

# CHAPTER 17

## Contemporary European Society and Culture

Wars not only reorder the balance of power and diplomatic structures, they also create major changes in society and culture. This truism certainly applies to the period following the end of World War II. Pent-up demand for products and the need for reconstruction fed an economic miracle, especially in Western Europe. Prosperity, in turn, promoted a population increase, consumerism, and technological advance. Most governments committed themselves to a more active role in economic regulation and ensuring a social welfare system. Renewed prosperity and the specter of the Cold War also worked a downside. Numerous groups of “outsiders”—students, feminists, environmentalists, terrorists—offered various critiques of European society in the years after 1945. Culturally, experimentation flourished in the postwar intellectual climate but also revealed divisions between traditionalists and modernists, and even postmodernists. Following World War II, Europe’s problems are increasingly seen in a global context.

**Note:** To users of Palmer, Colton, and Kramer, *A History of the Modern World*, this chapter concentrates on Chapter 27 of your text, but also includes additional material.

### THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Europe’s amazing recovery from the destruction of World War II produced a higher standard of living and increased life expectancy, but also resulted in negative side effects. In this section, we examine the social changes provoked by the changing European economy and the advance of technology.

#### *The Baby Boom and After*

The Great Depression and World War II had dampened European birth rates. After 1945, the Western world underwent a steady increase in the birth rate, known as the **baby boom**. Governments encouraged the trend in an effort to replace lost population from the war and also to allay a labor shortage in the period. State policies of **neonatalism** subsidized additional births, infant nutrition, and day care. Also aided by an influx of immigrants, Europe’s population increased by 25 percent between 1945 and 1970. With the onset of artificial means of contraception, particularly the **birth control pill**, in the 1960s, the birth rate trended downward after the mid-1960s. The baby boomers born in this interval and who grew up amidst prosperity and consumerism benefited from the increased standard of living but also came to criticize it, along with their parents’ values.

Since the 1970s, and especially since 1990, the population of many European nations, especially in the West, has stagnated. Some demographers forecast **negative population growth** for Italy and France over the next generation. This trend affects politics for two reasons. Government provision for generous retirement benefits must be funded by the taxes of the young. When these programs were first implemented, 20 workers funded the benefits of 1 retiree. That ratio has decreased to between three and five workers per retiree, creating a potential **entitlements time bomb** in the next few decades. Europe’s prosperity also attracts immigrants from Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere. Greater ethnic diversity has increased social tension and led to the

growth of nationalist and **anti-immigrant political parties**. With the decline in religious observance among European Christians, it is estimated that **Muslims will outnumber Christians in Europe by 2025**. It is likely that this demographic shift will be attended by increased conflict, as witnessed by the clash over a Danish newspaper's publication in 2006 of cartoons satirizing Islam and Mohammed.

### *Growth of and Challenge to the Welfare State*

Western and Eastern governments both significantly expanded welfare benefits following World War II. In the Eastern nations, this trend coincided with the establishment of Marxist governments dedicated to social equality and providing the basics for all of their citizens. In the West, the trend was driven by the dominance of Keynesian economic theory and fears about socialist exploitation of class conflict. Western nations provided **old-age pensions, unemployment, and disability insurance**; subsidized or **socialized medical care**; and redistributed income through progressive taxation. For the most part, this "**social safety net**" proved popular, though it came under increasing criticism during the stagnant 1970s and 1980s.

The late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a resurgence of conservative political parties in several nations, such as Great Britain and the United States. Leaders like British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and President Reagan criticized the overregulated economy and bloated government bureaucracy as causing the high inflation and unemployment of the period. Even socialist Francois Mitterand of France was forced to abandon the more ambitious elements of his social reform program by the mid-1980s due to budget deficits and stagnating productivity. **Supply-side economists** argued that economic productivity would result from a reduction of taxes, regulation, and government spending on the welfare state. Supply-side policies did produce growth in the 1980s and early 1990s, but leftist groups believed the costs too high in poverty, inequality, and decline of organized labor.

