The years after World War II brought many promising changes to an increasingly interconnected world. Major efforts were made to promote peace and international cooperation, and most countries agreed to human rights standards to be enforced through the United Nations. Colonized peoples in Asia and Africa gained their independence, and expanding global trade offered the hope of economic growth. However, these decades also saw major threats to peace, prosperity, and the environment.

A Cold War of rhetoric and frayed nerves between communist and anti-communist states disrupted dreams of a new era of international peace and cooperation. The Iron Curtain divided Soviet-dominated eastern Europe from American-supported western Europe. Regional wars in Korea and Vietnam pitted the United States and its allies against communist regimes. Cold War rivalries sometimes provided a windfall of aid for new states but also intensified civil conflicts in Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere.

Tensions eased in the 1970s, and the United States and the Soviet Union signed agreements to curtail nuclear arms and testing. With the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union in 1991, the Cold War finally ended. The United Nations and other multinational organizations moved to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction and promote global justice and equality. As the sole remaining superpower, the United States had a unique
capacity to act globally and a unique burden of suspicion of its motives.

Economic promises and perils also abounded in the post-war world. The wartime victors experienced rapid economic recovery, as did Germany and Japan, but in less developed lands prosperity came slowly or not at all. Global markets seemed to favor the industrialized nations. After 1975 a number of countries, including China, South Korea, Brazil, and Argentina, made dramatic strides in industrialization. But less developed nations had to struggle, and rapid population growth often offset their economic gains. The divide between rich and poor nations remained—or even widened.

Economic development meant new possibilities and perils for the environment. In the 1960s, the Green Revolution in agriculture greatly increased food supplies in Asia, and in the 1990s genetic engineering advances produced plants that yielded more food and were resistant to disease, drought, and insect damage. But industrial growth added immeasurably to the pollution of water and land. Atmospheric pollution increased exposure to harmful ultraviolet rays and led to increased global temperatures. Over-fishing and over-hunting imperiled many animal species, while thousands of acres of tropical forests were cut or burned for timber and farmland.

Finally, growing global interconnectedness held its own promises and perils. Many welcomed the emergence of English as the global language and the rapid spread of news, money, and ideas via the Internet. Others feared that Western material values and political and economic dominance posed a severe threat to cultural diversity around the world. A dangerous few reacted with violence.
31 The Cold War and Decolonization, 1945–1975

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The Cold War
Decolonization and Nation Building
Beyond a Bipolar World
ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY: The Green Revolution
DIVERSITY AND DOMINANCE: Race and the Struggle for Justice in South Africa

820
In 1946, in a speech at Fulton, Missouri, Great Britain’s wartime leader Winston Churchill said: “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. . . . I am convinced there is nothing they [the communists] so much admire as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than weakness, especially military weakness.” The phrase “iron curtain” became a watchword of the Cold War, the state of political tension and military rivalry that was then beginning between the United States and its allies (“running dogs of imperialism,” in Chinese communist parlance) and the Soviet Union and its allies (“satellites,” in American parlance).

The Atlantic Charter issued by Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt four months before the United States entered World War II in 1941 and the 1942 declaration signed by twenty-six “United Nations” (Roosevelt’s term for the alliance against the Axis) had looked forward to economic cooperation, restoration of sovereignty to nations occupied by the Axis, and above all to a world in which war and territorial conquest were not tolerated. By the time Churchill delivered his “iron curtain” speech, however, Britain’s electorate had voted him out of power, Harry S Truman had succeeded to the presidency after Roosevelt’s death, Communist Yugoslavia was supporting the communists in Greece, and the Soviet Union was dominating eastern Europe and supporting communist movements in China, Iran, Turkey, and Korea. Although Soviet diplomats joined their former allies in the newly founded United Nations organization, confrontation, not cooperation, was the hallmark of relations between East and West.

The intensity of the Cold War, with its accompanying threat of nuclear destruction, sometimes obscured a postwar phenomenon of more enduring importance. Western domination was greatly reduced in most of Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the colonial empires of the New Imperialism were gradually dismantled. The new generation of national leaders heading the states in these regions sometimes skillfully used Cold War antagonism to their own advantage. Their real business, however, was nation building, an enterprise charged with almost insurmountable problems and conflicts.

Each region subjected to imperialism had its own history and conditions and followed its own route to independence. Thus the new nations had difficulty finding a collective voice in a world increasingly oriented toward two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Some sided openly with one or the other. Others banded together in a posture of neutrality and spoke with one voice about their need for economic and technical assistance and the obligation of the wealthy nations to satisfy those needs.

The Cold War military rivalry stimulated extraordinary advances in weaponry and associated technologies, but many new nations faced basic problems of educating their citizens, nurturing industry, and escaping the economic constraints imposed by their former imperialist masters. The environment suffered severe pressures from oil exploration and transport to support the growing economies of the wealthy nations and from deforestation in poor regions challenged by the need for cropland. Neither rich nor poor nations understood the costs associated with these environmental changes.

As you read this chapter, ask yourself the following questions:

- What impact did economic philosophy have on both the Cold War and the decolonization movement?
- How was a third world war averted?
- Was world domination by the superpowers good or bad for the rest of the world?
- How were the experiences of Asia, Africa, and Latin America similar in this period?

The Cold War

The wartime alliance between the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union had been uneasy. Fear of working-class revolution, which the Nazis had played on in their rise to power, was not confined to Germany. For more than a century political and economic leaders
committed to free markets and untrammeled capital investment had loathed socialism in its several forms. After World War II the iron curtain in Europe and communist insurgencies in China and elsewhere seemed to confirm the threat of worldwide revolution.

Western leaders quickly came to perceive the Soviet Union as the nerve center of world revolution and as a military power capable of launching a war as destructive and terrible as the one that had recently ended. But particularly after the United States and the countries of western Europe established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military alliance in 1949, Soviet leaders felt surrounded by hostile forces just when they were trying to recover from the terrible losses sustained in the war against the Axis. The distrust and suspicion between the two sides played out on a worldwide stage. The United Nations provided the venue for face-to-face debate.

### The United Nations

In 1944 representatives from the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China drafted proposals that finally bore fruit in the treaty called the United Nations Charter, ratified on October 24, 1945. Like the earlier League of Nations, the United Nations had two main bodies: the General Assembly, with representatives from all member states; and the Security Council, with five permanent members—China, France, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union—and seven rotating members. A full-time bureaucracy headed by a Secretary General carried out the day-to-day business of both bodies. Various agencies focused on specialized international problems—for example, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) (see Environment and Technology: The Green Revolution). Unlike the League of Nations, which required unanimous agreement in both deliberative bodies, the United Nations operated by majority vote, except that the five permanent members of the Security Council had veto power in that chamber.

All signatories to the United Nations Charter renounced war and territorial conquest. Nevertheless, peacekeeping, the sole preserve of the Security Council, became a vexing problem. The permanent members exercised their vetoes to protect their friends and interests. Throughout the Cold War the United Nations was seldom able to forestall or quell international conflicts, though from time to time it sent observers or peacekeeping forces to monitor truces or agreements otherwise arrived at.

