pill, widely available by the mid-1960s
  - Pornography increased
  - Breakdown of the traditional family
    - Divorce rates increased dramatically in the 1960's
- Youth
  - Before WWII, higher education was largely for the wealthier classes
  - After the war, European states fostered greater equality of opportunity in higher education → eliminating fees → huge influx of lower and middle classes
  - Outburst of student revolts in the 1960s → an extension of the protests across American campuses in opposition to Vietnam
    - Most famous revolt occurred in France in 1968
  - Other aspects of western society attacked → materialism, impersonal bureaucracies
- Feminist Movement
  - 1960s saw an upsurge in the feminist movement
  - Protesting that political and legal equality had not brought true equality with men
  - Betty Friedan – *Feminine Mystique* (1963)

### Stagnation in Eastern Europe

- **Brezhnev** took over from Khrushchev in 1964
  - Reluctant to reform
- **Brezhnev Doctrine** → right of the Soviet Union to intervene if socialism was threatened in another socialist state (Czechoslovakia 1968)
- Détente during the Brezhnev years
  - Regime permitted more access to western styles of music, dress, and art, although dissenters were still punished
- Economically, emphasized heavy industry
- Major economic problems:

- Government's insistence on central planning led to a huge, complex bureaucracy that discouraged efficiency and reduced productivity
- Soviet system based on guaranteed employment and a lack of incentives, bred apathy, complacency, absenteeism, and drunkenness
- Also faced agricultural problems
- Soviets began to be dependent on capitalistic countries
- By the 1970s, the Soviet Union developed a system that depended on patronage for advancement
- By 1980, the Soviet Union was ailing
  - Decline in the economy, rise in infant mortality, surge in alcoholism, and deterioration in working conditions led to an overall decline in morale and a growing perception that the system was failing
  - When Gorbachev becomes Party secretary in 1985, a new era began

### Conformity in E. Europe

- 1956 saw the Hungarians suppressed → what it did show was that Soviets had control over satellites but would sometimes grant them leeway to adopt domestic policies appropriate to local conditions. As a result, E. European Communist leaders now adopted reform programs to try and make socialism more acceptable to their populations
- In Poland, continued worker unrest led to the rise of the independent labor movement called **Solidarity**
  - Led by Lech Walesa
  - Represented 10 million of Poland's 35 million people
  - With the support of locals and the Catholic Church, Solidarity was able to win a series of concessions
  - The Polish government arrested Walesa in December 1981 and outlawed the union and imposed military rule
- The government of Janos Kadar in Hungary enacted the most far-reaching reforms in Eastern Europe
  - In early 1960s he legalized small private enterprises
  - "Communism with a Capitalist facelift"
  - Slowly moved Hungary away from its strict adherence to Soviet dominance
- **The Prague Spring**
  - Czechoslovakia remained under the rule of Novotny (placed there by Stalin)
  - By the 1960s, he had alienated many members of his own party and was resented by Czechoslovakia's writers (playwright- Vaclav Havel)
  - A writers' rebellion late in 1967 led to Novotny's resignation
  - In 1968, **Alexander Dubcek** was elected first secretary of the Communist Party and soon introduced a number of reforms, including freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom to travel abroad, and relaxation of secret police.
  - "**Communism with a human face**"
  - This period of euphoria was known as the Prague Spring
  - It proved short lived → to forestall the spreading of the spring fever, the Red Army invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and crushed the reform movement

- Dubcek was replaced by Husak a nonreformist who abolished his reforms and reestablished the old order
- Repression in East Germany and Romania
  - Stalinist policies continued to hold war in Eastern Europe
  - In early 1950s, the Communist government of E Germany became a faithful Soviet satellite
  - Industry was nationalized and agriculture collectivized
  - Exodus of skilled laborers created an economic problem for East Germany and helped lead to the building of the wall in 1961
  - After building the wall, built up one of the strongest economies in the Soviet Union's Eastern Bloc
  - Erich Honecker succeeded Ulbricht in 1971 and was a hard-liner who utilized the Stasi to rule with an iron fist for the next 18 years
  - By 1989, there was a Stasi officer for every 165 people in E. Germany
  - Romania
    - By 1948, Communist People's Democratic Front had assumed complete power
    - In 1965, leadership of the Communist government passed in the hands of Ceausescu, who established a rigid dictatorial regime – also ruled with an iron grip, using a secret police force- the Securitate – against dissent

### Change in Western Europe

Europe experience severe economic recessions in 1973-1974 and 1979-1983. Inflation and unemployment rose dramatically. Increase in a price of oil in 1973 was major cause for the first downturn.