### *Consumerism and Its Critics*

Postwar prosperity brought a flood of new consumer goods. Pent-up demand from two decades of retrenchment during the Great Depression and WWII burst open with a spree of kitchen appliances, television sets, automobiles, and clothing fashions. **Mass marketing** techniques grew in sophistication, employing **TV spots** and **computer technology** to sell the "good life." Images and sounds of blue jeans and Coca-Cola were beamed across the Iron Curtain to demonstrate the superior abundance of Western society. Marketers often employed sexuality to sell products, a fact condemned both by religious conservatives and some feminists who decried the objectification of women. The Western economies (including the United States) began a shift away from traditional heavy industry toward services and information processing. While this **postindustrial economy** created new opportunities and wealth, it also gutted jobs from older industrial areas, such as the Midland cities of Britain—Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, and Sheffield.

Many across the political spectrum—from traditionalists to socialists—found the new consumerism shallow and wasteful. Environmentalists objected to the waste of nonrenewable resources and levels of pollution. Socialists found confirmation of theories of Marxist alienation in Western society's high levels of crime, suicide, and social dislocation. British economist **E. F. Schumacher** (1911–1977) argued for balancing society's need for efficiency and productive centralization with humanistic values of community and the dignity of labor. In

his famous work *Small Is Beautiful* (1973), Schumacher argued for sustainable development that would take into account the needs of future generations and the impact of production on the health of the planet.

### *Technological Advances*

Postwar Europe saw continued scientific progress. Major advances in medicine and medical care almost doubled life expectancy during the twentieth century. **Antibiotics** cured formerly deadly infectious diseases. Medical personnel first used **penicillin** widely during World War II to fight infections following surgeries and amputations. In addition, vaccines also helped curtail a number of other dreaded diseases; Jonas Salk in 1955 pioneered an easily administered **vaccine against polio**. Safe and effective surgery, including **organ transplantation**, became common after the 1970s. Due to worldwide public health efforts, often sponsored by the United Nations, smallpox had been eradicated by 1975. However, the threat of global pandemics, such as **AIDS** (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) and avian flu, has intensified with the further development of global trade and travel.

Much scientific research in the postwar period has been funded by governments. With the onset of the Cold War, both superpowers invested huge resources in obtaining a technological edge over the other—in rocket technology, nuclear power, and the space race. The space race produced the first **moon landing** by America's Apollo program in 1969. Not all applauded these advances. In his farewell address, President Eisenhower warned of the political dominance of a "**military-industrial complex**," consisting of large, bureaucratized armed forces, arms manufacturers, and corporations, all of whom held an interest in the continuation of the arms race or even war. A new class of **technocrats**—engineers, managers, scientists—seemed to wield authority out of proportion to their numbers and outside democratic political processes. Moreover, many European nations adopted **nuclear power** as a beneficial side effect of the Cold War nuclear arms race. By 2000, France supplied almost 75 percent of its energy needs via nuclear power. Opponents feared that reliance on nuclear power would lead to environmental problems, such as waste disposal and **nuclear meltdowns**, as occurred at Chernobyl in 1986 and almost occurred at **Three Mile Island**, Pennsylvania, in 1979.

### **CRITICS AND OUTSIDERS IN EUROPEAN SOCIETY**

Despite renewed economic prosperity, significant groups of Europeans felt either left out or alienated by postwar society. These groups offered critiques of consumerism, conformity, and inequality that often crossed the political spectrum.

#### *Youth Revolts and the Generation Gap*

The postwar baby boom generation was the first to attend college in large numbers. However, universities became a victim of their success in attracting students. Classes tended to be large and impersonal, and the professors distant. Students criticized living conditions in the dorms and demanded the addition of more up-to-date and relevant courses and programs in psychology, sociology, and women's studies. Youth criticisms were not unique to Europe; the years 1967–1968 saw worldwide protests against repression and bureaucratization. European protests began in Italy and Germany before spreading to France, which became the most fundamental critique of postwar society and almost brought down the government of President de Gaulle.

