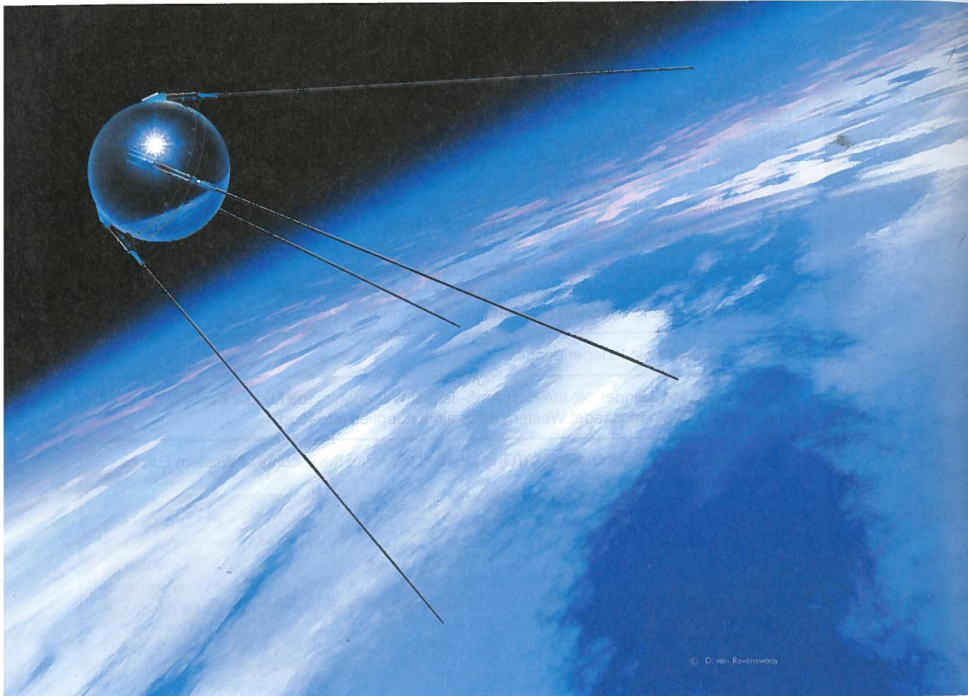
27 The Global Boom and Its Contradictions

1945–1975



Sputnik I, the first artificial satellite in Earth's orbit.

In February 1945 Arthur C. Clarke, the British science writer later celebrated for such books as *2001: A Space Odyssey,* wrote to the editor of *Wireless World* magazine. He argued in his letter that World War II rocket technology had advanced to the point where "artificial satellites" could be launched into orbit around the earth. The transmitters on these devices would broadcast research data about the upper atmosphere. Almost as an afterthought, Clarke also proposed that if a satellite were placed at the correct height above the equator to make one revolution every twenty-four hours, it would remain in a stationary position relative to the ground. "Three repeater stations, 120 degrees apart in the correct orbit," he wrote, "could give television and microwave coverage to the entire planet." In other words, these satellites could hypothetically relay signals instantly from any point on earth to any other point, a feat not possible at ground level. Clarke mused that the technical hurdles to satellite broadcasting might be overcome "perhaps half a century ahead."

In fact, the Soviet Union put Sputnik, a transmitting satellite the size of a beach ball, into orbit in October 1957, just twelve years after Clarke wrote his visionary letter. The United States shot Explorer I into space the following year, and in 1962 the AT&T corporation, working with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched Telstar, the first orbital satellite to relay TV signals. By 1964, governments and corporations were firing satellites into orbit at a rate of about ten a month. In 1969 three Americans landed on the moon.

The remarkable pace of satellite communication and space exploration was one expression of the extraordinary economic and technological surge that characterized the three decades after World War II. In the immediate aftermath of that devastating conflict, world leaders could not have foreseen that by 1950 both global population and economic production would veer sharply upward. The first part of this chapter explores this phenomenon, its causes, and its implications for both human social development and the planet's physical and natural health.

Scientific research animated the space age but so did the intense rivalry that developed between the United States and the Soviet Union, the subject of the second section of the chapter. The wartime Grand Alliance sealed in 1941 between the Western democracies and the Soviet Union deteriorated into acrimony even before the struggle ended (see Chapter 26). The United States and Russia never hurled armored divisions or nuclear missiles at each other, so in that sense the conflict remained a "cold" war. But the venomous rhetoric and brinksmanship of the two political blocs, plus their strategic interventions in the affairs of numerous other states in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, kept the world in a state of chronic anxiety for nearly forty years.

The third part of the chapter investigates the relationship between expanding global growth and accelerating demands around the world for political freedom and social justice. These rising expectations among the colonized and the poor, as well as among well-fed but discontented middle classes, produced political tensions, indeed several civil wars and revolutionary movements. Between 1950 and 1975 the world as a whole advanced to unparalleled material prosperity, but the chasm between the richest and the poorest social groups and world regions continued to widen.

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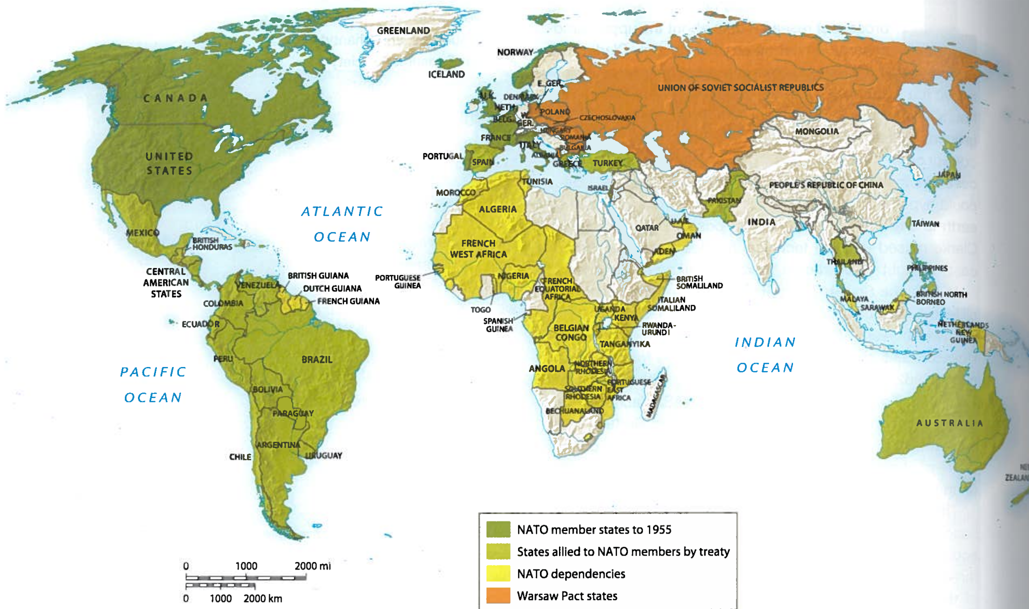
A Panoramic View



MAP 27.1 Political and military alliances, 1955.

The Cold War produced a politically bipolar global landscape. Which states remained outside the Warsaw Pact or NATO alliances? What factors might have encouraged certain states to maintain neutrality?

Population and Economy: An Era of Spectacular Growth

FOCUS Why did the world economy grow at such a rapidly accelerating rate in the three decades following World War II, and what were major social consequences of that growth?

The mid-twentieth century was a significant turning point for the global economy and the world's population. In the three decades after World War II, production of material wealth worldwide advanced at a much faster rate than it had during the previous thirty years. In some countries people consumed goods on a scale their grandparents would have thought unimaginable. Also about midcentury, the population growth rate, which had been accelerating since the eighteenth century, shot up even faster.

These two trends reinforced each other. Economic growth and new technology allowed the planet to accommodate more people, and more people meant an expanding supply of labor in places where economic success required it. In countries where population grew faster than the economy, however, living standards for peasants and workers typically declined. Stunning economic growth on the world scale proved compatible with both worsening poverty and environmental degradation in many places.

Global Population at Its Crest

In the third quarter of the twentieth century, the world's population growth rate ran higher than in any previous historical era; it also ran higher than after 1975. During those twenty-five years, some societies moved through a demographic transition (see Chapter 25). This meant that people lived longer on average (the mortality rate declined), but women had fewer children (the fertility rate also declined). The population growth rate therefore slowed. This happened in Europe and North America (north of Mexico) and a little later in Eastern Europe, Russia, Japan, and some Latin American states. In several regions, however, fertility rates remained high but mortality rates dropped faster than ever; consequently, growth rates went up. In much of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, populations grew at a rate of about 2.5 percent per year, much higher than, for example, in Western Europe. India's population grew from about 360 million in 1950 to 580 million by 1973, a number only slightly less than the world's entire population in 1600.

Several factors contributed to spiraling population after World War II. One of these was the post–World War II **baby boom.** Despite the general trend of slowing growth rates in many Western industrialized countries, a spike occurred just after the war, as more young people, released from military service or war-related work, started families amid improving economic conditions. In the United States and Britain, for example, millions of women lost wartime jobs. Consequently, they returned in large numbers to domestic life, and new offspring soon arrived. The baby boom lasted until about 1957, when fertility rates declined again.

baby boom A period of increased birthrates, especially in Western countries, from the end of World War II to about 1957.

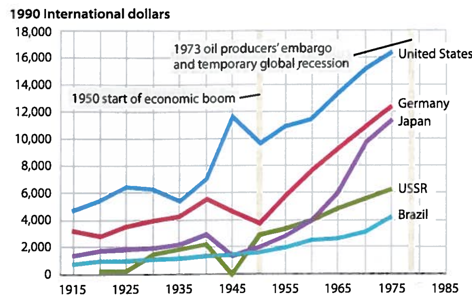
On the global scale, the population surge may be linked to an array of new drugs and pesticides, which pushed down mortality rates, especially in tropical and subtropical regions. Vaccination campaigns combated lethal diseases such as cholera, typhus, diphtheria, and polio, raising the survival rate of small children. Smallpox was exterminated, the last known case occurring in East Africa in 1977. DDT, the chemical pesticide first used in World War II, killed insects that transmitted typhus and malaria. Gradual postwar improvements in nutrition and water treatment, especially in large cities, also helped lower annual mortality.

The Postwar Economic Boom

Extraordinary global economic growth after World War II manifested itself in several ways: a huge expansion of capitalist industry, a resurgence of international trade and investment, continuous quickening of scientific and technical innovation, rising incomes for hundreds of millions of people, and much greater consumption of both fossil fuels and material goods. Remarkable rises in gross domestic product per capita occurred not only in the large capitalist economies but also in the communist states and at least some of the new nations that emerged from colonial dependency.

Evidence of boom times. The United States primed the growth pump worldwide. In 1945 it controlled nearly two-thirds of the globe's industrial output. However, once the Western European states and Japan dug themselves out of physical ruin, they began to register even higher growth rates than the United States. In the Soviet Union, communist economic planners showed they could also perform postwar miracles. That country's industrial output doubled between 1945 and 1950 alone and kept on growing into the 1960s. On the global scale, manufacturing grew fourfold between 1950 and 1975, and world trade doubled every ten years (see graph: Change in GDP per capita from 1914 to 1975[1]). In the major capitalist states, unemployment plunged, and workers enjoyed rising real wages. Both inflation and cyclical business downturns remained mild.

Integrating the capitalist economies. At the international Bretton Woods conference in New Hampshire in 1944 (see Chapter 26), the leading capitalist states vowed to advance global peace and prosperity by setting up postwar institutions for international cooperation, collective security, stabilization of currencies, low-tariff trade, and new investment in war-ravaged countries. When the war ended,



Change in GDP per capita from 1914 to 1975. Which countries experienced the greatest growth in GDP in this period? How would you characterize overall change in GDP in this period? What factors can account for the spike in U.S. GDP just after the sharp decline in Soviet GDP in 1945?

Italy, Japan, and the two-thirds of Germany that became the capitalist Federal Republic (West Germany) subscribed to the Bretton Woods plan. The countries that collaborated to promote economic integration formalized their association in 1961 as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a group that included seventeen European states, the United States, Canada, Turkey, and (within three years) Japan.