The decolonization of Africa and Asia greatly swelled the size of the General Assembly but not of the Security Council. Many of the new nations looked to the United Nations for material assistance and access to a wider political world. While the vetoes of the Security Council’s permanent members often stymied actions that even indirectly touched on Cold War concerns, the General Assembly became an arena for opinions on many issues involving decolonization, a movement that the Soviet Union strongly encouraged but the Western colonial powers resisted.

In the early years of the United Nations, General Assembly resolutions carried great weight. An example is a 1947 resolution that sought to divide Palestine into sovereign Jewish and Arab states. Gradually, though, the flood of new members produced a voting majority concerned more with poverty, racial discrimination, and the struggle against imperialism than with the Cold War. As a result, the Western powers increasingly disregarded the General Assembly, in effect allowing the new nations of the world to have their say, but not the means to act collectively.

### Capitalism and Communism

In July 1944, with Allied victory a foregone conclusion, economic specialists representing over forty countries met at Bretton Woods, a New Hampshire resort, to devise a new international monetary system. The signatories eventually agreed to fix exchange rates and to create the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (formally the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development). The IMF was to use currency reserves from member nations to finance temporary trade deficits, and the World Bank was to provide funds for reconstructing Europe and helping needy countries after the war.

The Soviet Union attended the Bretton Woods Conference and signed the agreements, which went into effect in 1946. But deepening suspicion and hostility between the Soviet Union and the United States and Britain undermined cooperation. While the United States held reserves of gold and the rest of the world held reserves of dollars in order to maintain the stability of the monetary system, the Soviet Union established a closed monetary system for itself and the new communist regimes in eastern Europe. Similar differences were found across the economies of the two alliances. In the Western countries, supply and demand determined prices; in the Soviet command economy, government agencies allocated goods and set prices ac-
According to governmental priorities, irrespective of market forces.

Many leaders of newly independent states, having won the struggle against imperialism, preferred the Soviet Union’s socialist example to the capitalism of their former colonizers. Thus, the relative success of economies patterned on Eastern or Western models became part of Cold War rivalry. Each side trumpeted economic successes measured by industrial output, changes in per capita income, and productivity gains.

During World War II the U.S. economy finally escaped the lingering effects of the Great Depression (see Chapter 29). Increased military spending and the draft brought full employment and high wages. The wartime conversion of factories from the production of consumer goods had created demand for those goods. With peace, the United States enjoyed prosperity and an international competitive advantage because of massive destruction in Europe.

The economy of western Europe was heavily damaged during World War II, and the early postwar years were bleak in many European countries. With prosperity, the United States was able to support the reconstruction of western Europe. The Marshall Plan provided $12.5 billion in aid to friendly European countries between 1948 and 1952. Most of the aid was in the form of food, raw materials, and other goods. By 1961 more than $20 billion in economic aid had been disbursed. European determination backed by American aid spurred recovery, and by 1963 the resurgent European economy had doubled its 1940 output.

Western European governments generally increased their role in economic management during this period. In Great Britain, for example, the Labour Party government of the early 1950s nationalized coal, steel, railways, and health care. Similarly, the French government nationalized public utilities; the auto, banking, and insurance industries; and parts of the mining industry. These steps provided large infusions of capital for rebuilding and acquiring new technologies.

In 1948 European governments also launched a process of economic cooperation and integration with the creation of the Organization of European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). Cooperative policies were first focused on coal and steel. Often located in disputed border areas, these industries had previously been flash points that led to war. Successes in these crucial areas encouraged some OEEC countries to begin lowering tariffs to
Concern about world food supplies grew directly out of serious shortages caused by the devastation and trade disruptions of World War II. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Ford Foundation took leading roles in fostering crop research and educating farmers about agricultural techniques. In 1966 the International Rice Research Institute (established in 1960–1962) began distributing seeds for an improved rice variety known as IR-8. Crop yields from this and other new varieties, along with improved farming techniques, were initially so impressive that the term Green Revolution was coined to describe a new era in agriculture.

On the heels of the successful new rice strains, new varieties of corn and wheat were introduced. Building on twenty years of Rockefeller-funded research in Mexico, the Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz y Trigo (International Center for the Improvement of Maize and Wheat) was established in 1966 under Norman Borlaug, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize four years later. This organization distributed short, stiff-strawed varieties of wheat that were resistant to disease and responsive to fertilizer.

By 1970 other centers for research on tropical agriculture had been established in Ibadan, Nigeria, and Cali, Colombia. But the success of the Green Revolution and the growing need for its products called for a more comprehensive effort. The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research brought together World Bank expertise, private foundations, international organizations, and national foreign aid agencies to undertake worldwide support of efforts to increase food productivity and improve natural resource management. More recently, the optimism that followed these innovations has been muted by the realization that population growth, soil depletion, the costs of irrigation and fertilizer, and the growing concentration of land in the export sector combined to reduce the effects of improved crop technology in poor countries.

The Green Revolution
encourage the movement of goods and capital. In 1957 France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg signed a treaty creating the European Economic Community, also known as the Common Market. By the 1970s the Common Market nations had nearly overtaken the United States in industrial production. The economic alliance expanded after 1970, when Great Britain, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, and Austria joined. The enlarged alliance called itself the European Community (EC).

Prosperity brought dramatic changes to the societies of western Europe. Average wages increased, unemployment fell, and social welfare benefits were expanded. Governments increased spending on health care, unemployment benefits, old-age pensions, public housing, and grants to poor families with children. The combination of economic growth and income redistribution raised living standards and fueled demand for consumer goods, leading to the development of a mass consumer society. Automobile ownership, for example, grew approximately ninefold between 1950 and 1970.

The Soviet experience was dramatically different. The rapid growth of a powerful Soviet state after 1917 had challenged traditional Western assumptions about economic development and social policy. From the 1920s the Soviet state relied on bureaucratic agencies and political processes to determine the production, distribution, and price of goods. Housing, medical services, retail shops, factories, the land—even musical compositions and literary works—were viewed as collective property and were therefore regulated and administered by the state.

The economies of the Soviet Union and its eastern European allies were just as devastated at the end of the Second World War as those of western Europe. However, the Soviet command economy had enormous natural resources, a large population, and abundant energy at its disposal. Moreover, Soviet planners had made large investments in technical and scientific education, and the Soviet state had developed heavy industry in the 1930s and during the war years. Finally, Soviet leadership was willing to use forced labor on an enormous scale. For example, Bulgaria’s postwar free work force of 361,000 was supplemented by 100,000 slave laborers.1

As a result, recovery was rapid at first, creating the structural basis for modernization and growth. Then, as the postwar period progressed, bureaucratic control of the economy grew less responsive and efficient at the same time that industrial might came to be more commonly measured by the production of consumer goods.
such as television sets and automobiles, rather than by
tons of coal and steel. In the 1970s the gap with the West
widened. Soviet industry failed to meet domestic de-
mand for clothing, housing, food, automobiles, and con-
sumer electronics, while Soviet agricultural inefficiency
compelled increased reliance on food imports.

The socialist nations of eastern Europe were com-
pelled to follow the Soviet economic model, with some
national differences. Poland and Hungary, for example,
implemented agricultural collectivization more slowly
than did Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, economic planners
throughout the region coordinated industrialization and
production plans with the Soviet Union. Significant
growth occurred in all the socialist economies, but the
inefficiencies and failures that plagued the Soviet econ-
omy troubled them as well.