**Heads Up!** Though many post-1945 FRQs tend to focus on political and economic issues, this topic represents a potential essay question on the AP Exam. To address such a question, make sure that you provide historical context of the Cold War and the postwar economic advances.

French students considered de Gaulle an elderly and distant figure, more interested in foreign affairs than domestic reform. In addition, many students and those sympathetic to leftist ideologies, such as Maoism and Trotskyism, opposed America's involvement in Vietnam and other Cold War colonial conflicts. Many students were attracted to the **New Left** critiques of neo-Marxist thinkers such as **Herbert Marcuse** (1898–1979), whose *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) condemned both the bureaucratic centralism of Soviet ideology and the rampant consumerism of Western society in favor of a culture of protest and rebellion.

In May 1968, the **University of Paris** exploded with student unrest. Students seized control of campus buildings and battled police, demanding better conditions but also a more open and less bureaucratic society. Workers initially supported the students with a nationwide general strike. When it looked as if de Gaulle's government would collapse, he defused the situation by co-opting the workers with wage increases and by assuring the support of the army for his government. Now isolated, the students eventually settled for concessions such as input into university governance and relief of overcrowding. Though the students' more ideological demands were not met, their actions highlighted growing divisions within European society.

Young people often conflict with parents as they establish autonomy. However, many used the "**generation gap**" to describe the widely divergent experiences of parents who grew up in the Great Depression and World War II with their children who experienced Cold War pessimism and economic prosperity. **Youth culture** embraced themes of rebellion, symbolized by the slogan "**sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.**" Postwar European governments decriminalized homosexuality and abortion, and made birth control widely available. The resulting **sexual revolution** sought to separate sexual expression from family and commitment. Many young people embraced premarital sex and open sexuality as acts of rebellion against a society they perceived as rigid and conventional. During the 1960s, the recreational **use of drugs** such as marijuana and LSD grew as a way to experiment with new states of consciousness. Postwar music also expressed themes of rebellion. The **Beatles'** long hair, irreverent attitudes, and drug references introduced a generation to rock 'n' roll music. American **protest music** from Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin linked social consciousness with popular culture. Fittingly, the children of the baby boomers launched their own musical rebellion in the 1980s with **punk** and **alternative**.

### **Feminism**

Militant feminism began as a transatlantic movement and coincided with the push for civil rights in the United States during the 1960s. Now that women had gained the vote in almost all European nations after World War II, they turned toward themes of economic and cultural liberation. **Women's liberation** was inspired by several key works. First, French philosopher **Simone de Beauvoir** (1908–1986), in *The Second Sex* (1949), demonstrated how gender represented a social construction of expectations and attitudes rather than a biological category. Throughout history, de Beauvoir argued, women have been treated as "**the Other**," that is, a deviance from the default male gender, rather than beings in their own right. American **Betty Friedan's** *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) encouraged women to battle subtle oppression that limited women's entrance into leadership positions in academia, business, and government.

Indeed, women in Eastern and Western Europe entered the workforce in larger percentages than ever before. Moreover, many women attained **leadership positions** in government during the postwar era. Scandinavian legislatures boast close to 50 percent of seats held by women. Several famous women were elected for the first time in modern history as heads of government or state, such as Margaret Thatcher in Britain, Golda Meir in Israel, and Indira Gandhi in India, not to mention numerous others. Feminists believed that "**reproductive rights**," such as

access to birth control and **legalized abortion**, were essential to this progress. Worldwide, Europe led the way for the liberation of women, and European feminists have proven instrumental in pushing the United Nations to develop programs for female literacy, contraception, and universal rights in those developing regions where women often suffer the brunt of oppression and poverty.

**Heads Up!** Because topics related to women's history often produce stereotyped responses, you may find it useful to trace the development of feminism over time—goals, tactics, and figures—to demonstrate its changing goals and variety.