In the 1950s the United States presided firmly over this club of capitalist states and the "Bretton Woods system," a set of rules that states were expected to follow in doing business with one another. Economic leaders agreed to make the U.S. dollar the world's anchor currency, pegging its value to gold at a fixed rate of $35 an ounce. Other countries then pegged their currencies to the dollar, though provision was made for states to alter the value of their currency to deal with economic or financial crises. The system worked well for nearly two decades. It discouraged disruptive currency fluctuations and stimulated international commerce and investment. Twenty-three countries established the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1947 to sponsor successive "rounds" of negotiations to lower customs duties on manufactured goods. The United States, Japan, and Western Europe all experienced huge export booms in consequence. Until the 1970s they produced together more than 80 percent of the world's manufactured exports, trading the greater part of those goods with one another.

In the postwar years, American corporations, flush with new consumer products, technologies, and disposable capital, dominated international investment. These firms put money in foreign countries by building factories and opening marketing offices. Between 1950 and 1973, U.S. corporate investment in Western Europe and Japan grew from $2 billion to $41 billion. Companies that mass-produced technologically complex products like automobiles ballooned in size. For example, Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors, the three major American automakers, all opened plants in Western Europe. By the late 1960s they commanded more than 25 percent of that region's consumer market for cars and trucks. Eventually, European and Japanese companies penetrated foreign markets as well.

The European Economic Community. The ruin of war convinced many Western European leaders that the region must exchange autarky—enclosed national self-sufficiency—for economic integration, even political federation. These leaders knew that the German Federal Republic would not be held back economically for long, and they wanted to direct its energies toward the region's economic resurgence and not into a new military buildup. The United States encouraged a pan-European partnership. John Foster Dulles, secretary of state during the Dwight D. Eisenhower presidency (1953–1960), had argued back in 1941 that when the war was over the "reestablishment of some twenty-five wholly independent sovereign states in Europe would be political folly."[2] European integration would presumably serve the objectives of Bretton Woods, enlarge markets for American goods, and counteract communist subversion.

Several states were ready to advance in that direction. In 1952 the German Federal Republic, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Italy joined together to launch the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), an international regulatory authority that created a common market for those two resources among the member states. This was a remarkable achievement, considering that Germany and Italy had been mortal enemies of the other four members just a few years earlier. In fact, the agency worked so well that these six states negotiated a much broader common market for goods, founding the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 under the terms of the Treaty of Rome. By the 1960s free trade and commercial cooperation among an expanding list of members were transforming Western Europe into a global economic powerhouse.

Capitalism and the welfare state. The idea that the state has a responsibility to guarantee at least minimal economic safety nets for all citizens gained nearly universal acceptance during the twentieth century, at least as a social principle. Leaders committed to the Bretton Woods system generally understood that wage-earning citizens, including labor union members and democratic socialists, would buy into plans for greater global economic integration only if the state continued to guarantee people basic security against company failures, wage losses, layoffs, and sudden business downturns.

Consequently, the **welfare state** grew along with the global economy, though disproportionately faster in Western Europe than in the United States, where public opinion remained divided about federal government activism. Owing to postwar prosperity, governments accumulated revenue to expand services such as health care, disability insurance, low-cost housing, pensions, public education, and grants to college students. In the third quarter of the century, this partnership between capitalist enterprise and social democracy worked quite well. In all the leading industrial states, poverty generally declined, worker wages rose, and leaders of the moderate left and right cooperated.

welfare state An approach to government in which the state uses public funds to protect and promote the health and social well-being of all citizens.

Economic Growth in Communist States

Between 1945 and 1955 the number of countries dedicated to the Marxist-Leninist brand of socialist ideology grew from one—the Soviet Union—to twelve, including eight in Eastern Europe, plus China, Mongolia, North Korea, and North Vietnam (see Map 27.1). The number of people living under communist governments increased by hundreds of millions. Many of these states experienced impressive economic growth in the 1950s. The Soviet economy grew faster than that of any Western capitalist country, though from a lower starting point. China enjoyed unprecedented growth from 1952 and 1957. All of these states shunned the Bretton Woods club, which, as they well knew, functioned in large measure to advance the global political and economic interests of the United States. Rather, they adopted highly centralized state planning and control generally modeled on Soviet-style socialism.

Soviet successes. Under Joseph Stalin's long rule, the Soviet economy moved to the rhythm of successive Five Year Plans, sets of government-mandated economic goals. The state, not private enterprises, owned the country's industrial plants, transport systems, and commercial institutions, as well as most of its farming. The state, not the market, determined prices and wages. After World War II, Stalin continued to mobilize the Soviet population for industrial development as if the fighting had not stopped. Living standards remained modest, and most consumer goods were available to only the *nomenklatura*—the upper levels of the communist civil and military bureaucracy.

The Soviet economy continued to grow under the guidance of Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971), the brash and boisterous coal miner's son who rose to the top of the Soviet political hierarchy within two years of Stalin's death. He denounced his predecessor's harsh domestic repression and global isolation, but he had full faith in socialism to improve life for ordinary citizens. During Khrushchev's years in command (1953–1964), he shifted some state investment from heavy industry to consumer products like shoes, clothing, and radios. He expanded low-cost housing, public services, and higher education, notably for young women. He revived Soviet farming with new machinery, fertilizers, and irrigation projects for collective farms. Gradually, rural living standards improved. Khrushchev also caught the capitalist world off guard in October 1957, when Soviet engineers launched Sputnik into earth orbit on a ballistic missile. This event sent the American public into an uproar over the country's failure to stay ahead of its communist rival in science and technology.

Khrushchev announced that within twenty years the Soviet economy would leave the capitalist states far behind. "When we catch you up . . . , in passing you up, we will wave to you," he told then–U.S. vice president Richard Nixon in 1959.[3] These confident proclamations, however, masked serious weaknesses. Many party bureaucrats despised Khrushchev's reforms and did all they could to sabotage them. State controls, though relaxed slightly, continued to stifle broad technical innovation. Despite the initial Soviet breakthrough in ballistic missile testing, Russia had only 4 operational missiles by 1962; the United States had 224.

Nikita Khrushchev and Richard Nixon discuss consumer economics. In 1959 the U.S. government opened an exhibit in Moscow featuring a typical American suburban house complete with labor-saving appliances. Touring the exhibition together, the Soviet premier and the American vice president engaged in an impromptu conversation (through interpreters) about their respective national economies. The exchange, known as the Kitchen Debate, was captured with new color videotape technology and broadcast in both countries. Why might Khrushchev and Nixon have debated household consumption as part of a larger conversation about economic ideology?

Khrushchev's political opponents forced him from office in 1964, though he had "de-Stalinized" the political culture enough that his successors sent him into obscure retirement, not to Siberia. Leonid Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin then rose to leadership. They continued to make modest social reforms and greatly increased Soviet foreign trade. But they also invested heavily once again in state planning, heavy industry, and the military. During the rest of the decade, economic growth slowed steadily; by the early 1970s, the Soviet economy was close to stagnant.

China leaps forward and back. Like Stalin in Russia, Mao Zedong aimed to make the People's Republic of China a self-sufficient industrial power. The country experienced periods of impressive economic growth between 1949 and 1976, the year Mao died. During those twenty-seven years, however, the economy oscillated wildly, in large part because of deep policy disagreements within the ruling Communist Party. Mao was determined to industrialize China at breakneck speed without compromising the Marxist-Leninist vision of radical social equality—no rich and poor peasants, no landlords, no capitalist bourgeoisie. Generally, when the state tried to orchestrate the economy from the top, growth waned. When it backed off, for example, permitting rural farmers to buy and sell privately in local markets, growth accelerated but income inequalities also widened.

For a few years after its 1949 victory, the communist government left petty capitalism in the countryside mostly alone, and with generous aid from the Soviet Union the Chinese economy grew rapidly. Between 1950 and 1957, life expectancy rose by twenty-one years. The number of children in school soared, and new laws alleviated the exploitation of rural women by abolishing child marriage and permitting divorce by mutual consent.

In the mid-1950s, however, Mao and his inner circle decided that the country must ramp up farm output to sustain industrial expansion and the rapidly growing urban workforce. He therefore ordered wholesale collectivization of agriculture. Peasants were to labor for the state, not for themselves. When village-size collectives proved insufficiently productive, the regime hatched grander plans, dispatching tens of millions of rural men and women to giant irrigation projects and to huge communes where they shared dormitories, dining halls, communal nurseries, and "happy homes" for the elderly. To increase iron and steel production, the state also instructed peasants to build and operate miniature blast furnaces. China, Mao proclaimed, would make a "Great Leap Forward" into socialist utopia.

A worker stokes a backyard blast furnace. Chinese peasants set up over one million smelters in the "battle for steel," an attempt to make steel on an industrial scale through the collective efforts of many rural communities. Why did localized steel manufacturing not produce the results Mao expected, in spite of a long history of impressive peasant productivity?

Instead, from 1958 to 1961 the country descended into famine. Farm output on the big but inefficient communes plummeted. Backyard mills produced inferior metal and prevented peasants from tending crops. A succession of disastrous harvests left vast rural areas with no food at all. Upwards of thirty million people, unable to survive on grass, bark, and shoe leather, died of starvation and disease, probably more than perished in World War II. Soviet help also shrank because relations between the two countries soured over a range of issues, including simmering territorial disputes along their mutual border. Economic conditions became so bad that leaders who favored smaller collectives and private plots for peasants recovered political influence. For a few years, growth returned—along with greater income differences.

In 1966, however, China descended again into turmoil. Mao, reacting to critics within the party and opposing any resurgence of capitalism, proclaimed the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This mass popular mobilization aimed to cleanse party and society of bourgeois values, foreign influences, and ideological impurities. In effect, Mao and his hard-core supporters, including his radical wife Jiang Qing, unleashed young intellectuals, students, and workers against the very government establishment that he headed. More than two years of political tumult and economic stagnation followed. Maoist Red Guards intimidated and even murdered people even faintly suspected of bourgeois "wrong thinking," including ownership of Western pop records. Millions of educated men and women were exiled to villages where peasants instructed them in proper revolutionary attitudes. Red Guard enthusiasm began to wane in the late 1960s, and the economy revived quickly. Meanwhile, high party officials devoted themselves to vicious infighting over succession to the elderly and failing Mao. This state of affairs continued until his death in 1976.

The Worldwide Lure of Industrialization

As the postwar world economy blossomed, the idea that industrialization was the key to prosperity spread rapidly from the big capitalist and socialist economies to dozens of other states. In most of these smaller countries, leaders tried to follow a middle road between private investment and centralized planning and control. They remained leery of the Bretton Woods system, arguing that economic progress required high tariffs to protect new industries, not closer ties with foreign corporations and banks.

Economies in Latin America. During the Great Depression and World War II, when global trade shrank, several Latin American republics experimented with **import substitution industrialization, or ISI.** These programs aimed to reduce both commercial dependence on more economically developed countries and vulnerability to global economic swings. Through ISI, a country could slow the export of natural resources and reduce somewhat its reliance on foreign capital. The state, however, had to prime the development pump by investing in and managing industries and transport networks. In the 1950s ISI produced some good results. Mexico quadrupled its manufacturing output between 1945 and 1973. By the mid-1960s Brazil, which occupies nearly half the land area of South America, produced nearly all its own consumer goods. Even so, foreign investment did not wither. Between 1950 and 1965, for example, American companies invested $3.8 billion in Latin American enterprises, reaping in return profits of $7.5 billion.

import substitution industrialization (ISI) Government economic policies to encourage national industries to produce finished goods that would otherwise be imported.

During and right after World War II, several Latin American states worked to strengthen democratic institutions, including voting rights for women. This trend, however, did not last. With the notable exceptions of Chile and Uruguay, authoritarian governments of one type or another, some of them military regimes, seized power, most in close alliance with the U.S. government. Typically, those governments represented pragmatic alliances among the army, business leaders, professionals, urban middle classes, and industrial workers, all groups that wanted technical modernization and industrial self-sufficiency. Between 1962 and 1966 alone, military coups took place in nine Latin American countries, including Brazil.

Even the most dictatorial governments, however, adopted nationalist and sometimes even socialist rhetoric, rallying city populations with promises of welfare services and better living standards. In Argentina, for example, President Juan Perón (in office 1946–1955, 1973–1974) kept a tight rein on power but also appealed to the urban masses and labor unions for support. Eva Duarte, the president's wife, rose from soap opera actress to brilliant advocate of the poor against the traditional land-owning class. Known affectionately as "Evita," she helped women get the vote in 1947, though also arguing that women best served the nation by staying home. Nonetheless, except in Mexico, reforms to transfer land from estate lords to peasants made little progress. In the late 1960s about 17 percent of Latin American proprietors owned about 90 percent of the land. Population also rose faster than national economies, producing inflation, rural joblessness, and swelling urban poverty in many countries.