Outside Europe, the United States and the Soviet
Union competed in providing loans and grants and sup-
plying arms (at bargain prices) to countries willing to
align with them. Thus the relative success or failure of
capitalism and communism in Europe and the United
States was not necessarily the strongest consideration in
other parts of the world when the time came to construct
new national economies.

For Germany, Austria, and
Japan, peace brought foreign
military occupation and new
governments that were ini-
tially controlled by the occup-
piers. When relations with the Western powers cooled
at the end of the war, the Soviet Union sought to pre-
vent the reappearance of hostile regimes on its borders.
Initially, the Soviet Union seemed willing to accept gov-
ernments in neighboring states that included a mix of
parties as long as they were not hostile to local commu-
nist groups or to the Soviets. The nations of central and
eastern Europe were deeply split by the legacies of the
war, and many were willing to embrace the communists
as a hedge against those who had supported fas-
cism or cooperated with the Germans. As relations
between the Soviets and the West worsened in the late
1940s, local communists, their strength augmented by
Soviet military occupation, gained victories across
eastern Europe. Western leaders saw the rapid emer-
gence of communist regimes in Poland, Czechoslo-
vakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and
Albania as a threat.

It took two years for the United States to shift from
viewing the Soviet Union as an ally against Germany to
seeing it as a worldwide enemy. In the waning days of
World War II the United States had seemed amenable to
the Soviet desire for free access to the Bosporus and Dar-
danelles straits that, under Turkish control, restricted
naval deployments from the Black Sea to the Mediter-
anean. But in July 1947 the Truman Doctrine offered
military aid to help both Turkey and Greece resist Soviet
military pressure and subversion, and in 1951 both were
admitted to NATO. NATO’s Soviet counterpart, the War-
saw Pact, emerged in 1955 in response to the Western
powers’ decision to allow West Germany to rearm within
limits set by NATO (see Map 31.1).

The much-feared and long-prepared-for third great
war in Europe did not occur. The Soviet Union tested
Western resolve in 1948–1949 by blockading the British,
French, and American zones in Berlin (located in Soviet-
controlled East Germany). Airlifts of food and fuel
defeated the blockade. In 1961 the East German govern-
ment accentuated Germany’s political division by build-

ing the Berlin Wall, a structure designed primarily to
prevent its citizens from fleeing to the noncommunist
western part of the city. In turn, the West tested the East
by encouraging a rift between the Soviet Union and Yu-
goslavia. Western aid and encouragement resulted in Yu-
goslavia’s signing a defensive treaty with Greece and
Turkey (but not with NATO) and deciding against joining
the Warsaw Pact.

Soviet power set clear limits on how far any eastern
European country might stray from Soviet domination.
In 1956 Soviet troops crushed an armed anti-Soviet rev-
olt in Hungary. Then in 1968 Soviet troops repressed a
peaceful reform effort in Czechoslovakia. The West, a
passive onlooker, could only acknowledge that the So-

yet Union had the right to intervene in the domestic af-
fairs of any Soviet-bloc nation whenever it wished.

A more explosive crisis erupted in Korea, where the
Second World War had left Soviet troops in control north
of the thirty-eighth parallel and American troops in con-
trol to the south. When no agreement could be reached
on holding countrywide elections, communist North
Korea and noncommunist South Korea became inde-
pendent states in 1948. Two years later North Korea inva-
ded South Korea. The United Nations Security Council,
in the absence of the Soviet delegation, voted to con-
demn the invasion and called on members of the United
Nations to come to the defense of South Korea. The en-
suing Korean War lasted until 1953. The United States
was the primary ally of South Korea. The People’s Repub-
lic of China supported North Korea.

The conflict in Korea remained limited to the Korean
peninsula because the United States feared that launch-
ing attacks into China might prompt China’s ally, the
Soviet Union, to retaliate, beginning the dreaded third
world war. Americans and South Koreans advanced from
a toehold in the south to the North Korean–Chinese bor-
der. China sent troops across the border, and the North Koreans and Chinese pushed the Americans and South Koreans back. The fighting then settled into a static war in the mountains along the thirty-eighth parallel. The two sides eventually agreed to a truce along that line; but the cease-fire lines remained fortified, and no peace treaty was concluded. The possibility of renewed warfare between the two Koreas continued well past the end of the Cold War and remains a disturbing possibility today.

Japan benefited from the Korean War in an unexpected way. Massive purchases of supplies by the United States and spending by American servicemen on leave stimulated the Japanese economy similar to the way the Marshall Plan had stimulated Europe's economy.

United States Defeat in Vietnam

The most important postwar communist movement arose in the part of Southeast Asia known as French Indochina. Ho Chi Minh* (1890–1969), who had spent several years in France during World War I, played the pivotal role. Ho had helped form the Communist Party in France. In 1930, after training in Moscow, he returned to Vietnam to found the Indochina Communist Party. He and his supporters took refuge in China during World War II.

At war's end the new French government was determined to keep its prewar colonial possessions. Ho Chi Minh's nationalist coalition, then called the Viet Minh, fought the French with help from the People's Republic of China. After a brutal struggle, the French stronghold of Dienbienphu* fell in 1954, marking the end of France's colonial enterprise. Ho's Viet Minh government took over in the north, and a noncommunist nationalist government ruled in the south.

The United States had given some support to the French. President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953–1961) and his foreign policy advisers debated long and hard about whether to aid France militarily during the battle for Dienbienphu. They decided not to prop up French colonial rule in Vietnam, perceiving that the European colonial empires were doomed. After winning independence, communist North Vietnam eventually supported a communist guerrilla movement—the Viet Cong—against the noncommunist government of South Vietnam. At issue was the ideological and economic orientation of an independent Vietnam.

President John F. Kennedy (served 1961–1963) and his advisers decided to support the South Vietnamese government of President Ngo Dinh Diem*. While they knew that the Diem government was corrupt and unpopular, they feared that a communist victory would encourage communist movements throughout Southeast Asia and alter the Cold War balance of power. Kennedy steadily increased the number of American military advisers from 685 to almost 16,000, while secretly encouraging the overthrow of Diem. The execution of Diem following his overthrow instigated a public debate as well as a critical reevaluation within the administration.

Ho Chi Minh (hoe chee min)
Dienbienphu (dee-yen-bee-yen-FOO)

Diem (dee-YEM)
Lyndon Johnson, who became president (served 1963–1969) after Kennedy was assassinated, obtained support from Congress for unlimited expansion of U.S. military deployment after an apparent North Vietnamese attack on two U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. But in South Vietnam there was little support for the nation’s new rulers who soon revealed themselves to be just as corrupt and unpopular as the earlier Diem government. Instead, many South Vietnamese were drawn to the heroic nationalist image of North Vietnam’s leader Ho Chi Minh who had led the struggles against the Japanese and French. By the end of 1966, 365,000 U.S. troops were engaged in the Vietnam War, but they were unable to achieve a comprehensive victory. The Viet Cong guerrillas and their North Vietnamese allies gained significant military credibility in the massive 1968 Tet Offensive. With a battlefield victory unlikely, the antiwar movement in the United States grew and Lyndon Johnson decided to not seek reelection.