### *Environmentalism*

Postwar economic growth created a host of environmental problems, such as **pollution**, **acid rain**, and global warming. American zoologist Rachel Carson (1907–1964) spawned the global environmental movement with her investigation of the effects of pesticides on the food chain in *Silent Spring* (1962). Environmental groups sprung up in response and agitated for ecological protections, the more radical of which demanded a complete reassessment of the nature of global, consumerist capitalism. The fall of communist states in Eastern Europe revealed that socialist economies could despoil the environment as much as capitalist ones; in fact, much of the cost of German reunification has involved getting the former East Germany up to similar ecological standards as the rest of Germany. **Green parties** sprung in Central Europe in the 1980s, advocating for sustainable development and supporting various other leftist causes, such as social justice and pacifism. Germany's Green Party has proved most successful, having served in coalition with the Social Democratic Party from 1998 to 2005. Environmentalists often combined forces tactically and philosophically with feminists and the **antinuclear movement** in the 1980s and 1990s.

Most industrialized nations now support at least some of the environmental agenda. In 1992, 178 nations sent representatives to the first "**Earth Summit**," held in Rio de Janeiro to address concerns over global warming. Science has essentially confirmed that humans' burning of fossil fuels has increased global temperatures and reduced the ozone layer. To address the issue further, 150 nations signed the **Kyoto Protocol** to halve so-called **greenhouse gases** by 2010; however, the largest producer of such gases, the United States, has of this date declined to ratify the agreement. Another issue of concern for the environmental movement has been **world population growth**. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the earth's population stood at 1.7 billion; as of 2006, it stands at around 7 billion. Much of this growth has occurred in the developing world, often complicating global problems of poverty, illiteracy, and lack of infrastructure. Controversy over measures to address this issue, such as promotion of birth control, often provokes controversy among differing cultural and religious traditions.

### *Guest Workers and Immigration*

During the economic boom times of the 1950s and 1960s, Europe allayed its labor shortage by enticing immigrants from Southern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. As in the United States today, these *Gastarbeiter* (as they are called in Germany) often performed jobs that local populations were reluctant or unwilling to assume. Moreover, governments often refused to extend citizenship or state benefits to these workers. When the European economy slowed in the 1970s and 1980s, local populations urged the guest workers to leave. When the fall of the Berlin Wall led to increased unemployment in the former East Germany, anti-immigrant parties and neo-Nazi groups urged their expulsion, or worse, attacked ethnic enclaves. In France, Jean-Marie Le Pen's **National Front Party** called for an end to immigration and supported economic nationalism; Le Pen polled enough votes in the 2002 presidential election to force a run-off before losing. Such issues highlight the growing diversity of European culture in an age of global

capitalism and the challenges of successfully integrating new groups and redefining what it means to be “European.”

### *Domestic Terrorism*

Indigenous European terrorist movements took root in the 1970s and divided basically into two types of groups: leftists and nationalists. Leftist groups arose out of the violent youth movement of the late 1960s, especially among those influenced by Maoist and Trotskyite ideologies. The **Red Brigade** used armed violence to try to force Italy’s withdrawal from the Western alliance. Most famously, it kidnapped and then **assassinated Prime Minister Aldo Moro** in 1978; its influence has declined since the late 1980s. Germany’s **Baader-Meinhof Gang** also employed assassinations and kidnappings of public and business officials, most famously in the so-called German Autumn of 1977. Since the collapse of communism, the influence of the group has decreased.

Ethnic separatist movements in Northern Ireland and Spain have used tactics similar to leftist groups. “**The Troubles**” in British-ruled Northern Ireland began in 1968–1969 with communal clashes between Unionist Protestants wishing to remain in the United Kingdom and Catholics wishing to unite with the Republic of Ireland. The **Irish Republican Army (IRA)** campaigned against the British presence with car bombs, assassinations, and hunger strikes. Not until 1998 had the two sides worked out a power-sharing agreement; in late 2005, the IRA announced that it had abandoned all of its weapons. Similarly in Spain, the **ETA** has agitated with assassinations and bombings for a separate and socialist government representing the **Basque** people, the oldest ethnic group in Europe and one of the few not speaking an Indo-European language.

## INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL TRENDS

The experience of the two world wars has fomented experimentation in the arts and reevaluation in the realms of philosophy and religion.