Economic challenges in new states. In all the territories that achieved independence from colonial rule in the decade after World War II, new leaders aimed to modernize their economies by building national industries. The largest and most technically advanced of these new states was India, which in 1950 had about 372 million people, more than twice as many as in all of Latin America. In pointed contrast to most states in Asia, India achieved growth while simultaneously building a vivacious, if disorderly, democracy. Jawaharlal Nehru, who led India and the Congress Party from 1947 to 1964, was a socialist and radical modernizer devoted to rapid industrialization. He emulated the Soviet Union in launching ambitious five-year development plans, but he also collaborated with Indian capitalists, of which there were many. Huge state investment produced impressive results. In the 1950s, iron, steel, textile, and automobile industries all advanced. In the 1960s, however, the economy slowed. Like several Latin American states, India shifted too much public investment from agriculture to heavy industry when population was rising fast. Irrigating more land, using more chemical fertilizers, and planting hybrid seeds helped produce more food, but rural poverty remained pervasive, propelling millions to migrate to cities like Bombay (Mumbai), Calcutta (Kolkata), and New Delhi.

Growth varied widely in other Asia territories, though four of them began to show remarkable success in the early 1960s. South Korea, the Republic of China on Taiwan, the largely self-governing British colony of Hong Kong, and Singapore, which gained independence from Britain in 1965, rejected the Latin American model of manufacturing mainly to supply home consumers. Instead, they favored new enterprises to make finished products to export to the rest of the world. None of these countries had abundant natural resources, but by making high-quality goods and keeping costs down, they became the "Asian tigers," competing vigorously in global markets.

Steel workers operate a forge at the Hsin Yee Metal Industries factory in Taiwan. Like other Asian tiger economies, Taiwan increased its output of both heavy industry and consumer goods starting in the 1960s. How did this economic strategy compare to efforts to industrialize in mainland China during the same period?

Cities, Suburbs, and Shantytowns

Population and economic growth together boosted the world's city dwellers from about 25 percent in 1950 to 40 percent by 1980. At midcentury there were 67 cities with populations in excess of one million; by 1975 there were 172.[4] The distribution of big cities on the world map also changed, with Asia taking the lead from Europe and North America (see Map 27.2).

In the boom years, cities in both industrialized and developing countries became more complex and more densely populated as centers of interdependent economic activity—manufacturing, processing, transport, research, higher education, government administration, and a multitude of services. Cars, new roads, and public transport systems also allowed people to live farther from historic centers, transforming some cities into sprawling metropolitan regions. For example, in the Kanto area of Japan after World War II, Tokyo and several other cities fused into one giant **megalopolis,** which today has a population in excess of thirty-six million. In North America and Europe, families with sufficient income to buy houses and cars spilled out from city centers into leafy suburbs, and businesses soon followed them. In less industrialized countries, urban sprawl resulted much less from outward suburbanization than from inward movement of poor rural people, who erected shantytowns in widening rings around city cores. In urbanizing regions like South Asia and tropical Africa, the first generation or two of city newcomers were predominantly men; women remained in villages to carry on with farm work. Family and ethnic networks, however, continued to tie urban settlements with ancestral villages. Also, clusters of urban huts and shacks often evolved into communities made stable by more balanced sex ratios, new families, and civic and religious organizations.

megalopolis An extensive and densely urbanized region or chain of urbanized regions.

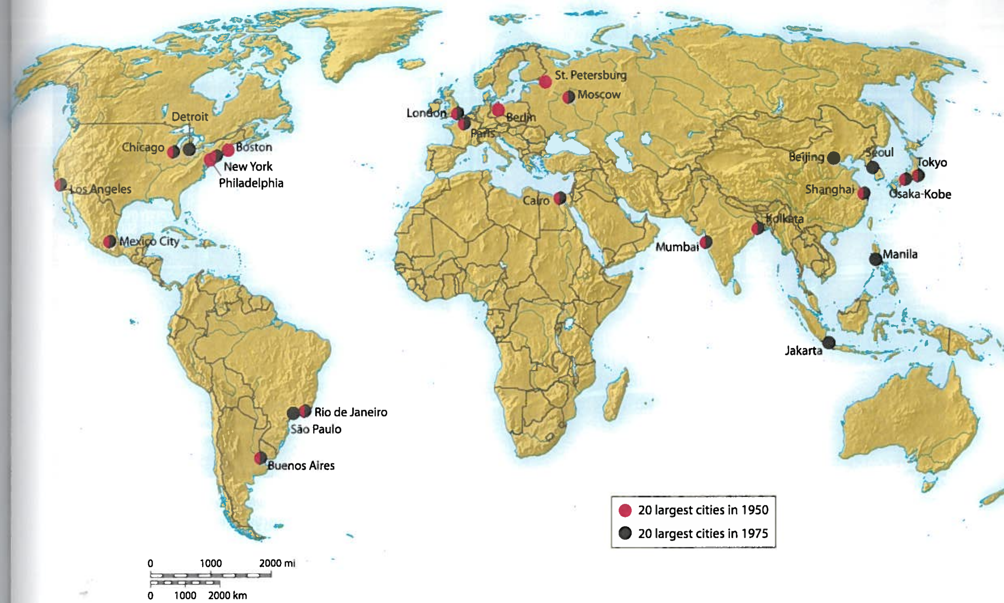
Postwar Consumer Society

The continuing fossil-fuel revolution made it possible for industry to produce more consumer goods than ever before. This torrent of new products inevitably produced cultural and psychological transformations. More men and women, first in the booming industrial economies, subscribed to a "culture of consumption." This way of living, which centered on desires to acquire and display "things," profoundly influenced economic decisions, social relations, and expectations of individual fulfillment. In fact, modern middle classes around the world came to define themselves partly by their ability to consume goods and enjoy pleasures that the lower classes—the great majority—could not afford.

The United States exited World War II as a rich society ready to shop. Refrigerators, kitchen ranges, TVs, automobiles, and single-family homes were among the most coveted "big-ticket" items. In the 1950s consumer spending also rose exponentially in Western Europe, Canada, and Australia. In France, for example, the proportion of homes with indoor toilets rose from 25 percent in 1954 to 75 percent in 1975. In the 1960s **consumerism** hit Japan. In the Soviet Union and communist Eastern Europe young men and women persistently clamored for more goods than their governments were willing or able to supply. The regimes in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany raised consumer production somewhat in the late 1950s, but mostly they promised full employment rather than generous wages and mountains of merchandise.

consumerism Social and cultural values and practices centered on the accumulation and consumption of material goods.

After World War II, private businesses spent much larger portions of their budgets on advertising, product testing, and customer relations strategies. The Burton's men's clothing chain in Britain exemplifies consumerist tactics. The 1953 edition of its "Manager's Guide" declared that salesmanship was the "art of making people want what you have to sell. . . . Create desire to possess strong enough to overcome a natural antipathy to parting with money, and you will make sale after sale."[5] Consumer capitalists also invented new credit mechanisms, notably home mortgage loans, installment buying, and store credit cards, so that customers with average



MAP 27.2 The world's twenty largest cities in 1950 and 1975.
Which of the largest cities in 1950 were no longer among the top twenty in 1975? What factors account for the shifting locations of the largest cities between 1950 and 1975?

incomes might enjoy instant gratification. Moreover, corporations devoted more research and development to inventing products designed specifically to make last year's goods seem outdated and unfashionable, a strategy known as planned obsolescence. Auto makers, for example, introduced new vehicle designs every year, hoping the Smiths would trade in their old model in order to climb a rung above the Joneses on the ladder of social prestige.

Consumption and social change. Consumerism had profound social effects in the richest societies. People could travel more freely, get better health care, and cut drudgery with work-saving technology. Economists worried at first that if the consumer economy fulfilled most desires and the welfare state kept everyone above water, then people would work less, thereby reducing productivity. In fact, the opposite happened. People tended to work harder and longer as their incomes rose, persuaded that more purchasing power would make them happier.

Economic growth and consumerism significantly changed the lives of middle- and working-class women. After a slump in female employment after the war, both married and single women poured back into wage work, squeezing homemaking into fewer available hours. Manufacturers relentlessly pursed female buyers, recognizing that they often made major domestic buying decisions. Ironically, dishwashers, ovens, and steam irons helped push women into the labor market but convinced few men that they might also master those machines. On the whole, employed women continued to earn less than men and to hit "glass ceilings" when promotions came around.

Postwar consumer culture had many critics. Social observers, especially in Europe, complained that popular yearning for material goods replaced community values with self-absorbed individualism. In the 1950s, European intellectuals saw the United States as a gigantic material culture pump, flooding the world with its movies, comic books, plastic doodads, and other spirit-numbing wares. In the 1960s, however,

Consumer advertising proliferated in the 1960s. A scene at a London train station illustrates the opportunities a diverse range of advertisers had to reach future customers, both women and men. What income levels and demographic groups do you think the advertisers in this picture were hoping to reach?

fears of an American cultural invasion largely evaporated in Western Europe, as people there adopted their own distinctive consumer cultures. They drove smaller cars to navigate the narrow streets of ancient European cities. Their filmmakers competed energetically with Hollywood, the Italian director Sergio Leone, for example, making idiosyncratic American "westerns" on location in Spain. The cultural invasion in fact reversed direction when British music and fashion hit American shores, and European corporations sold American consumers on the glamour of European goods.

The Biosphere in Distress

Humans altered and exploited the earthly biosphere at a rapidly accelerating rate in the postwar decades. Energy from fossil fuels—coal, petroleum, and natural gas—drove a threefold jump in global gross domestic product between 1950 and 1973. A parade of technological innovations—better chemical refining processes, high-pressure pipelines, larger tanker ships—allowed for the massive exploitation of fossil-fuel reserves. By 1975 humankind was consuming 2.3 billion tons of oil per year—up from 10 million in 1890. The Middle East joined Russia, Romania, Mexico, Venezuela, and the United States as a major oil-producing region. Fossil-fuel combustion, along with turbo-generating dams, fed most of the world's insatiable appetite for electricity. In the mid-1950s the Soviet Union, the United States, and Britain began to tap nuclear power for everyday use. From then until the 1980s, nuclear power plants multiplied in several other countries, notably France.

In the postwar decades, rapid economic and demographic growth had a much greater impact on the planet's physical and natural environment than anyone seems to have understood at the time. There is no doubt that degradation of the planet's soils, water systems, and atmosphere advanced steadily.

Manipulating soil, water, and seed. History's earliest farmers began to deplete the planet's thin soil layer by disturbing it with sticks and hoes. By the twentieth century, mechanized farming, lumbering, mining, and building caused billions of tons of soil to wash or blow away every year. Serious erosion could be checked to some extent by reforestation or other expensive measures that peasants could seldom afford. In mountainous Rwanda in East Africa, for example, population density increased from 80 to 180 people per square kilometer between 1948 and 1978. Farmers there waged a constant struggle to slow hillside soil loss. In postwar Brazil, commercial growers clear-cut millions of acres of forest to expand coffee production, causing massive soil runoff.

Expanding metallurgical and chemical production after the war generated mountains and rivers of toxic waste from mines, factories, smelters, and refineries. By 1950 most cities in developed countries had safe drinking water, but in much of the world urbanization far outpaced construction of enclosed sewers and water treatment plants. Consequently, water-borne diseases like cholera and typhoid continued to kill millions, especially small children. Even in places with good water treatment, businesses, governments, and private citizens tended to regard lakes and rivers as convenient cesspits. In the 1950s, for example, heavy industry made a fast recovery in northern Europe's Rhineland, but this also transformed the lower Rhine River into a chemical and metallurgical gutter largely devoid of aquatic life. Serious cleanup efforts began only in the late 1970s.

Soil and water degradation was also an unintended consequence of immense dam and irrigation projects. Between 1950 and 1980, irrigated land worldwide increased by close to 200 million acres.[6] Irrigation could vastly increase crop yields and therefore raise peasant incomes and promote exports. But it also presented long-term problems. Chemical fertilizers seeped from irrigated land back into canals and rivers, stimulating the buildup of algae and other nutrient-devouring plants, which clogged channels and starved aquatic life.