In 1973 a treaty between North Vietnam and the United States ended U.S. involvement in the war and promised future elections. Two years later, in violation of the treaty, Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops overran the South Vietnamese army and captured the southern capital of Saigon, renaming it Ho Chi Minh City. The two parts of Vietnam were reunited in a single state ruled from the north. Over a million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans had been killed in the war.

President Johnson had begun his administration committed to a broad program of social reforms and civil rights initiatives, called the Great Society. The civil rights campaign in the South led by Martin Luther King, Jr., and others led to a broad examination of issues of social justice and spawned numerous organizations that challenged the status quo. As the commitment of U.S. troops grew, a massive antiwar movement applied the tactics of the civil rights movement to government military policies. Many members of the military and their civilian supporters, on the other hand, were angered by limitations placed on the conduct of operations, despite fears that a wider war would lead to Chinese involvement and possible nuclear confrontation. The rising tide of antiwar rallies, now international in character, and growing economic problems undermined support for Johnson, who declined to seek reelection. By the mid 1970s both antiwar and pro-war groups had drawn lessons from Vietnam, the former seeing any use of military force overseas as dangerous and unnecessarily destructive, and the latter believing that overwhelming force was required in warfare.

### The Race for Nuclear Supremacy

Fear of nuclear warfare affected strategic decisions in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. It also affected all other aspects of Cold War confrontation. The devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by atomic weapons (see Chapter 29) had ushered in a new era. Nuclear weapons fed into a logic of total war that was already reaching a peak in Nazi genocide and terror bombing and in massive Allied air raids on large cities. After the Soviet Union exploded its first nuclear device in 1949, fears of a worldwide holocaust grew. Fears increased when the United States exploded a far more powerful weapon, the hydrogen bomb, in 1952 and the Soviet Union followed suit less than a year later. The possibility of the theft of nuclear secrets by Soviet spies fostered paranoia in the United States, and the conviction that the nuclear superpowers were willing to use their terrible weapons if their vital interests were threatened spread despair around the world.

In 1954 President Eisenhower warned Soviet leaders against attacking western Europe. In response to such an attack, he said, the United States would reduce the Soviet Union to “a smoking, radiating ruin at the end of two hours.” A few years later the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev made an equally stark promise: “We will bury you.” He was referring to economic competition, but Americans interpreted the statement to mean literal burial. Rhetoric aside, both men—and their successors—had the capacity to deliver on their threats, and everyone in the world knew that all-out war with nuclear weapons would produce the greatest global devastation in human history.

Everyone’s worst fears seemed about to be realized in 1962 when the Soviet Union deployed nuclear missiles in Cuba. Khrushchev and Cuban president Fidel Castro were reacting to U.S. efforts to overthrow the government of Cuba. When the missiles were discovered, the United States prepared for an invasion of Cuba. Confronted by unyielding diplomatic pressure and military threats, Khrushchev pulled the missiles from Cuba. Subsequently, the United States removed its missiles from Turkey. As frightening as the Cuban missile crisis was, the fact that the superpower leaders accepted tactical defeat rather than launch an attack gave reason for hope that nuclear weapons might be contained.

The number, means of delivery, and destructive force of nuclear weapons increased enormously. The bomb dropped on Hiroshima, equal in strength to 12,500 tons of TNT, had destroyed an entire city. By the 1960s explosive yields were measured in megatons (millions of kg of TNT equivalent).
cause fighting each other directly would have risked escalation to the level of nuclear exchange, they carefully avoided crises that might provoke such confrontations. Even when arming third parties to do their fighting by proxy, they set limits on how far such fighting could go. Some of these proxy combatants, however, understood the limitations of the superpowers well enough to manipulate them for their own purposes.

**Decolonization and Nation Building**

After World War II Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire lost their empires, and many foreign colonies and dependencies were transferred to the victors, especially to Great Britain and France. Following World War II the victors lost nearly all their imperial possessions. As a result of independence movements in Africa, Asia, and the Americas and growing anti-imperialist movements at home, most of the colonies of Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the United States were transformed into independent states (see Map 31.2).

Circumstances differed profoundly from place to place. In some Asian countries, where colonial rule was of long standing, newly independent states found themselves in possession of viable industries, communications networks, and education systems. In other countries, notably in Africa, decolonized nations faced dire economic problems and internal disunity that resulted from language and ethnic differences. Political independence had been achieved by most of Latin America in the nineteenth century (see Chapter 21). Following World War II mass political movements in this region focused on the related issue of economic sovereignty—freedom from growing American economic domination.

Despite their differences, a sense of kinship arose among the new and old nations of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. All shared feelings of excitement and rebirth. As the North Americans, Europeans, and Chinese settled into the exhausting deadlock of the Cold War, visions of independence and national growth captivated the rest of the world.

**New Nations in South and Southeast Asia**

After partition in 1947 the independent states of India and Pakistan were strikingly dissimilar. Muslim Pakistan defined itself according to religion and quickly fell under the control of military leaders. India, a secular republic led by Prime Minister
Jawaharlal Nehru, was much larger and inherited most of the considerable industrial and educational resources the British had developed, along with the larger share of trained civil servants and military officers. Ninety percent of its population was Hindu, most of the rest Muslim.

Adding to the tensions of independence (see Chapter 30) was the decision by the Hindu ruler of the northwestern state known as Jammu and Kashmir, without consulting his overwhelmingly Muslim subjects, to join India. War between India and Pakistan over Kashmir broke out in 1947 and ended with an uneasy truce, only to resume briefly in 1965. Though Kashmir remained a flash point of patriotic feeling, the two countries managed to avoid further warfare.

Despite recurrent predictions that multilingual India might break up into a number of linguistically homogeneous states, most Indians recognized that unity benefited everyone; and the country pursued a generally democratic and socialist line of development. Pakistan, in contrast, did break up. In 1971 its Bengali-speaking eastern section seceded to become the independent country of Bangladesh. Their shared political heritage notwithstanding, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh grew steadily apart, following markedly different economic, political, religious, and social paths.

As the Japanese had supported anti-British Indian nationalists, so they encouraged the dreams of some anticolonialists in the countries they had occupied in Southeast Asia. Other nationalists, particularly those belonging to communist groups, saw the Japanese as an imperialist enemy; and the harsh character of Japanese occupation eventually alienated most people in the occupied countries. Nevertheless, the defeats the Japanese inflicted on British, French, and Dutch colonial armies set an example of an Asian people standing up to European colonizers.

In the Dutch East Indies, Achmad Sukarno (1901–1970) cooperated with the Japanese in the hope that the Dutch, who had dominated the region economically since the seventeenth century, would never return. After military confrontation, Dutch withdrawal was finally negotiated in 1949, and Sukarno became the dictator of the resource-rich but underdeveloped island nation. He ruled until 1965, when a military coup ousted him and brutally eliminated Indonesia’s powerful communist party.

Elsewhere in the region, nationalist movements won independence as well. Britain granted independence to Burma (now Myanmar) in 1948 and established the Malay Federation the same year. Singapore, once a member of the federation, became an independent city-state in 1965. In 1946 the United States kept its promise of postwar independence for the Philippine Islands but retained close economic ties and leases on military bases.

