

Western Europe: Revival of Democracy and the Economy

- All countries faced similar problems → had to rebuild economies, re-create democratic institutions, and face threat of Communism
- Communist success in Western Europe was short lived after WWII
 - Only in Italy and France- where still focused on inequities- did they retain significant support- 25%
 - Socialists parties struggled after the war as well – by the 1950s saw the need to abandon old doctrine and instead of focusing on class, focus on social injustice and liberty → no longer emphasizing elimination of capitalism
- By 1950, moderate political parties made a comeback
 - Rise of the **Christian Democrats**—not church based like prewar, interested in democracy and significant economic reforms
- Marshall Plan played a significant role in the economic recovery of Western Europe
- By 1950, industrial output was 30% above prewar levels

France

- Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970) dominated French history after WWII
 - During the war de Gaulle had assumed leadership of the resistance groups and played an important role in ensuring the establishment of French provisional government after the war.
- The declaration of the Fourth Republic, with a return to a parliamentary system based on parties that de Gaulle thought weak led him to withdraw from politics
- Formed the French Popular Movement—rightist organization
 - The Algerian crisis and defeats in Indochina weakened the Fourth Republic
- De Gaulle became president in 1958 → drafted a new constitution and established the Fifth Republic
 - He enhanced the power of the president – right to choose the prime minister, dissolve parliament, and supervise both defense and foreign policy
 - Wanted to bring France back into a position of great power
 - Increase role in the Cold War
 - Pulled France out of NATO
 - Invested in nuclear arms race – first nuclear bomb in 1960
- Economy improved between 1958 and 1968- faster than the US economy
- By the end of de Gaulle's era, France was a major industrial producer and exporter
- Still had problems→ Nationalization of coal, steel, and railroads led to large government deficits
 - Cost of living also increased faster than the rest of Europe- consumer goods were 45% higher in price than 10 years earlier
- Dissatisfaction with the inability of de Gaulle to deal with these problems led to series of protests and strikes in May 1968
- De Gaulle resigned in 1969

West Germany

- Three major parties emerged: Social Democrats, the Christian Democrats, and the Free Democrats – occupation forces allowed the political parties to play greater roles in their zones
- Unification of the three Western zones led to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949
 - Konrad Adenauer, leader of the Christian Democrats, served as chancellor from 1949 to 1963
- Due to the Korean War and increasing Cold War tensions, W. Germany rearmed in 1955 and became a member of NATO
- **“economic miracle”**
 - Ludwig Erhard, minister of finance, pursued a policy of new currency, free markets, low taxes, and elimination of controls, which combined with the American financial aid, led to rapid economic growth
 - To maintain its economic expansion, West Germany imported hundreds of thousands of guest workers, primarily from Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia
- Not until the 1960s, when Germans began to address the Nazi past more publicly by including the history in schools
- An economic downturn in the 1960s opened the door for the Social Democrats and in 1969, they became the leading party

Britain and the Welfare State

- In the elections immediately after the war the Labour Party defeated Churchill’s Conservative Party.
 - Had promised far-reaching reforms – particularly in the area of social welfare – in the post war situation this was attractive
 - The new Labour government under PM Clement Attlee, created reforms that established the basis for the modern **welfare state**
- Nationalization of the Bank of England, the coal and steel industries, public transportation, and public utilities such as electricity and gas
- National Insurance Act and the National Health Service Act in 1946
 - Established comprehensive social security program and nationalized medical insurance
 - System of socialized medicine – doctors and dentists work with the state hospitals, although private practice could be maintained
- The British welfare state became the model for most European states after the war
- The cost of this at home forced the British to dismantle the British Empire → it was not a belief in the morality of self-determination that brought an end to the Empire, but economic necessity
- Continuing problems, however, brought the Conservatives back into power from 1951 to 1964
 - Although they favored private enterprise, they accepted the welfare state

Italy

- After the war, Italy faced heavy reconstruction

- The monarchy was abolished and in June 1946, Italy became a democratic republic
- Christian Democrats, allied with the Catholic Church, emerged as the leading political party
 - Able to maintain control by keeping support of the upper and middle classes and the southern peasantry
- Still a large presence of the Italian Communist Party
- Italy also experienced an “economic miracle”
 - Marshall Plan helped stabilize the economy
 - Southern Italy still lagged behind → In the ‘60s millions of Italians moved from the south to the more prosperous north

Move Toward Unity

- 1951 → France, West Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Italy formed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)
 - Create a common market for coal and steel products, eliminate tariffs and other trade barriers for the 6 countries
- 1957 → European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) → further European research on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy
- These 6 nations signed the Rome Treaty, which created the European Economic Community (EEC) → also known as the Common Market
 - Eliminated trade 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
 - Encouraged cooperation and standardization in many aspects of the six nations’ economies
 - All member nations benefited economically – became the world’s largest exporter and purchaser of raw materials

Postwar Society and Culture in Western Europe

What major changes occurred in Western society and culture between 1945 and 1965?