One example is particularly poignant. In Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the military ruler from 1952 to 1970, ordered construction of a high dam at Aswan on the middle Nile River, an enormous project that started in 1960 and took a decade to complete. The dam stopped the Nile's annual summer flood, which had sustained Egypt's agrarian civilization for five thousand years. Instead, downstream flow was regulated to allow crop irrigation all year round. Presumably, Egypt would then be able to feed its rapidly growing population and to export large surpluses of cotton and other commodities. Signs of trouble, however, soon appeared. The millions of tons of silt that for millennia had flowed across the lower valley and the Nile delta every summer accumulated instead in Lake Nasser, the huge reservoir behind the dam. Consequently, farming downstream depended on massive annual infusions of chemical fertilizer, much of which had to be purchased abroad. Riotous blooms of algae and water hyacinths clogged irrigation canals and even water delivery to Cairo. In the absence of annual silt flow, Mediterranean sea water pushed deeper inland, threatening the farm-rich Nile delta. Nasser had hoped for agricultural self-sufficiency, but today Egypt imports as much as 60 percent of its annual food supply.

Global population could not have increased at the rate it did after the war without an accompanying rise in food production. In the postwar decades, scientists and engineers applied modern technology to ramp up farm yields, in some places by a factor of ten. Bioengineers developed new strains of wheat, rice, and maize (corn) bred specifically

Building the Aswan High Dam. A worker pauses to change his shoes at the site of this ambitious project, which involved both massive manual labor and heavy machinery. Partly funded by the USSR, the dam was to be a big step toward Egypt's food and energy self-sufficiency. What role might nationalist appeals have played in arousing popular support for the project?

Green Revolution Acceleration of world agricultural production, especially from the 1960s, resulting from use of high-yielding varieties of food crops, synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and expanded irrigation systems.

to produce luxuriant crop yields, but only in the presence of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and immense volumes of irrigation water. This **Green Revolution,** which got under way slowly in the 1930s, spread from the United States to Mexico, where wheat harvests tripled between 1944 and 1960. In the following two decades, many populous countries, including Turkey, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, China, South Korea, and the Philippines produced enough wheat or rice to keep up with the pace of population growth.

Yet unintended consequences multiplied. In much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, technology that raised farm productivity tended to benefit large-scale landlords and companies disproportionately relative to individual farm families. Gasoline-powered machinery, fertilizers, and irrigation water represented enormous inputs of energy and capital that only big land-owners could usually afford. Hybridized seeds produced high-yield food plants, but the seeds of those plants were sterile. Consequently, farmers had to buy new seeds every year from firms that owned patents to them. This state of affairs hugely benefited biotechnology corporations but not small farmers in developing countries. Nor could family farmers compete easily with big growers capable of producing crops in volume and therefore keeping market prices down. In the 1970s millions of farmers, especially in Asia, left the land to find subsistence wage work.

Air pollution. Early in the twentieth century, a London physician coined the term *smog* to describe the "smoky fog" that hung over large cities. The word came to mean the atmospheric haze that forms when sunlight chemically reacts with the nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons emitted by internal combustion engines. Smog causes eye and respiratory maladies, and it harms many types of flora. During the postwar boom, factories, mines, farms, and motor vehicles spewed record tonnages of chemical contaminants into the atmosphere. Only in the 1960s, however, did scientists begin systematically to measure air contamination in big cities and industrial regions. By then, the richer countries were taking steps to bring urban air pollution under at least partial control. London roused itself to action after December 1952, when a combination of weather conditions shrouded the city in a weeklong toxic fog. The Great Smog caused nearly four thousand deaths from respiratory diseases. In the 1950s and 1960s, contamination affecting whole regions reached appalling levels in places like the São Paulo area in Brazil and the Ruhr valley in northwestern Europe.

Even the most technologically innovative countries were slow to address pollution from motor vehicles, whose numbers in the world grew from 50 million in 1930 to 500 million by 1985. Some metropolitan areas, for example, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Athens, and Tehran, began to suffer acutely because cars became so numerous, the sun shines many days a year, and surrounding mountains prevent smog dispersion. Also, beginning in the 1920s, oil corporations improved gasoline efficiency by adding lead, which caused toxic elevations in human blood streams. Concerted efforts to reduce tailpipe contamination got under way in the late 1960s, but urban pollution worldwide was still getting worse as of 1975.

In 1962 Rachel Carson, an American zoologist, published *Silent Spring*, an indictment of the chemical industry for selling DDT and other pesticides that killed animal life. Despite intense corporate opposition, her work roused scientific and public consciousness about the environment. Not until the following decade, however, did governments and public interest groups begin to make commitments to retard and if possible reverse numerous forms of environmental degradation (see Chapter 28).

Daytime traffic during the Great Smog. A bus navigates the streets of London in December 1952, as commuters brave foul conditions caused by hydrocarbon emissions. Why did air quality deteriorate so much before residents of industrialized countries began to take measures to counteract pollution?

The Cold War Wears On

FOCUS How did the Cold War affect political and economic relations among the world's peoples in the three decades following World War II?

The Cold War, whose early years we described in the context of World War II's aftermath (see Chapter 26), may be conceived as a struggle between two contrasting political and economic visions. The United States aspired to lead the world to economic prosperity through democracy and capitalism. The Soviet Union, China, and other communist states were equally determined to shun capitalist internationalism. The communist regimes, rather, aimed to demonstrate that Marxist-Leninist teachings, together with central planning, economic self-sufficiency, and subordination of private interests to the state, would produce material well-being and social equality for all. On the ground, Europe remained divided at what Winston Churchill called the iron curtain: The armies of the United States and its Western European NATO stood nose to nose with divisions of the Warsaw Pact, the military alliance that the Soviet Union formed with its Eastern European junior partners in 1955 (see Map 27.1).

The Era of Mutually Assured Destruction

The existence of nuclear weapons shaped all international relations after 1945. The world's most powerful states had gone to war in both 1914 and 1939 on the assumption that whatever the cost, winners would eventually emerge from the wreckage and start to rebuild. A war fought with atomic bombs, however, threatened to snuff out the human species altogether. Who would rebuild after that? The United States, which showed what even small fission bombs could do to two Japanese cities, held a monopoly on atomic technology for four years. But Stalin ordered a nuclear crash program that yielded a successful atomic test on the Inner Eurasian steppes in 1949.

The Korean War as test case. The war that erupted in Korea in 1950 might have provoked a nuclear confrontation, but it did not. Like Germany, Korea found itself divided at the end of the world war, a Soviet-allied communist government installed in the north, and a U.S.-backed republic in the south, the two states separated by an arbitrary border at the thirty-eighth parallel of latitude. But as soon as both major powers withdrew their troops from the Korean peninsula in 1948–1949, north and south threatened to attack each other.

The Soviet Union, having signed a mutual defense pact with Mao Zedong and perhaps hoping to discourage postwar Japan from drawing too close to the United States, gave Kim Il-Sung, the leader of North Korea, a green light to invade the south and reunify the peninsula under communist rule. He thought the United States would not interfere. Instead, the U.S. government convinced the United Nations Security Council (on a day when the Soviet delegation was absent) to authorize military intervention. The ensuing war lasted just over three years. At the start, North Korean forces nearly overran the peninsula, but a counterassault under General Douglas MacArthur drove close to North Korea's border with China at the Yalu River. Believing such provocation could compromise his own hold on power, Mao ordered 300,000 Chinese troops to cross the Yalu in October 1950. That onslaught pushed American and allied divisions back, but then the war degenerated into grinding stalemate. Neither Stalin nor U.S. president Harry Truman wanted to

Troops of the People's Liberation Army, North Korea, October 1950. Chinese forces sent to support the communist North Korean government were unequally equipped to battle United Nations forces led by the United States. Notice the ragtag uniforms and the soldiers in the front row wearing only sandals. Nevertheless, these troops managed to halt UN advances and bring the war to a stalemate. Why might Mao have risked sending poorly equipped soldiers to war?

drop atomic bombs to decide the future of Korea, and in July 1953 the adversaries signed an armistice, leaving the peninsula still divided. Something like 2.8 million Koreans died in the war. The conflict aggravated mistrust between the United States and Russia and sent American relations with China into deep freeze for more than two decades.

Cold War fears and hopes. The Korean War also intensified the nuclear arms race. In 1952 the United States tested the first hydrogen bomb, which worked on the principle of nuclear fusion. The detonation in the South Pacific produced a 10.4 million ton explosion, five hundred times larger than the blast over Nagasaki. The Soviets evened that playing field the following year. Between 1952 and 1974, Britain, France, China, Israel, and India all joined the nuclear club, though their arsenals remained relatively small. By the mid-1960s both Russia and the United States had submarine fleets armed with enough nuclear missiles to kill hundreds of millions of people in a single afternoon.

Leaders in both Washington and Moscow could imagine the likely consequence of an all-out missile exchange, and it scared them from the start. When Mao Zedong remarked in 1957 that China could lose three hundred million people in a nuclear strike and still recover nicely, Soviet and Americans leaders were equally appalled. In 1959 President Dwight Eisenhower mused darkly that if missiles started flying "you might as well go out and shoot everyone you see and then shoot yourself."[7] In the early 1960s the United States openly proclaimed a policy of **mutually assured destruction,** or **MAD,** the dubious theory that if no one expected to come out of a nuclear war alive, then no one would start one.

mutually assured destruction (MAD) The doctrine aimed at preventing nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union by shared knowledge that, if either side attacked, both would suffer mass destruction.

The Cold War in the 1950s and 1960s had a strange inconsistency. On the one hand, the adversaries continued to expand their military arsenals and spy networks. Each side warned the other that it would answer an attack with a rain of nuclear fire. In the 1950s, however, American intelligence revealed that the United States had far greater nuclear and long-range missile capability than Russia did. The Soviets knew this, too, which drove them to turn up the volume of threats. The U.S. propaganda machines responded in kind. On the other hand, both powers proclaimed their commitment to peaceful coexistence. They held periodic summit meetings and organized cultural exchanges. Trade between the Soviet bloc and the Western industrial states grew rapidly in the 1960s. In 1963 the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which prohibited nuclear testing in the atmosphere. Additional agreements followed, culminating in the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which banned nuclear states from developing defenses against incoming rockets.

The European stalemate. After Stalin lifted the land blockade of West Berlin (see Chapter 26), the Cold War adversaries moved toward a cautious understanding that neither would attack or otherwise destabilize the other's half of Europe, barring the most extreme provocation. For example, in 1956, Hungarian citizens, angered over repression and poor progress in living standards, revolted against their communist government, demanding withdrawal from the Soviet bloc. Within a few days, however, the Red Army moved in to suppress the insurgency, at a cost of some twenty thousand Hungarian lives. The United States and its allies denounced the aggression but did nothing more, confirming, to the dismay of street fighters in Budapest, their policy of nonintervention in the affairs of Soviet satellites.

Then, in 1961, the Soviet Union collaborated with the communist-ruled German Democratic Republic (GDR) to build a wall, first of barbed wire, then of concrete, to seal East Berlin and the rest of the GDR from West Berlin. Unable to stop citizens, especially skilled and educated ones, from fleeing to booming West Berlin, the GDR put up the barrier as a measure of desperation. The Western allies protested but also knew that the wall just might reduce tensions in central Europe. John F. Kennedy, recently inaugurated as U.S. president (in office 1961–1963), conceded that "it's not a very nice solution, but a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war."[8]

The Cold War Goes Global

An irony of the Cold War is that even though American and Soviet missiles remained on their launch pads, something like fifty-five wars of varying scope, both civil and international, either started or were already in progress between 1950 and 1975. Both superpowers intervened in several of these conflicts, hoping to cultivate new allies and advance their own strategic and ideological interests. The Cold War therefore played out across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, often with unforeseen consequences.