**The Struggle for Independence in Africa**

The postwar French government was as determined to hold onto Algeria as it was to keep Vietnam. Since invading the country in 1830 France had followed policies very different from those of the British in India. French settlement had been strongly encouraged, and Algeria had been declared an actual part of France rather than a colony. By the mid-1950s, 10 percent of the Algerian population was of French or other European origin. The Algerian economy was strongly oriented toward France. Though Islam, the religion of 90 percent of the people, prohibited the drinking of alcohol, Algerian vineyards produced immense quantities of wine for French tables. Algerian oil and gas fields were the mainstay of the French petroleum industry.

The Algerian revolt in 1954 was pursued with great brutality by both sides. The Algerian revolutionary organization, the Front de Libération National (FLN), was supported by Egypt and other Arab countries acting on the principle that all Arab peoples should be able to choose their own governments. French colonists, however, considered the country rightfully theirs and swore to fight to the bitter end. When Algeria finally won independence in 1962, a flood of angry colonists returned to France. Their departure undermined the Algerian economy because very few Arabs had received technical training or acquired management experience. Despite bitter feelings left by the war, Algeria retained close and seemingly indissoluble economic ties to France, and Algerians increasingly fled unemployment at home by emigrating to France and taking low-level jobs.

In most of sub-Saharan Africa independence from European rule was achieved through negotiation. However, in colonies with significant white settler minorities, African peoples had to resort to armed struggle to gain independence, since settler populations strongly resisted majority rule. Throughout Africa, nationalists had to overcome many obstacles, but they were also able to take advantage of the consequential changes that colonial rule had brought.

In the 1950s and 1960s economic growth and growing support for liberation overcame worries about economic and environmental problems that would develop after independence. In the cities that hosted colonial authorities, educated African nationalists used the languages introduced by colonial governments to help

**Myanmar** (myahn-MAH)
build multiethnic coalitions within the artificial colonial boundaries. Missionary and colonial schools had produced few high school and college graduates, but graduates of these colonial school systems were often frustrated by obstacles to their advancement and joined the independence movements. Africans who had obtained advanced education in Europe and the United States also played an important role in the struggle for independence as did African veterans of allied armies during World War II.

The networks of roads and railroads built to facilitate colonial exports were used by African truckers and railroad workers to promote Africa's new political consciousness and spread anticolonial ideas. Improvements in medical care and public health had led to rapid population growth. The region's young population enthusiastically embraced the goal of self-rule.

The young politicians who led the nationalist movements devoted their lives to ridding their homelands of foreign occupation. An example is Kwame Nkrumah* (1909–1972), who in 1957 became prime minister of Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast), the first British colony in West Africa to achieve independence. After graduating from a Catholic mission school and a government teacher-training college, Nkrumah spent a decade studying philosophy and theology in the United States, where he absorbed ideas about black pride and independence then being propounded by W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey.

During a brief stay in Britain, Nkrumah joined Kenyan nationalist Jomo Kenyatta, a Ph.D. in anthropology, to found an organization devoted to African freedom. In 1947 Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast to work for independence. The time was right. There was no longer strong public support in Britain for colonialism and, as a result, Britain's political leadership was not enthusiastic about investing resources to hold restive colonies. After Nkrumah's party won a decisive election victory in 1951, the Gold Coast governor released him from prison (where he had been held on "sedition" charges) and appointed him prime minister. Full independence came in 1957. Nkrumah turned out to be more effective as an international spokesman for colonized peoples than as an administrator, and in 1966 a group of army officers ousted him.

After Ghana won independence, Britain quickly granted independence to its other West African colonies, including large and populous Nigeria in 1960. However, white settler opposition in some British colonies in eastern and southern Africa delayed this process. In Kenya a small but influential group of wealthy coffee planters seized upon a protest movement among the Kikuyu people as proof that Africans were unready for self-government. The settlers called the movement "Mau Mau," a made-up name meant to evoke primitive savagery. When violence between settlers and Mau Mau fighters escalated after 1952, British troops hunted down the Mau Mau leaders and resettled the Kikuyu* in fortified villages to prevent contact with rebel bands. The British also declared a state of emergency, banned all African political protest, and imprisoned Kenyatta and many other nationalists for eight years on charges of being Mau Mau leaders. Released in 1961, Kenyatta negotiated with the British to write a constitution for an independent Kenya. In 1964 he was elected the first president of the Republic of Kenya. He proved to be an effective, though autocratic, ruler. Kenya benefited from greater stability and prosperity than Ghana.

Kwame Nkrumah (KWAH-mee n-KROO-muh)
Kikuyu (kih-KOO-you)
African leaders in the sub-Saharan French colonies were more reluctant than their counterparts in British colonies to call for full independence. They visualized political change in terms of promises made in 1944 by the Free French movement of General Charles de Gaulle at a conference in Brazzaville, in French Equatorial Africa. Acknowledging the value of his African territorial base, his many African troops, and the food supplied by African farmers, de Gaulle had promised more democratic government and broader suffrage, though not representation in the French National Assembly. He also had promised to abolish forced labor and imprisonment of Africans without charge; to expand French education down to the village level; to improve health services; and to open more administrative positions, though not the top ones, to Africans. The word independence was never mentioned at Brazzaville, but the politics of postwar colonial self-government led in that direction.

Most new African politicians who sought election in the colonies of French West Africa were civil servants. Because of the French policy of job rotation, they had typically served in a number of different colonies and thus had a broad outlook. They realized that some colonies—such as Ivory Coast, with coffee and cacao exports, fishing, and hardwood forests—had good economic prospects and others, such as landlocked, desert Niger, did not. Furthermore, they recognized the importance of French public investment in the region—a billion dollars between 1947 and 1956—and their own dependence on civil service salaries, which in places totaled 60 percent of government expenditures. The Malagasy politician Philibert Tsirinana* said at a press conference in 1958: “When I let my heart talk, I am a partisan of total and immediate independence [for Madagascar]; when I make my reason speak, I realize that it is impossible.”

When Charles de Gaulle returned to power in France in 1958, at the height of the Algerian war, he warned that a rush to independence would have costs, saying: “One cannot conceive of both an independent territory and a France which continues to aid it.” Ultimately, African patriotism prevailed in all of France’s West African and Equatorial African colonies. Guinea, under the dynamic leadership of Sekou Touré*, gained full independence in 1958 and the rest in 1960.

Independence in the Belgian Congo was chaotic and violent. Contending political and ethnic groups found external allies; some were aided by Cuba and the Soviet Union, others by the West or by business groups tied to the rich mines. Civil war, the introduction of foreign mercenaries, and the rhetoric of Cold War confrontation roiled the waters and led to heavy loss of life as well as property destruction. In 1965 Mobuto Sese Seko seized the reins in a military coup that included the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister, and held on in one of the region’s most corrupt governments until driven from power in 1997.