### West Germany

- West German voters moved politically from the center-right politics of the Christian Democrats to center-left politics, and in 1969, the Social Democrats became the leading party.
- First Social Democratic chancellor was Willy Brandt. Successful in “opening toward the east”- ***Ostpolitik***
- Brandt met with Ulbricht, the leader of East Germany, and worked out a treaty that was signed in 1972. This agreement did not establish full diplomatic relations with East Germany but did call for “good neighborly” relations. As a result, led to greater cultural, personal, and economic contacts between West and East Germany.
- Despite this success, the discovery of an East German spy among Brandt's advisers causes his resignation in 1974.
- His successor, Helmut Schmidt was more of a technocrat than reform-minded and concentrated on economic problems.
  - was successful in eliminating a deficit of 10 billion marks in three years
- In 1982, a new government formed with a coalition of the Free Democrats and Christian Democrats

## Great Britain

- Between 1964 and 1979, Britain's Conservative and Labour parties alternated in power
- Neither party could end the fighting between the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland
  - Violence increased as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) staged a series of terrorist attacks
- Either party was not able to deal with the economy
- In 1979, after the economic problems seemed to worsen during the five years of Labour rule, the Conservatives returned to power under **Margaret Thatcher "Iron Lady"**
  - She became the first woman to serve as prime minister in British history
- Thatcher pledged to lower taxes, reduce government bureaucracy, limit social welfare, restrict union power, and end inflation.
- Although she did not eliminate the basic measures of the social welfare system, she instituted austerity measures to control inflation
- Her economic policy was termed "Thatcherism" → improved the British economic system, but at a price → old industrial areas declined
- Also saw cutbacks in education
- In foreign policy, Thatcher, like Ronald Reagan took a hardline against Communism
- She oversaw a large military buildup aimed at reestablishing Britain as a world police officer
- In 1982, Argentina attempted to take control of the Falkland Islands (one of Britain's few remaining colonial outposts), the British stopped the Argentines, but at an economic cost and the loss of 255 lives
- The Falkland war did generate popular support for Thatcher → increase in nationalism

## France

- The economic downturn in the '70s brought a shift to the left for France
- By 1981, the Socialists had become the dominant party in the National Assembly, Socialist leader Francois Mitterrand was elected president
- In 1982, he froze prices and wages in hopes to reduce the budget deficit and high inflation
- He also increased minimum wage, expanded social benefits, a mandatory 5<sup>th</sup> week of paid vacation for salaried workers, 39 hr work week, and higher taxes on the rich
- Government also nationalized the steel industry, major banks, the space and electronics industries, and important insurance firms
- The Socialist policies largely failed, within 3 years there was a decline in support caused by Mitterrand turning portions of the economy over to private enterprise.
- However, some improvements in the late 80s allowed him to win a second 7-year term in 1988

## Italy

- Italy witnessed the installation of its fiftieth postwar government in 1991
- Italian governments continued to consist of coalitions mostly led by Christian Democrats
- The Italian Communists had become advocates for Eurocommunism → an attempt to broaden support by dropping Marxist ideology
  - Won a number of local elections and took charge of the municipal governments in several cities including Rome and Naples for a brief time
- Italy also suffered economically in the 1970s

- Negative influence of mafia which had spread from southern Italy to the north

#### The European Community

- After 1970, Western European states continued to pursue the goal of integrating their economies
- First, 6 states in 1957
- The European Economic Community expanded in 1973 when Great Britain, Ireland, and Denmark joined what was now called the **European Community (EC)**
- Greece joined in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986

#### Society and Culture

- The Environment and Green Movements
  - By the 1970s, serious environmental problems became apparent
    - Air pollution
    - Water pollution
    - Nuclear power → Chernobyl (1986)
      - The opening of E. Europe after 1989 exposed the vast damage of industrial pollution
    - Environmental concerns forced the major parties in Europe to advocate for regulations and protection of the environment
    - **Green parties** emerged in the 1970s
      - Many had different origins- some antinuclear, others focused on women's liberation and concern for foreign workers
      - Very visible in West Germany- also Sweden, Austria, and Switzerland
      - Traditional political parties co-opted the environmental issues of the Greens
- Postmodern thought
  - The term postmodern covers a variety of artistic and intellectual styles and ways of thinking that have been prominent since the 1970s
  - **Postmodernism** rejects the modern Western belief in an objective truth and instead focuses on the relative nature of reality and knowledge
  - **Poststructuralism**, or deconstruction, believes 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 – no fixed truth or universal meaning (Jacques Derrida)
  - Foucault- idea that society not only creates ideal behavior from those who conform, but it also invents a subclass of individuals who do not conform – *History of Sexuality*
- Art
  - In the 60s and 70s, artists started producing installations that were either too fleeting or too large to appear in a traditional context of a museum
  - Allen Kaprow → “happenings”- events that were not scripted but chance occurrences— sometimes included audience participation
  - Postmodern response to modernism in architecture → blending of modern day materials with historical reference
  - Return to Realism in arts, Photorealism- often pessimistic or cynical

- Literature
  - Milan Kundera (Czech writer)- blended fantasy with realism – used fantasy to examine moral issues
- Music
  - Serialism
  - Minimalism
  - British Punk movement
- Mass Sports
  - Olympic games could now be broadcast around the globe
  - Football (Soccer) remained the dominant world sport and more than ever became a vehicle for nationalist sentiment and expression
  - During the Cold War tensions high in sport- USSR and US/W Europe
    - 1956- six nations withdrew from Olympics in protest of Soviets crushing the Hungarian uprising
    - In 1972, 27 African nations threatened to pull out of the Munich games because of apartheid in S. Africa
    - Also in '72 Munich games a Palestinian terrorist group seized 11 Israeli athletes as hostages
    - US boycotted the 1980 Olympics in protests of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
    - Soviets boycotted the LA Games 1984