### *Modernism and Postmodernism*

We often use the term “modern” simply to mean contemporary. Modernism, however, is associated with what might be called the “Enlightenment project,” that is, the effort to discover the laws of nature and of human society, and thereby reach objective knowledge of the world. Once humans possess objective knowledge, they can harness nature for their flourishing and achieve progress. These notions define developments in ideas, economics, politics, and culture from the eighteenth into the twentieth centuries. The wrenching experiences of the two world wars and disgust over the crimes of absolutist ideologies such as Nazism and communism have produced a movement against the modern assumptions of objective knowledge, a movement known as **postmodernism**.

Postmodernism’s roots lay in the nineteenth-century ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche and Danish philosopher **Søren Kierkegaard** (1813–1855), both of whom emphasized the lack of objective values in the world and the importance of **subjective experience**. In the postwar intellectual world, postmodernism has exercised a significant influence on literary criticism, philosophy, the writing of history, architecture, and film. Postmodernists aim to “**deconstruct**” texts—fiction and nonfiction—to find the underlying sociopolitical structure of gender, class, and race embedded in the authors’ works. All ideas carry the baggage of the creator’s biases and drive for power. As **Thomas Kuhn** (1922–1996) argued in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), not even science possesses objective authority, instead representing a series of “para-

“digm shifts” that deal only with fact and theory, not truth. Postmodernists express interest more in how knowledge is “constructed” rather than its correspondence with “Truth,” since the latter does not exist anyway. In art, postmodernists employ irony and satire and promiscuously blend traditional and modern styles.

### Existentialism

As a philosophy, existentialism dominated the postwar intellectual world. Existentialism arises out of humanity’s modern predicament—our feeling of **angst** amid a world of dizzying economic and technological change, the decline of traditional religious values, and the horrors revealed about humanity during the twentieth century. Most but not all existentialists began with Nietzsche’s premise “God is dead.” If this is so, then man must “**create himself.**” As a movement, existentialism took hold among French intellectuals wrestling with the agonizing issues of resistance or collaboration during the Nazi occupation of France. **Jean-Paul Sartre** (1905–1980) was captured by the German army during World War II and later founded a resistance movement. Sartre argued that for humans, “**existence precedes essence,**” meaning that we “turn up on the scene” without choosing to exist; because we have no creator, our essence must be defined by our own choices and values. As is demonstrated in **Albert Camus’s** (1913–1960) novels such as *The Stranger* (1942) and *The Plague* (1947), humans must face the **absurdity** of existence by making life-defining choices alone. Human experience is thus subjective, and because no objective values exist for us to draw on, we must accept our radical human freedom and act with **authenticity**—without self-deception and by accepting responsibility for our choices. Existentialism significantly influenced the arts (see following discussion), and with its emphasis on subjectivity and criticism of modern society, helped lay the foundations for postmodernist thought.

**Heads Up!** For a sense of existentialism, read Camus’s “The Myth of Sisyphus” at [www.nyu.edu/classes/keefe/hell/camus.html](http://www.nyu.edu/classes/keefe/hell/camus.html) or Sartre’s longer “Existentialism as a Humanism” at [www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/works/exist/sartre.htm](http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/sartre/works/exist/sartre.htm).

### Art, Theater, and Music

Signifying the increasingly important role of the United States in European affairs, the center of the Western art world shifted to New York City following World War II. Two styles dominated art in the contemporary era: **abstract expressionism** and **pop art**. In abstract expressionism, the artist does not “portray” anything, but instead uses the canvas and paint to express an emotional attitude or mood. American painter **Jackson Pollock** (1912–1956) popularized the style with his “drip technique” of pouring and splashing paint on immense canvases lying on the floor. Pop art is often associated with both the rise of consumerism in the postwar Western world and also the irony and satire of postmodernism. Artists such as American **Andy Warhol** (1928–1987) and **Roy Lichtenstein** (1923–1997) employed advertising, celebrities, and comic books in their art to comment ironically on the artificiality of consumer capitalism. When contemplating Warhol’s Campbell’s soup cans or Lichtenstein’s comic strips, the line between advertising and artistic creativity becomes blurred.