Decolonization in southern Africa was delayed by the opposition of European settlers, some with deep roots in Africa but many others who were new arrivals after 1945. While the settler minority tried to defend white supremacy, African-led liberation movements were committed to the creation of nonracial societies and majority rule. In the 1960s Africans began guerrilla movements against Portuguese rule in Angola and Mozambique, eventually prompting the Portuguese army to overthrow the undemocratic government of Portugal in 1974. The new Portuguese government granted independence to Angola and Mozambique the following year. In 1980, after a ten-year fight, European settlers in the British colony of Southern Rhodesia accepted African majority rule. The new government changed the country’s name, which had honored the memory of the British imperialist Cecil Rhodes, to Zimbabwe, the name of a great stone city built by Africans long before the arrival of European settlers. This left only South Africa and neighboring Namibia in the hands of ruling European minorities.

A succession of South African governments had constructed a state and society based on a policy of racial separation, or apartheid†, after World War II. Fourteen percent of the population was descended from Dutch and English settlers. By law, whites controlled the most productive tracts of land, the industrial, mining, and commercial enterprises, and the government. Other laws imposed segregated housing, schools, and jobs on South Asians and people of mixed parentage classified as “nonwhite.” The 74 percent of the population made up of indigenous Africans were subjected to far stricter limitations on place of residence, right to travel, and access to jobs and public facilities. African “homelands,” somewhat similar to Amerindian reservations in the United States, were created in parts of the country, often far from the more dynamic and prosperous urban and industrial areas. Overcrowded and lacking investment, these restricted “homelands” were very poor and squalid, with few services and fewer opportunities.

The African National Congress (ANC), formed in 1912, and other organizations led the opposition to apartheid (see Diversity and Dominance: Race and the Struggle for Justice in South Africa). After police fired on demonstrators in the African town of Sharpeville in 1960 and banned all peaceful political protest by Africans, an

---

* Tsirinana (tsee-REE-nah-nah)  Sekou Touré (SAY-koo too-RAY)

† apartheid (uh-PAHRT-ate)
African lawyer named Nelson Mandela (b. 1918) organized guerrilla resistance by the ANC. Mandela was sentenced to life in prison in 1964. The ANC operated from outside the country. The armed struggle against apartheid continued until 1990 (see Chapter 33).

The Quest for Economic Freedom in Latin America

Latin American independence from European rule was achieved more than a hundred years earlier, but European and, by the end of the nineteenth century, American economic domination continued (see Chapters 27 and 30). Chile's copper, Cuba's sugar, Colombia's coffee, and Guatemala's bananas were largely controlled from abroad. The communications networks of several countries were in the hands of ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph Company), a U.S. corporation. From the 1930s, however, support for economic nationalism grew. During the 1930s and 1940s populist political leaders had experimented with programs that would constrain foreign investors or, alternatively, promote local efforts to industrialize (see discussion of Getulio Vargas and Juan Perón in Chapter 30).

In Mexico the revolutionary constitution of 1917 had begun an era of economic nationalism that culminated in the expropriation of foreign oil interests in 1938. Political stability had been achieved under the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI (the abbreviation of its name in Spanish), which controlled the government until the 1990s. Stability allowed Mexico to experience significant economic expansion during the war years, but a yawning gulf between rich and poor, urban and rural, persisted. Although the government dominated important industries like petroleum and restricted foreign investment, rapid population growth, unchecked migration to Mexico City and other urban areas, and political corruption challenged efforts to lift the nation's poor. Economic power was concentrated at the top of society, with two thousand elite families benefiting disproportionately from the three hundred foreign and eight hundred Mexican companies that dominated the country. At the other end of the economic scale were the peasants, the 14 percent of the population classified as Indian, and the urban poor.

While Mexico's problems derived only partly from the effects of foreign influence, Guatemala's situation was more representative. Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, elected in 1951, was typical of Latin American leaders, including Perón of Argentina and Vargas of Brazil (see Chapter 30), who tried to confront powerful foreign interests. An American corporation, the United Fruit Company, was Guatemala's largest landowner; it also controlled much of the nation's infrastructure, including port facilities and railroads. To suppress banana production and keep prices high, United Fruit kept much of its Guatemalan lands fallow. Arbenz attempted land reform, which would have transferred these fallow lands to the nation's rural poor. The threatened expropriation angered the United Fruit Company. Simultaneously, Arbenz tried to reduce U.S. political influence, raising fears in Washington that he sought closer ties to the Soviet Union. Reacting to the land reform efforts and to reports that Arbenz was becoming friendly to communism, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in one of its first major overseas operations, sponsored a takeover by the Guatemalan military in 1954. CIA intervention removed Arbenz, but it also condemned Guatemala to decades of government instability and growing violence between leftist and rightist elements in society.

In Cuba economic domination by the United States prior to 1960 was overwhelming. U.S. companies effectively controlled sugar production, the nation's most important industry, as well as banking, transportation, tourism, and public utilities. The United States was the most important market for Cuba's exports and the most important source of Cuba's imports. The needs of the U.S. economy largely determined the ebb and flow of Cuban foreign trade. A 1934 treaty had granted preferential treatment (prices higher than world market prices) to Cuban sugar in the American market in return for access to the Cuban market by American manufacturers. Since U.S. companies dominated the sugar business, this was actually a kind of tax imposed on American consumers for the benefit of American corporations. By 1956 sugar accounted for 80 percent of Cuba's exports and 25 percent of Cuba's national income. But demand in the United States dictated keeping only 39 percent of the land owned by the sugar companies in production, while Cuba experienced chronic underemployment. Similarly, immense deposits of nickel in Cuba went untapped because the U.S. government, which owned them, considered them to be a reserve.

Profits went north to the United States or to a small class of wealthy Cubans, many of them, like the owners of the Bacardi rum company, of foreign origin. Between 1951 and 1958 Cuba's economy grew at 1.4 percent per year, less than the rate of population increase. Cuba's government was notoriously corrupt and subservient to the wishes of American interests. In 1953 Fulgencio Batista*, a former military leader and president, illegally returned to power in a coup. Cuban aversion to

Fulgencio Batista (ful-HEHN-see-oh bah-TEES-tah)
DIVERSITY AND DOMINANCE

Race and the Struggle for Justice in South Africa

One of South Africa's martyrs in the struggle against apartheid was Steve Biko (1946–1977), a thinker and activist especially concerned with building pride among Africans and asserting the importance of African cultures. Biko was one of the founders of the Black Consciousness Movement, focusing on the ways in which white settlers had stripped Africans of their freedom. As a result of his activism, he was restricted to his home town in 1973. Between 1975 and 1977 he was arrested and interrogated four times by the police. After his arrest in August 1977 he was severely beaten while in custody. He died days later without having received medical care. His death caused worldwide outrage.

But these are not the people we are concerned with [those who support apartheid]. We are concerned with that curious bunch of nonconformists who explain their participation in negative terms: that bunch of do-gooders that goes under all sorts of names—liberals, leftists etc. These are the people who argue that they are not responsible for white racism and the country's "inhumanity to the black man." These are the people who claim that they too feel the oppression just as acutely as the blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the black man's struggle for a place under the sun. In short, these are the people who say that they have black souls wrapped up in white skins.

The role of the white liberal in the black man's history in South Africa is a curious one. Very few black organisations were not under white direction. True to their image, the white liberals always knew what was good for the blacks and told them so. The wonder of it all is that the black people have believed in them for so long. It was only at the end of the 50s that the blacks started demanding to be their own guardians.