In Iran, for example, the government of Prime Minister Muhammad Mosaddiq tried in the early 1950s to build a constitutional democracy that limited the powers of the hitherto authoritarian monarchy of Muhammad Reza Shah (reigned, 1941–1979). To reduce foreign control over the economy, Mosaddiq nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Fearing both disruption of oil deliveries to Europe and Mosaddiq's tolerance for communist political activity, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conspired with British operatives and conservative Iranian military officers in 1953 to overthrow the regime. Reza Shah returned to full power, and the United States gained a close ally. But the people of Iran got twenty-seven more years of royal despotism. Similarly, in 1954 the United States collaborated with right-wing army officers in Guatemala to oust President Jacobo Arbenz (in office 1951–1954). He had not only enacted land reforms that offended the United Fruit Company, an American corporation, but also cultivated friendly ties with communist governments. Following the coup, Guatemala descended into decades of military dictatorship and civil war.

On the Soviet side, Khrushchev and his successors also saw opportunities to project Soviet imperial power in informal ways. He energized Russian foreign policy, offering economic and military aid to friendly or neutral countries and exploiting unstable situations. The Cold War reached a critical turning point in 1962, when the Soviets installed intermediate range missiles in Cuba. Three years earlier, Fidel Castro (in office 1959–2008) and a guerrilla army dedicated to radical, Marxist-inspired social reform had emerged from mountain hideouts to overthrow the oppressive government of Fulgencio Batista, a close ally of American business. When Castro confiscated $1 billion worth of American property, the United States broke diplomatic relations. Having nowhere else to turn, Castro asked the Soviet Union to buy Cuban sugar, its main export, and to provide technical and military aid. In response, President Kennedy authorized the CIA and Cuban exiles to invade the island at the Bay of Pigs, a wretchedly planned operation that ended in disaster. Nevertheless, Kennedy continued to try to destabilize Castro's regime, including a trade embargo.

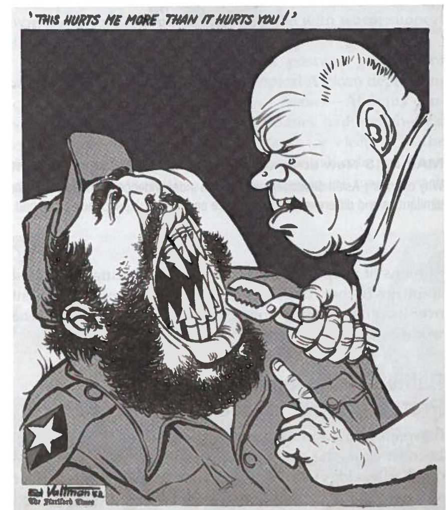
The Cuban revolution surprised Soviet leaders because a Marxist-Leninist regime had come to power in the Western Hemisphere without them having done anything to make it happen. Khrushchev apparently thought that by placing missiles in Cuba he would simultaneously protect his new client and encourage communist revolutionaries elsewhere in Latin America. "It was clear to me," he later wrote, "that we might very well lose Cuba if we didn't take some decisive steps in her defense."[9] When Kennedy learned that Soviet rockets were to be installed ninety miles from Florida, he saw no choice but confrontation. In October 1962 he announced to jittery television audiences around the world that a Soviet missile launch on any target in the Western Hemisphere would provoke immediate retaliation. But rather than ordering air strikes on the rocket sites, he dispatched a naval flotilla to block Soviet supply ships from reaching Cuba. Knowing well that the United States far outgunned him in numbers of intercontinental missiles, Khrushchev backed down. The crisis did not end, however, in American triumph. Khrushchev negotiated removal of the missiles already in Cuba for withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Turkey and Kennedy's promise not to invade the island again.

The Cuban missile crisis had important political consequences. Both superpowers grasped more urgently the need to keep lines of communication open between them to prevent mutual misunderstandings, however loud the public rhetoric. Though the Soviets agreed to tread lightly in Latin America, the two powers ratcheted up their rivalry in the young states of Asia and Africa. Meanwhile, Castro's light shone brighter than ever among leftist and communist leaders around the world because he had stood up to his mighty capitalist neighbor.

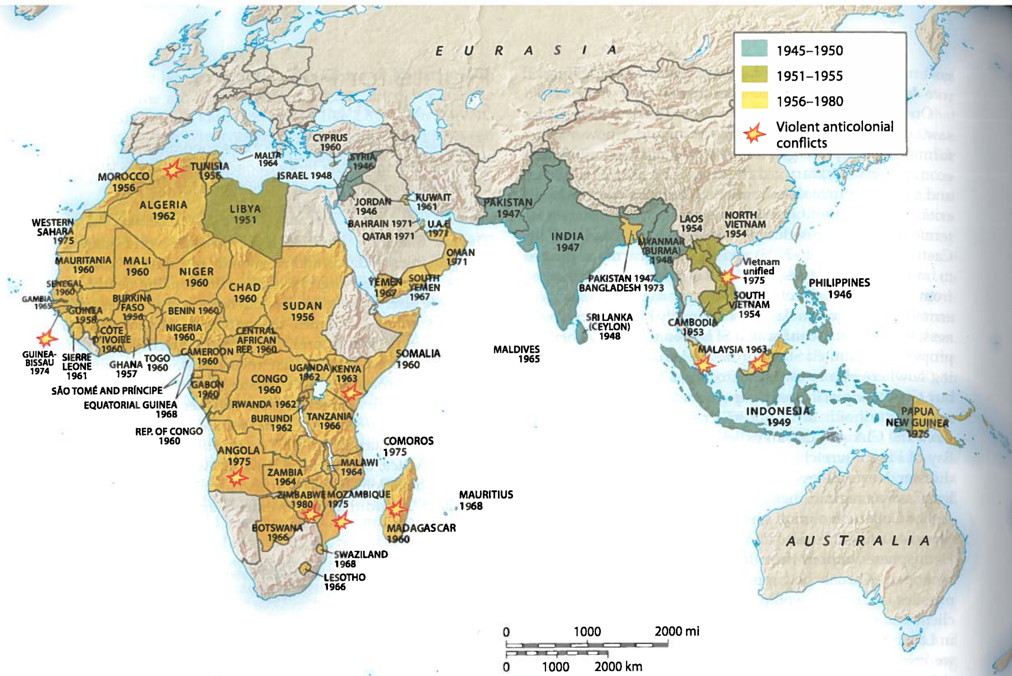
Fights for Freedom and Justice

FOCUS In what ways did global economic and political change in the three decades after World War II affect the development of movements for colonial independence and social reform?

The fact that some societies in the postwar world enjoyed rising living standards and reasonably responsible governments roused yearnings for similar life benefits nearly everywhere else. In colonial dependencies and in states with relatively small economies, disappointed economic hopes among middle and poorer classes aggravated social tensions and helped stir popular revolutions, civil struggles, and violent protests. After a cluster of newly independent states joined the United Nations between 1946 and 1950, there was a five-year lull. The second wave of colonial flag-lowering started in 1955, continuing steadily, especially in Africa, during the following two decades. In 1950 the United Nations had 50 members; by 1975 it had 144 (see Map 27.3). In addition to movements against colonial rule,



Khrushchev pulls his rockets out of Cuba. This cartoon, originally published in the *Hartford Times*, parodies the Soviet Union's decision to withdraw its ballistic missiles from Castro's Cuba. Edmund Valtman, the artist, won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartoons in 1962. How does this image portray the relationship between Cuba and the USSR?



MAP 27.3 New sovereign states in Afroeurasia, 1945–1980.

Why did many Asian dependencies achieve independence between 1945 and 1956 and so many African ones only after 1956? What political or cultural similarities and differences do you notice among the dependencies that had violent struggles before achieving independence?

millions of people in sovereign states, including the richest countries in the world, took to the streets to register dissent over inequality and oppression. Popular protest around the world reached a crescendo in 1968.

Paths to Independence: Protest and Negotiation

Between 1956 and 1980 forty new states emerged in Africa. In most cases the decolonization process took place without battlefield violence. Nationalist parties waged their struggles with petitions, marches, strikes, boycotts, and short urban uprisings, tactics that produced death and injury, but not on a grand scale. In no African colony did nationalist leaders wish to break up the territory or wreck its governing apparatus. Rather, nationalists aimed initially to assume full control of the same administrative organs and the same territorial boundaries that European invaders had created earlier.

None of the imperial powers in Africa—Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, and Spain—expected to leave as soon as they did. After World War II, Britain and France proclaimed new economic and political development programs, expecting that small minorities of men and women with Western educations would willingly collaborate to improve, at a gradual pace, the living standards of poor majorities. Most nationalists, on the contrary, regarded every useful economic project and every small political reform as an argument for full independence sooner rather than later. Moreover, between 1950 and 1975, one imperial power after another (the last being Portugal) conceded that they could no longer afford their empires, neither the expense of relentless suppression of nationalist opposition nor the costs of serious economic development.

To politicians in London and Paris, the alternative of letting leaders of new nations largely finance their own development, while at the same time cultivating friendly business relations with them, looked increasingly attractive.

Britain, moreover, was willing to defer to the United States in formulating strategies to keep communists or other anticapitalist radicals from getting control of nationalist movements or seizing power in new states.

New states in British Africa. Great Britain had fifteen dependencies in Africa, the largest of them Nigeria, which had a population in 1960 of nearly forty million, eight times more people than in Scotland. Since the interwar decades, British administrators had been working with small educated elites to expand, without any sense of hurry, indigenous participation in political institutions like advisory councils, local governments, or civil services. But after 1945, independence movements gained momentum. In the British Gold Coast, renamed Ghana after independence, Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972) emerged in the late 1940s as tropical Africa's first larger-than-life nationalist hero and mass organizer. Educated in the United States and inspired by Gandhi's nonviolent resistance strategies in India, he formed the Convention People's Party (CPP), which coordinated rallies, marches, strikes, and boycotts to push relentlessly against the British regime.

In 1951 Britain agreed to a general election, hoping that the radical CPP would lose it. That did not happen, and colonial officials had no choice but to appoint Nkrumah, who was in jail at the time, "leader of government business." In 1954, African American writer Richard Wright visited Ghana. Attending a CPP rally, he bore witness to Nkrumah's remarkable ability to rouse urban crowds and personify the nationalist cause.

> The speaker [one of Nkrumah's supporters] threw a challenging question in English requiring a yes or no answer, for he wanted the audience to participate in the meeting . . .
>
> "Nkrumah has led you this far and he will lead you on! . . . You must believe that he'll never let you down! He went to prison for you; he suffered for you; he'll lay down his life for you! . . .
>
> "Will *he* fight for you?
>
> "Yes!
>
> "Will *you* fight for him?
>
> "Yes!
>
> "And what are we fighting for?
>
> "FREE—DOOOOM! FREE—DOOOOM!"[10]

Three years later, Ghana achieved independence under Nkrumah's presidency. Between then and 1965, Britain dispossessed itself of ten other dependencies in Africa, including enormous Nigeria, without prolonged violence.

New states in French Africa. Shortly after World War II the newly constituted French Fourth Republic declared that it had no intention of shedding its Asian and African empire. By the end of 1954, however, the Viet Minh nationalist army had forced France to leave Vietnam (see Chapter 26), and Muslim nationalists had started an insurrection in Algeria. Those developments inspired educated elites, trade unions, and urban youth in France's immense tropical African territories to press for self-rule. The people of those colonies also watched nationalists in Morocco and Tunisia win independence from France in 1956 with warm support from the United States.

As in the British case, France's postwar government announced plans to develop its tropical African dependencies and to expand the number of *évolués*—Africans considered culturally "evolved" because they had French-style educations—to be permitted to stand for election to the French National Assembly. As in the British colonies, however, nationalists, with some encouragement from French

Voters cast their ballots in Senegal, 1956. Africans in French colonies voted for representatives to the French National Assembly, but this limited civic participation did not quell nationalist resistance to colonial rule. Some Africans tore up their ballots to protest the lack of African control of local government, arguing that representation in Paris was no substitute for independence. How did the timing of voting rights for women in French-ruled Africa compare with that of women's enfranchisement in France (see the section called "Feminist movements").