- Middle class grew- increase in white collar jobs
- Consumer society developed
 - Credit (introduced in the ‘20s) became widespread
 - Introduction of supermarkets
 - Automobile
 - By the 1960s, there were almost 45 million
- Mass leisure
 - Rising incomes, combined with shorter working hours, created an even greater market for mass leisure activities
 - In the 1960s the number of paid holidays increased
 - German and Italian workers received between thirty-two and thirty-five paid holidays a year
 - Pop culture became commercialized
 - Mass tourism
- **Creation of Welfare State** – most noticeable social development in postwar Europe

- Social welfare benefits differed from country to country in quantity and quality
- Affordable healthcare a goal of the welfare state- in some countries, medical care was free to all people with some kind of insurance, but in others people had to contribute to the cost of their medical care (10-25% of cost)
- Family allowances→ some countries provide a minimum level of maternal care for children
 - Also a way to increase the population after the war
- Expanded the number of universities and provided scholarships to allow everyone to attend an institution of higher learning
 - Did not achieve goals, in the 60s, most students in Western European universities came from privileged backgrounds
 - Britain 25% from working class
 - France 17.6%
- Money states spent on social services increased dramatically
 - Critics said this produced a new generation of citizens overly dependent on the state
 - Most people favored the benefits though, and politicians saw it as political suicide to try and lower benefits
- Gender
 - British system only provided subsidies for women who stayed home→ married women who worked were given few or no benefits
 - Employers were also encouraged to pay women lower wages to discourage them from joining the workforce
 - British system encouraged wives to be dependent on husbands
 - Same in W. Germany
 - French government gave women and men equal welfare benefits
 - However, still wanted to encourage population growth so provided incentives for women to stay home and bear children as well as day care and after school programs to assist working mothers

Women in Postwar Western Europe

- Trend toward smaller families→ impacted the change in women's employment in both Europe and the US
- Increased number of married women in the workforce
 - Burden of earning income on one hand and raising a family and maintaining the house on the other became an issue
- Working class women in particular still earned salaries lower than those of men for equal work
 - In the 1960s, women earned only 60% of men's wages in Britain, 50% in France, and 63% in W. Germany
- Still working traditionally female jobs
- Women in France and Italy did not get the right to vote until 1945
- Immediately after WWII, European women tended to fall back into the traditional roles expected of them, and little was heard of feminist concerns
- Women's liberation movement would rise in the 1960s

- **Simone de Beauvoir** – teacher, novelist, and writer- in a lifelong partnership (never married) with Jean-Paul Sartre
 - Existentialist movement, political activist
 - Influential work- *The Second Sex* (1949)- argued that as a result of a male dominated society, women had been defined by their differences from men and consequently received second-class status
 - Became a big influence in feminist movement of the 60s and 70s in Europe and America

Postwar Art and Literature

- Art-
 - Many artists, especially Surrealists, fled to the US during WWII to escape persecution for their revolutionary ideas
 - Following the war, the US dominated the art world as it did the world of pop culture
 - New York City replaced Paris as the artistic center of the West → The Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, numerous galleries etc...
 - **Abstract Expressionism** became synonymous with the New York art scene
 - Energetic and spontaneous
 - Jackson Pollock (1912-1956)
 - **Pop Art**
 - Took images of pop culture and transformed it into fine art
 - Andy Warhol (1930-1987)
- Literature
 - “Theater of the Absurd”
 - Drama, began in France in the 1950s
 - Samuel Beckett – *Waiting for Godot* (1952)
 - Reflected the post war time of disillusionment with ideological beliefs in politics or religion
- Philosophy
 - Existentialism
 - Born largely of the desperation caused by two world wars and breakdown of traditional values
 - Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus
 - Absence of God in the universe – lack of hope and future
 - No meaning- humans have one source of hope → themselves
 - “Discover the human person in a depersonalized age”
- Attempt to Revive Religion
 - Religion had been on the decline
 - Protestant Karl Barth—infuse traditional Christian teachings with new life
 - Charismatic pope tried to renew the Catholic Church
 - Pope John XXIII- sparked a dramatic revival of Catholicism – summoned the 21 ecumenical council of the Church known as the Vatican II (can synthesize with

Council of Trent)– liberalized a number of Catholic practices. Liturgy of mass-vernacular, not Latin – new avenues of communication opened

- However, overall decline in church going for Europeans. Even in Italy, only 48% by 1968.

Popular Culture

- Americanization of the world
 - Consumerism
 - TV
 - Establishment of a quota system prevented American tv from completely taking over
 - Movies
 - Music
 - Jazz, rhythm and blues, rock and roll
 - Beatles