**Heads Up!** An excellent resource for postwar art is [witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTH20thcentury.html](http://witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTH20thcentury.html).

The ideas of existentialist Albert Camus directly influenced the so-called **Theater of the Absurd** in postwar Europe. Whereas traditional drama concentrates on the development of plot and character, absurdist drama provokes the question, “What is happening now?” Along with the characters, the audience attempts to ascertain the significance of what is occurring on stage.

Perhaps the most famous absurdist drama is Irish playwright **Samuel Beckett's** *Waiting for Godot* (1954), in which two tramps arrive on stage and discuss waiting for a figure named Godot; not only does Godot never show, but the audience is never told why this person is important. In Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967), two characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* discuss their upcoming fate but seem unable to prevent their untimely deaths—a play within a play.

While popular music incorporated rebellion and consumerism, composers of avant-garde ("cutting edge") music experimented with **serialism**. Serialist composers such as **Arnold Schoenberg** (1874–1951) employed a 12-note scale and used mathematical series of "tone rows" to create a more abstract sound than standard tonal and melodic music. Pioneering American composer **John Cage** (1912–1992) experimented with "chance music," where elements of a composition occur randomly. Most famously, Cage "played" his composition "4'33'" in concert, a piece consisting of not a single note; Cage simply timed the composition and then closed the piano cover. In conclusion, perhaps many of these works strike the reader as far-fetched, ridiculous, or nonsensical; with postwar Western culture, it may very well be that the point is that "there is no point."

### *Religion in the Modern World*

As previously noted, religious belief in Europe declined markedly in the postwar period. Nonetheless, religious developments continued to play a role in European culture after 1945. For the Catholic Church, the most important development has been the **ecumenical movement**, or the effort to reach out and establish common ground with other, particularly Christian, religions. Since the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the Church had generally been on the defensive against modern ideas and culture. When **Pope John XXIII** (r. 1958–1963) called the **Second Vatican Council** (1962–1965), it signaled the willingness of the Catholic Church to update doctrine and practice more in keeping with modern developments. John opened dialogues with different faiths and called on wealthy nations to support social justice and work toward human rights. His successor, Paul VI (1963–1978), continued the work of Vatican II but sparked controversy with his encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968), which condemned artificial means of birth control.

Paul's death in 1978 opened the door for a historic change in the church, the election of the first non-Italian pope since 1522 and the first Slavic pope ever: **John Paul II** (1978–2005), often considered the first postmodern pope, lived under both Nazi and Soviet oppression in his native Poland. Many commentators consider this experience to have shaped the John Paul's concern with what

**Sidebar:** Further information on the life and writings of the recently deceased John Paul II can be found at the Vatican Web site, which also includes relevant information on the activities and dogma of the Catholic Church: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/).

he later called the twentieth century's "culture of death." As pope, John Paul supported the Solidarity movement in Poland and worked toward the end of communist oppression in Eastern Europe but also condemned the nuclear arms race and the excesses of consumer capitalism. John Paul's long reign also witnessed his many efforts to reconcile the Catholic Church with its past, apologizing for the Crusades, Galileo's persecution, and the failures of the Catholic Church during the Holocaust. Though progressive on social issues, John Paul adhered to a conservative line on church dogma, upholding bans on contraception, female priests, married priests, and abortion. His supporters see him as providing a brake on the hasty changes made at Vatican II, while his detractors grew concerned with a renewed hierarchical stance.



Most European Protestant denominations have reconciled themselves to modern biblical scholarship and have adapted their faiths in keeping with modern science. Nonetheless, Protestant theologians such as the Swiss **Karl Barth** (1886–1986) took reformed Christianity back to its roots in biblical revelation. Barth held that divine revelation stood on its own feet, without the possibility of being “judged” by human reason. The European Protestant experience has differed markedly from that of the United States since 1945. **Evangelical Christianity** along with a renewed fundamentalism has experienced widespread growth in America, trends that have not generally touched Europe. Formerly communist Eastern Europe suffered under religious persecution, which effectively killed religious belief in several nations. This “unchurched” Europe often conflicts with United States when it comes to issues such as Darwinian evolution and approaches to foreign policy.