Weighing THE EVIDENCE

Frantz Fanon on the Shortcomings of the National Bourgeoisie

One of the most influential texts to emerge from colonial independence movements is Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth. *Fanon (1925–1961) came from a middle-class family on the French Caribbean island of Martinique. During World War II he went to North Africa to join the Free French resistance against the Germans. He was wounded in battle and awarded the* Croix de Guerre. *After the war he studied medicine and psychiatry in France. There, he became starkly aware of the limits of social assimilation. Though he had grown up in a thoroughly French environment and fought for the country, whites never viewed him as an equal. His interest in the psychological effects of colonialism resulted in his first book,* Black Skin, White Masks *(1952).*

In 1953 Fanon accepted a position at an Algerian psychiatric hospital and gave support to FLN revolutionaries. He became acutely aware, through experiences of his patients, of the violent foundations of French colonial rule. In 1956 the French government expelled him from Algeria. He then moved to Tunisia where he continued his work on behalf of Algerian independence.

Suffering from terminal leukemia, Fanon wrote The Wretched of the Earth *in 1961. The book attracted notoriety for its apparent approval of violence as a means to end colonial rule. Fanon recognized, however, that both perpetrators and victims of violence can never escape its psychological effects. In subsequent essays he explained that revolutionary violence must be short lived, or it will destroy all whom it touches.*

In the excerpt below, he discusses how the nation (here referring to a body of people with shared political goals) must negotiate the transition from colonialism to independence. Within a general Marxist framework of class struggle, Fanon argues that the indigenous colonial bourgeoisie are ill equipped to lead the nation because they have identified with the values of their capitalist colonial oppressors and lost touch with the masses.

The national middle class which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an under-developed middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace. . . .

Seen through its eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neocolonialism. The national bourgeoisie will be quite content with the role of the Western bourgeoisie's business agent, and it will play its part without any complexes in a most dignified manner. But this same lucrative role, this cheap-jack's function, this meanness of outlook and this absence of all ambition symbolize the incapability of the national middle class to fulfill its historic role of bourgeoisie. Here, the dynamic, pioneer aspect, the characteristics of the inventor and of the discoverer of new worlds which are found in all national bourgeoisies are lamentably absent. In the colonial countries, the spirit of indulgence is dominant at the core of the bourgeoisie; and this is because the national bourgeoisie identifies itself with the Western bourgeoisie, from whom it has learnt its lessons. It follows the Western bourgeoisie along its path of negation and decadence without ever having emulated it in its first stages of exploration and invention, stages which are an acquisition of that Western bourgeoisie whatever the circumstances. . . . The national bourgeoisie will be greatly helped on its way towards decadence by the Western bourgeoisies, who come to it as tourists avid for the exotic, for big-game hunting and for casinos. . . . Because it is bereft of ideas, because it lives to itself and cuts itself off from the people, undermined by its hereditary incapacity to think in terms of all the problems of the nation as seen from the point of view of the whole of that nation, the national middle class will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for Western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe. . . .

If you really wish your country to avoid regression, or at best halts and uncertainties, a rapid step must be taken from national consciousness to political and social consciousness. . . . The battle-line against hunger, against ignorance, against poverty and against unawareness ought to be ever present in the muscles and the intelligences of men and women. . . . There must be an economic program; there must also be a doctrine concerning the division of wealth and social relations. . . . It is only when men and women are included on a vast scale in enlightened and fruitful work that form and body are given to that consciousness. . . . The living expression of the nation is the moving consciousness of the whole of the people; it is the coherent, enlightened action of men and women. . . . No leader, however valuable he may be, can substitute himself for the popular will; and the national government, before concerning itself about international prestige, ought first to give back their dignity to all citizens.

Source: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 149, 152–154, 203–205.

Thinking Critically

Why, in Fanon's view, does the national middle class feel a stronger relationship to the colonizer than it does to others in its own country? What do you think Fanon means by saying that the middle class will turn its country into the "brothel of Europe"? What do you think he means by the term "neocolonialism"? What problems must a new nation first address to ensure its viability? From this selection, what can you infer about Fanon's views of those taking power in newly independent countries? In what ways, if any, does the selection reveal the influence of Marxism on Fanon's thought?

communists and socialists, agitated for one reform and compromise after another. Urban laborers, dissatisfied with pay, working conditions, and social discrimination, continued to organize strikes, and a stream of young men and women in big cities like Dakar and Abidjan joined nationalist political groups. In 1956 the government in Paris responded by dividing French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa, its two big colonial federations, into smaller political units, hoping to fragment and weaken nationalist elites. This scheme had little effect, and in any case revolutionary violence in Algeria spread to France, bringing the Fourth Republic to its knees in 1958. Charles De Gaulle, leader of the Free French in World War II, came out of retirement to proclaim the Fifth Republic and preside over a new constitution. He made one last effort to keep the African colonies within the French fold but by then had run out of persuasive arguments. In 1960 fourteen new republics in West and Equatorial Africa, plus the island of Madagascar, achieved full sovereignty.

Paths to Independence: Insurgency and Revolution

Among the dozens of territories that sought and won independence in the third quarter of the century, only a few witnessed prolonged fighting between colonizer and colonized. One example is the British East African colony of Kenya, where a small but politically powerful European settler population adamantly opposed African independence. There, violence broke out in 1952. African guerrillas, mainly Kikuyu-speaking peasants and urban poor frustrated over landlessness, unemployment, and low-wage labor on European-owned coffee and tea estates, set up rebel bases in central Kenya's forests. Colonial forces, which gave the uprising the derogatory name Mau Mau, launched counterinsurgency operations and imprisoned tens of thousands of men and women. The fighting ended in 1955, after 95 Europeans and at least 11,500 Africans lost their lives. Shortly afterward, however, London decided to negotiate decolonization before another violent outbreak occurred. Kenya became independent in 1963 under the presidency of Jomo Kenyatta.

The Algerian Revolution. Algeria was different from all other French overseas colonies because its inhabitants included about one million people of European origin. They constituted a minority of about 15 percent of the population, which was predominantly Arabic- or Berber-speaking Muslims. Most European settlers fiercely opposed Algerian self-rule under any authority except its own, and the Fourth Republic regarded the territory, not as a dependent colony, but as a permanent part of France. The economic and social gulf between the privileged, mostly city-dwelling European minority and the Muslim population of peasants, urban workers, and small entrepreneurs was immense. Under great settler pressure, successive French governments refused to make any significant moves toward majority rule.

The consequence was eight years of bitter war. In November 1954, just a few months after France withdrew from Vietnam in defeat, Algerian insurgents instigated a countrywide rebellion. The National Liberation Front (FLN), which orchestrated the rising, demanded a sovereign, democratic, and socialist Algeria guided by Islamic ideals. The French authorities responded with brutal repression, which only spread the revolutionary fire. By mid-1957 the colonial army appeared to be winning the war, but the FLN continued to operate from havens in neighboring Morocco and Tunisia. Facing both colossal costs and nothing but intransigence on the part of settler leaders, De Gaulle opened negotiations with the FLN in 1960. Independence came two years later. About 85 percent of the European population refused Algerian citizenship and fled the country in near panic during the final months of the war. The new nationalist regime took over a country in a state of physical and economic collapse.

Southern Africa. Armed struggles broke out in three southern African colonies in the 1960s. The British dependency of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe after independence) had a European settler population of only about 5 percent, but this minority dominated politics and the export economy. Watching Britain give up one African possession after another and counting on support from white-ruled South Africa, Southern Rhodesia's white leaders made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 to perpetuate their authority. Britain protested but did not send troops. Zimbabwe's African nationalist parties stepped up guerrilla operations. Meanwhile, armed resistance also intensified in the two big Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique. In those cases the metropolitan government, itself an authoritarian dictatorship under António Salazar, refused all negotiation with nationalist leaders. In 1974, Portuguese officers, weary of protracted African wars of no discernible benefit to tiny Portugal, overthrew Salazar, paving the way for democracy at home and independence for the colonies in 1975. In consequence, Zimbabwe's guerrilla fighters were able to take advantage of sanctuaries in Angola and Mozambique, which led to negotiated independence under majority rule in 1980.

Struggles for Stability in Young States

In the 1950s and 1960s new states celebrated independence flush with hope for rapid economic development. Few of these states had much industry. Rather, they exported food and mineral commodities, as they had during the colonial era. During the postwar global boom, however, world prices for many commodities rose higher, which translated into at least modest growth for many new countries. In Ghana, the Ivory Coast, and Kenya, among other states, society made impressive gains in health care, life expectancy, and education.

Yet rising gross domestic product seldom produced long-term political calm. Few of the states that started out

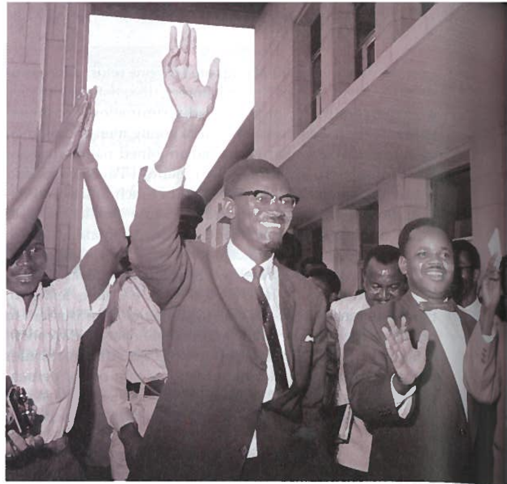
as presidential republics or constitutional monarchies followed India's path to democracy. In the 1950s and 1960s military officers seized power in many states. Eighteen coups took place in Africa alone. In several countries, elected presidents transformed themselves into dictators, banning all political parties except their own. In a few states, debilitating civil wars broke out.

Upon gaining independence, nationalist leaders took over the civil services, police, and communication networks that the colonial regimes had left behind. Most new governments also put themselves in control of economic resources with the goal of creating a more equitable society. In most of these countries, however, development plans lost steam. Highly skilled workers, up-to-date technology, and investment capital were usually in short supply. Railway, telephone, and electrical networks did not improve nearly fast enough after decades of colonial neglect. Government-paid jobs mushroomed, but industrialization projects did not. By the mid-1960s the global boom had passed its peak. Revenue from export commodities, typically a young state's biggest income source, began to drop. Where top leaders had failed to secure their own power, disgruntled political groups, often military men (the army being the only organization with plenty of guns) threw the old nationalist leaders out.

In Ghana, for example, Kwame Nkrumah, the founding president, lost power to a military faction in 1966 after the price of cocoa, the country's leading export, began to plummet. That same year, Nigeria, suffering from severe tensions among regional political groups, experienced the first of a long series of military takeovers. Competition for control of newly discovered oil made matters worse and led directly to a three-year civil war (1967–1970) in which the southeastern region tried unsuccessfully to form a separate state named Biafra.

The Congo fell into civil turmoil just two weeks after it celebrated independence from Belgium in June 1960. In contrast to Britain and France, Belgium not only banned all nationalist political activity in its enormous colony until the mid-1950s, but also permitted only a handful of Africans to get responsible government jobs or even high school educations. When popular riots broke out in the capital city of Leopoldville (Kinshasa), the Belgian regime organized slapdash elections to a new Congolese legislature, then abruptly abandoned the colony.

Independent Congo unraveled almost immediately. More riots broke out, army units mutinied, and in the copper-rich southern province of Katanga rebels in alliance with European mining interests declared a separate state. Just before independence, Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961), a former postal clerk, founded a national political party dedicated to transcending the country's complex ethnic and linguistic divisions. But as the Congo's first prime minister, he faced an agonizing task of restoring order. There is no evidence that Lumumba was a communist, but his radical denunciation of Belgium and a plea to the Soviet Union to send aid moved the United States to support a UN peacekeeping force.



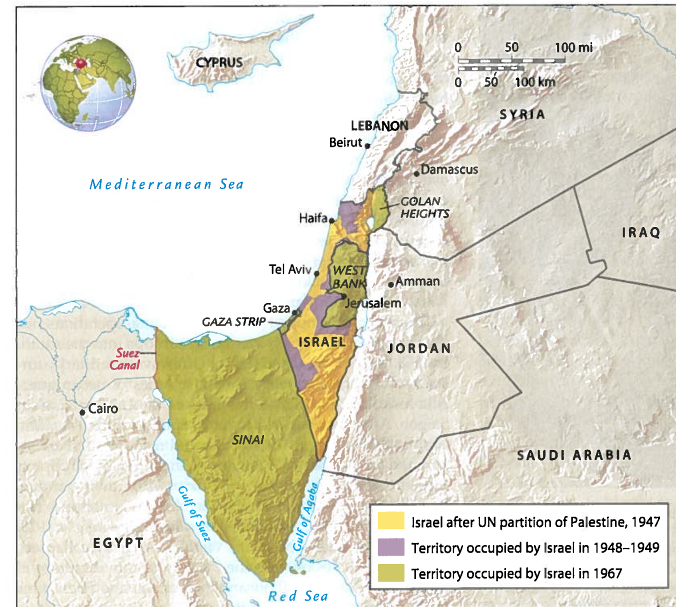
Patrice Lumumba, Congo's first prime minister, leaving the National Senate, 1960. The first democratically elected leader of Congo faced huge challenges during his twelve-week term in office. In this photo Lumumba celebrates the 41–2 vote of confidence, called in response to his handling of the Katanga succession. In 2002, Belgium issued an apology to Congo for Lumumba's murder in 1961.