The integration they talk about is first of all artificial in that it is a response to conscious manoeuvre rather than to the dictates of the inner soul. In other words the people forming the integrated complex have been extracted from various segregated societies with their in built complexes of superiority and inferiority and these continue to manifest themselves even in the "nonracial" setup of the integrated complex. As a result the integration so achieved is a one-way course, with the whites doing all the talking and the blacks the listening. Let me hasten to say that I am not claiming that segregation is necessarily the natural order; however, given the facts of the situation where a group experiences privilege at the expense of others, then it becomes obvious that a hastily arranged integration cannot be the solution to the problem. It is rather like expecting the slave to work together with the slave-master's son to remove all the conditions leading to the former's enslavement.

Secondly, this type of integration as a means is almost always unproductive. The participants waste lots of time in an internal sort of mudslinging designed to prove that A is more of a liberal than B. In other words the lack of common ground for solid identification is all the time manifested in internal strifes [sic] inside the group.

It will not sound anachronistic to anybody genuinely interested in real integration to learn that blacks are asserting themselves in a society where they are being treated as perpetual under-16s. One does not need to plan for or actively encourage real integration. Once the various groups within a given community have asserted themselves to the point that mutual respect has to be shown then you have the ingredients for a true and meaningful integration. At the heart of true integration is the provision for each man, each group to rise and attain the envisioned self. Each group must be able to attain its style of existence without encroaching on or being thwarted by another. Out of this mutual respect for each other and complete freedom of self-determination there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the life-styles of the various groups. This is true integration.

From this it becomes clear that as long as blacks are suffering from [an] inferiority complex—a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision—they will be useless as co-architects of a normal society where man is
nothing else but man for his own sake. Hence what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that may come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim.

Thus in adopting the line of a nonracial approach, the liberals are playing their old game. They are claiming a “monopoly on intelligence and moral judgement” and setting the pattern and pace for the realisation of the black man’s aspirations. They want to remain in good books with both the black and white worlds. They want to shy away from all forms of “extremisms,” condemning “white supremacy” as being just as bad as “Black Power!” They vacillate between the two worlds, verbalising all the complaints of the blacks beautifully while skilfully extracting what suits them from the exclusive pool of white privileges. But ask them for a moment to give a concrete meaningful programme that they intend adopting, then you will see on whose side they really are. Their protests are directed at and appeal to white conscience, everything they do is directed at finally convincing the white electorate that the black man is also a man and that at some future date he should be given a place at the white man’s table.

In the following selection Anglican bishop Desmond Tutu (b. 1931) expressed his personal anguish at the death of Steve Biko. He summarized Biko’s contributions to the struggle for justice in South Africa. Tutu won the Noble Peace Prize in 1984 and was named archbishop in 1988. From 1995 to 1998 he chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which investigated atrocities in South Africa during the years of apartheid. He stated that his objective was to create “a democratic and just society without racial divisions.”

When we heard the news “Steve Biko is dead” we were struck numb with disbelief. No, it can’t be true! No, it must be a horrible nightmare, and we will awake and find that really it is different—that Steve is alive even if it be in detention. But no, dear friends, he is dead and we are still numb with grief, and groan with anguish “Oh God, where are you? Oh God, do you really care—how can you let this happen to us?”

It all seems such a senseless waste of a wonderfully gifted person, struck down in the bloom of youth, a youthful bloom that some wanted to see blighted. What can be the purpose of such wanton destruction? God, do you really love us? What must we do which we have not done, what must we say which we have not said a thousand times over, oh, for so many years—that all we want is what belongs to all God’s children, what belongs as an inalienable right—a place in the sun in our own beloved mother country. Oh God, how long can we go on? How long can we go on appealing for a more just ordering of society where we all, black and white together, count not because of some accident of birth or a biological irrelevance—where all of us black and white count because we are human persons, human persons created in your own image.

God called Steve Biko to be his servant in South Africa—to speak up on behalf of God, declaring what the will of this God must be in a situation such as ours, a situation of evil, injustice, oppression and exploitation. God called him to be the founder father of the Black Consciousness Movement against which we have had tirades and fulminations. It is a movement by which God, through Steve, sought to awaken in the Black person a sense of his intrinsic value and worth as a child of God, not needing to apologise for his existential condition as a black person, calling on blacks to glorify and praise God that he had created them black. Steve, with his brilliant mind that always saw to the heart of things, realised that until blacks asserted their humanity and their personhood, there was not the remotest chance for reconciliation in South Africa. For true reconciliation is a deeply personal matter. It can happen only between persons who assert their own personhood, and who acknowledge and respect that of others. You don’t get reconciled to your dog, do you? Steve knew and believed fervently that being pro-black was not the same thing as being anti-white. The Black Consciousness Movement is not a “hate white movement,” despite all you may have heard to the contrary. He had a far too profound respect for persons as persons, to want to deal with them under readymade, shopsoiled [sic] categories.

All who met him had this tremendous sense of a warm-hearted man, and as a notable acquaintance of his told me, a man who was utterly indestructible, of massive intellect and yet reticent; quite unshakeable in his commitment to principle and to radical change in South Africa by peaceful means; a man of real reconciliation, truly an instrument of God’s peace, unshakeable in his commitment to the liberation of all South Africans, black and white, striving for a more just and more open South Africa.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What are Steve Biko’s charges against white liberals in South Africa?
2. What was the proper role for whites in the antiapartheid movement according to Biko?
3. How does Bishop Tutu’s eulogy differ from the political spirit and point of view expressed in Biko’s 1970 essay?
4. According to Bishop Tutu, what were Biko’s strongest characteristics? Were these characteristics demonstrated in Biko’s essay?

corruption, repression, and foreign economic domination spread quickly.

A popular rebellion forced Batista to flee the country in 1959. The dictator had been opposed by student groups, labor unions, and supporters of Cuba's traditional parties. The revolution was led by Fidel Castro, a young lawyer who had been jailed and then exiled when a 1953 uprising failed. Castro established his revolutionary base in the countryside and utilized guerrilla tactics. When he and his youthful followers took power, they vowed not to suffer the fate of Arbenz and the Guatemalan reformers. Ernesto (“Che”) Guevara, Castro's chief lieutenant who became the main theorist of communist revolution in Latin America, had been in Guatemala at the time of the CIA coup. He and Castro took for granted that confrontation with the United States was inevitable. As a result, they quickly removed the existing military leadership, executing many Batista supporters and creating a new military.

They also moved rapidly to transform Cuban society. Fidel Castro (b. 1927) gave a number of speeches in the United States in the wake of his victory and was cheered as a heroic enemy of dictatorship and American economic imperialism. Within a year his government redistributed land, lowered urban rents, and raised wages, effectively transferring 15 percent of the national income from the rich to the poor. Within twenty-two months the Castro government seized the property of almost all U.S. corporations in Cuba as well as the wealth of Cuba's elite.

To achieve his revolutionary transformation Castro sought economic support from the Soviet Union. The United States responded by suspending the sugar agreement and seeking to destabilize the Cuban economy. These punitive measures, the nationalization of so much of the economy, and the punishment of Batista supporters caused tens of thousands of Cubans to leave. Initially, most immigrants were from wealthy families and the middle-class, but when the economic failures of the regime eventually became clear, many poor Cubans fled to the United States or to other Latin American nations.