### **Globalization**

Since the beginning of your course, an ever-present theme has been Europe’s place in the world. More than ever, the issues confronting the world today reflect those facing Europe. With global communication developments, such as faxes, cell phones, and the Internet, it is no longer possible for one region of the world to wall itself off from the rest. Some recognition of past mistakes in this regard is already apparent with postwar efforts to build a common European identity through economic and political integration. In some ways, Europe has renewed its power and prestige after the horrors of the twentieth century, yet it continues to struggle with its role and place in the world, as seen in the belated response to the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s. As confirmed by history since 1945, many Europeans seem to recognize that their continent functions increasingly within a global context.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Armstrong, Karen, *The Battle for God* (2000)—A comparative and critical analysis of the growth of fundamentalism among the monotheistic faiths.

Butler, Christopher, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction* (2002)—As the title suggests, this volume provides the reader with the basics regarding the recent intellectual climate.

Camus, Albert, *The Stranger* (1942) and *The Plague* (1947)—Two well-known novels that convey the existentialist ethos well and raise profound questions about the human condition.

Friedman, Thomas, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (2005)—The author examines the process of global economic and technological change.

Judt, Tony, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (2005)—A well-received history that offers powerful insights and the author’s unique voice.

Kurlansky, Mark, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* (2004)—Interesting analysis of the personalities involved in a year of upheaval.

Lacquer, Walter, *Europe since Hitler: The Rebirth of Europe* (1982)—This volume provides an overview of postwar developments in all areas.

Landes, David S., *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (1998)—An examination of how and why some areas of the world experience success and others difficulty in producing wealth.

[www.art-for-a-change.com/Paris/paris.html](http://www.art-for-a-change.com/Paris/paris.html)—This site provides text and posters of the student revolts in 1968 Paris.

[kennedy.byu.edu/partners/CSE/](http://kennedy.byu.edu/partners/CSE/)—Housed at Brigham Young University, this site provides a variety of resources on contemporary Europe.

[www.ycsg.yale.edu/center/](http://www.ycsg.yale.edu/center/)—Yale University sponsors this site on relevant features of globalization, including climate change and trade issues.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Following World War II, up to the 1960s, Europe's population:
  - declined due to Cold War conflicts.
  - fluctuated depending on the economy.
  - rose because of an increasing birth rate.
  - stagnated with the onset of artificial contraception.
  - surpassed that of Asia and Africa.
- Which of the following best describes the economic policies of Western European governments after World War II?
  - a gradual reassertion of laissez-faire economic theory
  - provision for welfare programs such as old-age pensions
  - nationalization of most industries to provide full employment
  - focus on the agricultural sector at the expense of industry
  - movement toward the command economic model
- Major technological developments in postwar Europe included all of the following EXCEPT:
  - moon landings.
  - polio vaccine.
  - personal computers.
  - nuclear power.
  - cure for AIDS.
- The quotes below represent ideas associated with:
  - supply-side economists frustrated with government bureaucracy.
  - feminists agitating for access to birth control and abortion.
  - technocrats who opposed the interference of government in science.
  - students protesting the rigidity and alienation of modern society.
  - environmentalists concerned about pollution and species diversity.
    - "Boredom is counterrevolutionary."
    - "Don't liberate me—I'll take care of that."
    - "We want structures that serve people, not people serving structures!"
- Compared with feminists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, feminists in the post-World War II period focused on:
  - gaining the right to vote in all European nations.
  - securing equality in the workforce and political power.
  - protecting the environment from male exploitation.
  - eliminating marriage as an institution of oppression.
  - overturning laws banning prostitution and pornography.
- In the postwar period, which of the following represents the most accurate characterization of the environmental movement?
  - It led to cooperation between the superpowers in battling acid rain.
  - It was initiated by Simone de Beauvoir's writings regarding pollution.