Lumumba agreed to this plan, but in 1961, Joseph Mobutu, a rising Congolese military star, conspired with Belgian operatives and the U.S. CIA to have the prime minister murdered. UN troops extinguished the Katanga rebellion in 1963, and two years later, after about a million Congolese had died in violent upheaval, Mobutu seized full power. There he remained for more than thirty years, keeping the country unified, cooperating with capitalist mining enterprise, and adamantly opposing the slightest democratic reform.

The turbulent Middle East. The era of formal European colonial rule ended in most of the Arabic-speaking Middle East shortly after World War II. Even so, continuing hostility between the Jewish state of Israel and its neighbors, concentrations of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees in camps in Egypt and Jordan, and the rising international stakes for access to Middle Eastern oil made for volatile postcolonial conditions. Popular opinion in the Arab states overwhelmingly regarded Israel as a foreign intruder and proxy for continuing Western imperial domination. Israel gained international credibility by winning the 1948 war with its Arab neighbors and believed it deserved regional acceptance. But tensions remained high, including chronic fighting along the border between Israel and Egypt. Arab leaders dealing with pressing economic problems at home had no wish to undermine their own authority by moving to normalize relations with Israel.

Arab national governments, some ideologically socialist, others pro-Western and conservative, quarreled intensely with each other, but they also joined together to fight three more wars with Israel, in 1956, 1967, and 1973. In Egypt, President Gamal Abdel Nasser put himself forward as champion of regional unification, promising to absorb Israel into a large pan-Arab state. In 1956 he negotiated with the British to end their occupation of the Suez Canal Zone, but shortly thereafter he suddenly nationalized the canal's operation. Two-thirds of Western Europe's oil supplies passed through the waterway, and in October, Britain, France, and Israel devised a secret plan to take back the canal and overthrow Nasser. When the military operation got under way, the United States, seeing the situation from a wider regional perspective, refused to back its allies. "How could we possibly support Britain and France," President Eisenhower protested, "if in doing so we lose the whole Arab world?"[11] The Soviet Union, which had good relations with Nasser, threatened nuclear retaliation if the attack did not stop. Neither Britain nor France could afford to defy U.S. opinion. Within a few weeks they and the Israelis pulled out of Egyptian territory, ending the Suez Crisis. The war made Nasser a regional hero. On its side, Israel demonstrated once again its military strength but also reinforced the Arab conviction that Israel had no genuine desire for peace with its neighbors.

Shaky calm prevailed for eleven years, but in the spring of 1967 tensions reached a boiling point once again. Nasser continued to seek Arab unity by vowing to extinguish Israel, while the Soviet Union sent both Egypt and Syria cargos of weapons. The United States proclaimed its commitment to Israel's defense while tending carefully to its oil interests elsewhere in the region. Following a succession of miscues between Israel and its neighbors over who intended to do what, Israeli jets simultaneously attacked Egypt, Syria, and Jordan on June 5, destroying the air forces of all three countries. Israeli forces then invaded the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza, the Golan Heights in Syria, and the West Bank (Jordanian territory west of the Jordan River). Israel's victory in this Six Day War (or June War) discredited all the Arab regimes, especially Nasser, whose army lost twelve thousand soldiers, the Sinai oil fields, and revenue from the Suez Canal, which remained closed to shipping until 1975. Israel occupied 28,000 square miles of new territory, which included 300,000 Arabs, many of them impoverished refugees from the 1948 conflict (see Map 27.4). The war compounded regional hostilities and strengthened the hand of Palestinians determined to wage guerrilla warfare against Israel. The



MAP 27.4 Israel and its occupied territories.
What aspects of physical geography might have affected the course and outcome of the 1967 Arab–Israeli War?

fourth war of the era broke out in 1973, an event associated with the economic crises to be described in Chapter 28.

Vietnam between civil war and Cold War.

Vietnam achieved independence in 1954, several years sooner than most of France's colonies, because communist Viet Minh forces under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh humbled the French army in battle. Vietnam, however, did not achieve unification. Ho's Indochinese Communist Party controlled the north but not the south, where anticommunist sentiment remained strong, especially among the land-owning elite and the politically influential Roman Catholic minority population. Terms of Vietnam's independence (the Geneva Accords) projected reunification in 1956, following an election. But no vote took place because the United States, replacing France as patron of pro-Western political groups throughout Southeast Asia, engineered the installation of Ngo Dinh Diem, a staunch anticommunist, as president of South Vietnam.

A refugee runs with her possessions during the Tet Offensive. Vietcong and North Vietnamese fighters launched urban assaults in January 1968, destabilizing Saigon and several other cities. Although the U.S. and South Vietnamese armies regained control of Saigon by March, the battle signaled a turning point in American opinion of the war. How might photos like this one have affected American attitudes?

In the north, Ho's regime, with aid from both the Soviet Union and China, adopted socialist prescriptions of one-party control, state-led industrialization, and land reforms to give private estate lands to peasants. In the south, by contrast, the Diem government allied itself with the land-owning class and made policies that favored Catholics over the Buddhist majority. Despite injections of American money, Diem steadily lost popular support, while pro-communist elements in the countryside organized the National Liberation Front (NLF), or Viet Cong, to incite revolution. Vowing to reunite Vietnam, Ho supported the NLF, provoking all-out war between north and south by the early 1960s. Both the United States and the Soviet Union came to see this struggle as a microcosm of their own global contest. The U.S. government declared that it would not stomach any more communist regimes in Asia, while the Soviets intensified their strategy to support not only communist but radical leftist governments wherever they could.

In 1963 the United States allowed South Vietnamese officers to overthrow and kill Diem, although political leadership continued to deteriorate. The Saigon government moved rapidly into the informal American imperial orbit, depending on the United States for as much as 80 percent of its economy. When NLF forces seized control of about half of South Vietnam, U.S. military forces took on more of the fighting. U.S. president Lyndon Johnson (in office 1963–1969) saw the war as a test of U.S. credibility. "If we are driven from the field in Viet-Nam, then no nation can ever again have the same confidence in American promise, or in American protection."[12] From 1965 to 1973 Presidents Johnson and Richard Nixon (in office 1969–1974) tried successively to achieve victory by military escalation, including deployment of more than 500,000 troops and strategic bombing of both North and South Vietnam, plus NLF and North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia.

These tactics stopped neither Viet Cong operations nor the movements of North Vietnamese troops into the south. In 1968 the NLF launched the Tet Offensive, a militarily unsuccessful but nonetheless shocking series of urban guerrilla assaults that reached the gates of the U.S. embassy in Saigon. After that, American public opinion shifted steadily against the war as a waste of life and resources. Nixon attempted to get out of Vietnam with honor by dropping more bombs while at the same time withdrawing troops and opening negotiations with the North Vietnamese. The adversaries finally concluded a ceasefire agreement in 1973. But two years later, the South Vietnamese army collapsed, as northern forces overran the country, finally reuniting it. More than fifty-eight thousand Americans and about four million Vietnamese died in the war.

High Expectations and Social Protest

Peoples who were subjects of neither foreign colonial masters nor rapacious dictators but nonetheless suffered discrimination, powerlessness, or poverty found new voice in the 1960s. Young people, many of them college students, added to the wave of social discontent with protests against the war in Vietnam, stifling conformism in education, and the failure of parents and other authority figures to understand the anxieties and aspirations of a generation that grew up enveloped in material plenty. If a single thread ran through the social protest movements of this period, it was the conviction that societies that congratulated themselves for being prosperous and democratic failed too often to guarantee the social equality and individual freedom that a world without fascist empires was supposed to offer. The movements that sprang up in the 1960s generally adopted the symbols and rhetoric of the political left, though the ideological spectrum ran from moderate democratic socialism to the radical revolutionism inspired by Mao Zedong.

Discrimination and racism in the post-Nazi decades.

To the global majority, systems of social inequality founded on a hierarchy of superior and inferior races looked especially antiquated and hateful in the post-Nazi era. In a few places, however, such systems held on after the war. In the United States, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others led the nonviolent, Gandhi-inspired civil rights movement to end legalized racism in the southern states. The movement set in motion a series of legislative and court actions culminating in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which guaranteed all adult Americans the right to vote. These new laws were partial victories, and in the later 1960s, social dissenters focused on economic discrimination against blacks and other minorities, especially in the inner cities of the North and West.

The most notorious case of institutionalized racism was South Africa, where the dominant population of European descent represented, not the majority as in the American South, but a minority of about 20 percent of a total 1950 population of 12.4 million. Africans, the group subject to the most drastic repression and discrimination, numbered about 68 percent. Minorities of "Coloreds" (people of mixed race) and Asians had only slightly better legal status. Like the European minority in Algeria, South African whites, who spoke Afrikaans or English, regarded themselves as home-grown citizens of their country, not as foreign colonial rulers. The great majority of them believed white domination to be rooted in the natural order of things.

Nevertheless, South Africa was changing fast after World War II. The mineral and farm export economy boomed, and Africans poured into the cities and mining areas, seeking wage work and relief from life on parched and unfertile rural land. As their numbers grew, these urban dwellers became increasingly impatient with pervasive racism. In 1948, however, the ultraconservative National Party won a majority in the parliamentary government, an election in which blacks could not vote. The new government responded to rapid social transformations by fortifying the existing system with new laws known collectively as **apartheid,** or "separation." These measures aimed to deny Africans any rights to live permanently in cities. Rather, the state required them to have legal residence in designated rural "homelands," or Bantustans, where they constituted giant pools of labor to be moved temporarily in and out of cities or mines as needed. Apartheid laws also included strict social segregation, bans on interracial marriage, and requirements that African men and women carry "pass books" authorizing them to travel from one place to another. In the 1950s the government spent twelve times more per capita on the education of white children than on Africans, a large percentage of whom did not attend school at all.

apartheid The political and legal system in force in South Africa from 1948 to 1994 designed to ensure the domination of the white minority over the majority population.

In a resource-rich country whose continuing industrialization required increasing economic flexibility and integration, apartheid was utterly irrational. It was founded ultimately on well-justified white fears that Africans despised the racist order. From the late 1940s onward, in fact, South Africa descended into festering civil conflict punctuated by strikes, boycotts, and marches. State authorities responded harshly, for example, shooting sixty-nine Africans at an anti–pass law rally at Sharpeville in 1960. After that incident, the African National Congress (ANC) and the more radical Pan-African Congress, the two major African nationalist parties, organized armed units that carried out acts of sabotage. The white government banned the ANC and in 1964 sent Nelson Mandela (1918-) and other nationalist leaders to serve life sentences on desolate Robben Island in the South Atlantic. At his trial on charges of sabotage, Mandela explained why he had taken recourse to violence: "We were placed in a position in which we had either to accept a permanent state of inferiority, or to defy the government. We chose to defy the law. . . . When . . . the government resorted to a show of force to crush opposition to its policies, only then did we decide to answer violence with violence."[13]

The imprisonment of ANC leaders seriously hurt the resistance movement, but in the meantime more Africans managed to gain literacy and even attend universities, though within the framework of segregated "Bantu education." This group became increasingly politicized and internationally connected. In 1976, radicalized students spearheaded a new and ultimately successful mass movement for freedom (see Chapter 28).

In other parts of the world, efforts to fight oppression had mixed results. In Northern Ireland, which remained part of the United Kingdom after the Republic of Ireland achieved independence in 1922, Roman Catholics organized mass demonstrations in 1968 to protest economic inequality and the political domination of the Protestant majority. This initially peaceful action degenerated into fighting between

Protesters flee from police gunfire in Sharpeville, South Africa. Police used live ammunition to disperse participants in a peaceful demonstration organized by the Pan-Africanist Congress to protest race-based pass laws. Many of the sixty-nine dead were shot in the back. How might this event have radicalized both black South Africans and international opposition to the white minority government?

Catholic and Protestant paramilitary bands, which provoked British military intervention. Peace was not achieved until 1998. In Latin America, left-leaning Roman Catholic clergy came to the defense of poor Indian and *mestizo* majorities, proclaiming a new "liberation theology" dedicated to alleviating poverty, hunger, disease, and class discrimination. Most activists in this movement assisted poor neighborhoods and villages, but religious and political conservatives branded them as disguised Marxists. The movement faded in the 1970s when Pope John Paul II, a fierce anticommunist, turned against it.

Radicalism in the 1960s. Between 1964 and 1970, young activists representing the most advantaged populations in the world took to the streets, mobilizing an assortment of radical movements for equality and justice. Underlying this radical turn was the coming of age of the baby-boom generation, the relatively large demographic group born in Europe and North America in the decade after World War II. Responding to the postwar economic upswing, baby boomers flooded into colleges and universities. The rising incomes of working parents, the declining demand for youthful farm labor, and the opening of many new public universities propelled this development. The United States led the way in mass higher education, but Western European student enrollments also rose, depending on the country, anywhere from 300 to 900 percent between 1960 and 1980.

Middle-class students of the postwar decades tended to have high expectations of both satisfying careers and the world's material and moral progress. By the 1960s, however, disappointment and skepticism began to set in. Political and cultural leaders appeared to endorse spirit-sapping consumerism rather than creativity, "establishment politics" rather than participatory democracy, capitalist profits rather than social justice, and threats of nuclear annihilation rather than global peace. Universities as semi-enclosed intellectual and social communities proved to be warm incubators for radicalism, the more so when educational authorities tried to contain free expression. Student activists trended to the political left ideologically, specifically to the New Left, a movement for social justice that was as wary of doctrinaire, state-controlled communism as it was of capitalist materialism.

Radical organizations and spontaneous protests sprouted across the industrialized world and among urban middle-class youth nearly everywhere. Television broadcasts of demonstrations, marches, and confrontations between protesters and police reinforced the impression of a worldwide community of young people who shared a common fight for justice, a global cohort that, according to a slogan of the times, "did not trust anyone over thirty." In the United States, the civil rights movement fueled broader-based radicalism that targeted the Vietnam War, the draft, and corporations that built weapons. Students in Europe, Japan, Mexico, and many other places took up similar causes but also protested the failure of governments to expand university access nearly fast enough to meet demand.

Student and, in some countries, worker protests reached a crescendo in the spring and summer of 1968. In the United States, public opinion turned against the Vietnam quagmire,

A May Day rally in Paris, 1968. Thousands of workers and students marched across the city. Their banners demand peace in Vietnam, higher wages, and an end to the state of emergency the French government imposed in an attempt to quell protests.

Protesters arrested in Mexico City. Demonstrations turned violent on October 3, 1968, as university students clashed with police. The event, known as the "Massacre of Tlatelolco" after the urban plaza where it occurred, killed as many as three hundred people, though Mexican media reported only 27 dead at the time. How would you characterize the range of government responses to popular protests in the 1960s in different countries?

Individuals MATTER

Alexander Dubček: Leader of the Prague Spring

Alexander Dubček addresses factory workers in Prague, August 1968.

Shortly after Alexander Dubček (DOOB-chehk, 1921–1992) assumed the office of secretary of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party in January 1968, he promised reforms to establish "socialism with a human face." In the following months, he announced new social and economic freedoms. But on August 21 he watched in alarm as Soviet army forces invaded his country, abruptly ending what became known as the Prague Spring.

Dubček was born in Czechoslovakia's eastern Slovak ethnic region in 1921, but he spent his early years with his family in the Soviet Union. There he enjoyed a quiet childhood and, despite Joseph Stalin's repressive rule, acquired a strong faith in Soviet communist leadership. He returned to Czechoslovakia in the late 1930s and during World War II took part in anti-German resistance. After the war he became a leader in the Slovak wing of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party and in the 1950s was selected to study at a political institute in Moscow. His time there coincided with Nikita Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign, a strategy that in Dubček's view showed the party could relax controls on economic and political life without jeopardizing its authority. He returned to Czechoslovakia in the late 1950s determined to work for similar reforms at home.

A retiring individual without notable speaking skill, Dubček nonetheless rose in 1963 to leadership of the Slovak Communist Party. During the next several years, Slovakians enjoyed more freedom of expression than their ethnic Czech counterparts, who lived under the hardline leadership of Antonín Novotný. Resisting all economic or social reforms and charged with corruption, Novotný yielded his party leadership to Dubček in January 1968. The new secretary moved quickly to loosen authoritarian controls on Czech citizens, authorizing new workers' councils and relaxing laws governing public speech and foreign travel. He pursued a program to implement "democratic socialism" within ten years, but he also insisted on firm party control and solid allegiance to the Soviet Union. Consequently, Dubček had to perform an intricate balancing act between popular pressure for liberalizing reforms and Russian wariness that Czechoslovakia could gradually slip out of the Soviet bloc. Dubček also faced rising criticism from other Eastern European communist leaders, who feared their own citizens' attraction to Czech-style reforms.

Dubček held talks with the Soviets in the summer of 1968 but refused to call off a planned conference to reform the party structure or agree to garrison Soviet troops on Czechoslovakian territory. This was too much for Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. On the night of August 20, Russian tanks, supported by small units from other Soviet bloc states, rolled across the Czech frontier and occupied Prague without encountering armed resistance. In the following months, Dubček tried to salvage some reforms, and Czechs launched a campaign of passive resistance. But in April 1969, he was stripped of party membership and the following year was sent to an obscure job in the forestry service, where he remained for nineteen years.

By suppressing the Prague Spring, the Soviet Union baldly reasserted its hegemony over Eastern Europe. But it severely damaged Soviet claims to leadership of the global communist movement. Romanian, Yugoslavian, and Chinese communist leaders all deplored the invasion. So did the communist parties of Western Europe and the leaders of student protest movements worldwide. As for Dubček, he returned to public life during Czechoslovakia's 1989 Velvet Revolution, when communist rule ended. He was elected chairman of the Czecho-Slovak parliament, a position he held until his death in 1992.

Thinking Critically

How do you think Dubček reconciled his commitment to the exclusive authority of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia with his conviction that the country needed political and economic reforms?

and countrywide campus demonstrations helped persuade President Johnson to renounce a bid for reelection that year. In Paris students barricaded streets and took over parts of the city, while workers staged wildcat strikes. In the aftermath of these disturbances, President Charles De Gaulle retired to his country home, where he died a few months later. In Czechoslovakia, student demonstrations played a part in the "Prague Spring," a brief period of political liberalization that ended when Soviet and Eastern European armies sent in tanks to restore full subservience to Moscow. Student activism, along with the accompanying counterculture of rock music, flamboyant dress, long hair, drug taking, communal living, and declarations of sexual freedom, continued at a high pitch until 1970, when it lost steam quite rapidly, owing less to repression than to general exhaustion and bitter splits and conflict among various protesting groups.

Feminist movements. In the aftermath of World War II, people yearned for social stability. For the great majority of male leaders, return to normalcy meant restoring conventional family life: Women should step down from the wage jobs they had during the war and partner with breadwinning husbands to bring up young citizens and make wise consumer choices. As Cold War tensions worsened, Western leaders also contended that families in the care of modest and morally upright women offered the country's best defense against communist agents of class warfare. In the socialist countries, postwar normalcy generally meant that women should continue to work at factory and farm jobs as they had before the war, while performing the same domestic duties they always had. In most newly emerging states, male elites insisted that women who had served nationalist movements as political organizers or guerrilla fighters help build the nation on a bedrock of strong families. In Algeria, for example, the image of women as revolutionary fighters, bomb makers, and spies gave way after independence to the ideal of the Muslim woman at home teaching children proper nationalist and Islamic values.

In the industrialized countries, however, the ideal of stay-at-home wife and mother flew in the face of facts. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the number of females, including married women, in the paid workforce grew steadily. So also did the number of women seeking higher education. Women sought greater sexual freedom as courts and legislatures became more tolerant of birth control and family planning, notably in Europe and Japan, where wartime fears of population decline receded. Women also gained full voting rights shortly after the war in France, several Latin American countries, and most new postcolonial states.

Social and economic progress, however, did not keep pace with legal changes. In the environment of universities and competitive workplaces, women increasingly challenged the hypothesis, relentlessly urged by consumer business, that women who were not content with family care, home beautification, and personal appearance somehow suffered from psychic or emotional deficiencies. In the United States and Europe, feminist writers, including Betty Friedan, Simone de Beauvoir, and Gloria Steinem, persuaded more women that they had permission to seek opportunity and satisfaction beyond house and neighborhood. "We can no longer ignore," Friedan wrote in *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, "that voice within women that says: 'I want something more than my husband and my children and my home.'"[14]

In the 1960s, women began to organize on a number of fronts to advocate fairness at work, reproductive choice, and attention to prostitution as a social affliction. These associations, for example, the National Organization for Women (NOW) founded in the United States in 1966, proliferated first in Western countries. They appeared shortly thereafter in Asian and African cities. This feminist wave was just gathering force in 1975, when the United Nations proclaimed "International Women's Year" and sponsored the first major international conference on women's rights in Mexico City.

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Conclusion

The third quarter of the twentieth century is still so recent that any estimation of its most important developments for the world's history must remain tentative. Consider just three factors—population, economy, and environment. The global population growth rate reached its all-time peak during those twenty-five years. It might conceivably soar again in the future, but many demographers believe that it is likely to fall in the coming century owing to the continuing decline of both mortality and birthrates.

The global economic growth rate also reached its highest historic level during that quarter-century, a feat that increased living standards in much of the world but did not prevent a widening breach between the richest and poorest populations. Since the early 1970s, global economic growth has been more volatile (see Chapter 28).

Regarding the environment, humans consumed nonrenewable energy and manipulated the biosphere on an unprecedented scale between 1950 and 1975. Human action

greatly sped up ecological degradation in several different physical and natural systems. After 1975, however, humans for the first time became acutely aware of the potential damage they were causing. Consequently, some political, business, and civic leaders took action to slow environmental deterioration, though at a far more leisurely pace than seems justified from our present vantage point.

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Key Terms

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Please see end of book reference section for additional reading suggestions related to this chapter.

Change over Time

Date	Event
1948	The South African government institutes apartheid.
1950–1953	The Korean War pits the Soviet-backed north against U.S.-backed south.
1952	The United States tests the first hydrogen bomb. London's Great Smog raises awareness of air pollution.
1952–1955	Kenyan guerrillas fight British colonial forces in the Mau Mau rebellion.
1953	With help from U.S. and British operatives, military officers in Iran overthrow the Mosaddiq government and reinstate the king, Reza Shah.
1954	France withdraws in defeat from Vietnam.
1954–1962	Algerian insurgents battle French authorities in the Algerian Revolution.
1955	Soviet-allied states form the Warsaw Pact.
1955–1975	Vietnam becomes the theater of a civil war and Cold War conflict.
1957	Ghana achieves independence from Britain under Kwame Nkrumah. The Soviet Union launches Sputnik, the first artificial satellite to orbit the globe. The European Economic Community is founded.
1958–1961	Mao Zedong initiates the "Great Leap Forward" to speed China's industrialization.
1960	Fourteen former French colonies in Africa win independence.
1961	A number of capitalist states form the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The German Democratic Republic attempts to stop emigration with the Berlin Wall.
1962	Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* raises awareness of the environmental toll of pesticides. The United States and Soviet Union face off in the Cuban missile crisis.
1963	The United States and the Soviet Union sign the Limited Test Ban Treaty.
1965	Britain, France, and Israel's plan to take back the Suez Canal from Egypt leads to the Suez Crisis.
1967	Israel defeats its Arab neighbors in the Six Day War.
1967–1970	Competition for control of oil leads to civil war in Nigeria.
1968	Worldwide student demonstrations coalesce around social justice issues. Soviet and Eastern European armies put an end to the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia.
1970	The Aswan High Dam in Egypt begins operation.
1975	Portuguese African colonies gain independence. The United Nations proclaims International Women's Year.