Little evidence supports the view that Castro undertook his revolution to install a communist government, but he certainly sought to break the economic and political power of the United States in Cuba and install dramatic social reforms based on an enhanced role for the state in the economy. With relations between Castro and Washington reaching crisis and Castro openly seeking the support of the Soviet Union, in April 1961 the United States attempted to apply the strategy that had removed Arbenz from power in Guatemala. Some fifteen hundred Cuban exiles trained and armed by the CIA were landed at the Bay of Pigs in an effort to overthrow Castro. The Cuban army defeated the attempted invasion in a matter of days, partly because the new U.S. president, John F. Kennedy, decided to provide less air support than had been planned by the Eisenhower administration.

The failure of the Bay of Pigs tarnished the reputation of the United States and the CIA and gave heart to revolutionaries all over Latin America. The failed overthrow of Castro also helped precipitate the Cuban missile crisis. Fearful of a U.S. invasion, Castro and Khrushchev placed nuclear weapons as well as missiles and bombers in Cuba to forestall the anticipated attack. But the armed revolutionary movements that imitated the tactics, objectives, and even appearance of Cuba's bearded revolutionaries experienced little success. Among the thousands to lose their lives was Che Guevara who was executed after capture in Bolivia in 1967. Nevertheless, Castro had demonstrated that American power could be successfully challenged and that a radical program of economic and social reform could be put in place in the Western Hemisphere.

Che Guevara (chay guh-VAHR-uh)
Decolonization occurred on a vast scale. Fifty-one nations signed the United Nations Charter in the closing months of 1945. During the United Nations’ first decade twenty-five new members joined, a third of them upon gaining independence. During the next decade forty-six more new members were admitted, nearly all of them former colonial territories.

Each of these nations had to organize and institute some form of government. Comparatively few were able to do so without experiencing coups, rewritten constitutions, or regional rebellions. Leaders did not always agree on the form independence should take. In the absence of established constitutional traditions, leaders frequently tried to impose their own visions by force. Most of the new nations, while trying to establish political stability, also faced severe economic challenges, including foreign ownership and operation of key resources and the need to build infrastructure. Overdependence on world demand for raw materials and on imported manufactured goods persisted in many places long after independence.

Because the achievement of political and economic goals called for educated and skilled personnel, education was another common concern in newly emerging nations. Addressing that concern required more than building and staffing schools. In some countries, leaders had to decide which language to teach and how to inculcate a sense of national unity in students from different—and sometimes historically antagonistic—ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups. Another problem was how to provide satisfying jobs for new graduates, many of whom had high expectations because of their education.

Only rarely were the new nations able to surmount these hurdles. Even the most economically and educationally successful, such as South Korea, suffered from tendencies toward authoritarian rule. Similarly, Costa Rica, a country with a remarkably stable parliamentary regime from 1949 onward and a literacy rate of 90 percent, remained heavily dependent on world prices for agricultural commodities and on importation of manufactured goods.

**BEYOND A BIPOLAR WORLD**

Although no one doubted the dominating role of the East–West superpower rivalry in world affairs, the newly independent states had concerns that were primarily domestic and regional. Their challenge was to pursue their ends within the bipolar structure of the Cold War—and possibly to take advantage of the East–West rivalry. Where nationalist forces sought to assert political or economic independence, Cold War antagonists provided arms and political support even when the nationalist goals were quite different from those of the superpowers. For other nations, the ruinously expensive superpower arms race opened opportunities to expand industries and exports. In short, the superpowers dominated the world but did not control it. And as time progressed, they dominated it less and less.

**The Third World**

As one of the most successful leaders of the decolonization movement, Indonesia’s President Sukarno was an appropriate figure to host a meeting in 1955 of twenty-nine African and Asian countries at Bandung, Indonesia. The conferees proclaimed solidarity among all peoples fighting against colonial rule. The Bandung Conference marked the beginning of an effort by the many new, poor, mostly non-European nations emerging from colonialism to gain more influence in world affairs by banding together. The terms nonaligned nations and Third World, which became commonplace in the following years, signaled these countries’ collective stance toward the rival sides in the Cold War. If the West, led by the United States, and the East, led by the Soviet Union, represented two worlds locked in mortal struggle, the Third World consisted of everyone else.

Leaders of so-called Third World countries preferred the label nonaligned, which signified freedom from membership on either side. However, many leaders in the West noted that the Soviet Union supported national liberation movements and that the nonaligned movement included communist countries such as China and Yugoslavia. As a result, they decided not to take the term nonaligned seriously. In a polarized world, they saw Sukarno, Nehru, Nkrumah, and Egypt’s Gamal Abd al-Nasir as stalking horses for a communist takeover of the world. This may also have been the view of some Soviet leaders, since the Soviet Union was quick to offer some of these countries military and financial aid.

For the movement’s leaders, however, nonalignment was primarily a way to extract money and support from one or both superpowers. By flirting with the Soviet Union or its ally, the People’s Republic of China, a country could get cheap or free weapons, training, and barter agreements that offered an alternative to selling agricultural or mineral products on Western-dominated world markets. The same flirtation might also prompt the

Gamal Abd al-Nasir (gah-MAHL AH-B-d al–NAH-suhr)
United States and its allies to proffer grants and loans, cheap or free surplus grain, and investment in industry and infrastructure.

When skillful, nonaligned countries could play the two sides against each other and profit from both. Egypt under Nasir, who had led a military coup against the Egyptian monarchy in 1952, and under Nasir’s successor Anwar al-Sadat after 1970 played the game well. The United States offered to build a dam at Aswan, on the Nile River, to increase Egypt’s electrical generating and irrigation capacity. When Egypt turned to the Soviet Union for arms, the United States reneged on the dam project in 1956. The Soviet Union then picked it up and completed the dam in the 1960s. In 1956 Israel, Great Britain, and France conspired to invade Egypt. Their objective was to overthrow Nasir, regain the Suez Canal (he had recently nationalized it), and secure Israel from any Egyptian threat. The invasion succeeded militarily, but the United States and the Soviet Union both pressured the invaders to withdraw, thus saving Nasir’s government. In 1972 Sadat evicted his Soviet military advisers, but a year later he used his Soviet weapons to attack Israel. After he lost that war, he announced his faith in the power of the United States to solve Egypt’s political and economic problems.

Numerous other countries adopted similar balancing strategies. In each case, local leaders were trying to develop their nation’s economy and assert or preserve their nation’s interests. Manipulating the superpowers was a means toward those ends and implied very little about true ideological orientation.

**Japan and China**

No countries took better advantage of the opportunities presented by the superpowers’ preoccupation than did Japan and China. Japan signed a peace treaty with most of its former enemies in 1951 and regained independence from American occupation the following year. Renouncing militarism and its imperialist past (see Chapter 26), Japan remained on the sidelines throughout the Korean War. Its new constitution, written under American supervision in 1946, allowed only a limited self-defense force, banned the deployment of Japanese troops abroad, and gave the vote to women.

The Japanese turned their talents and energies to rebuilding their industries and engaging in world commerce. Peace treaties with countries in Southeast Asia specified reparations payable in the form of goods and services, thus reintroducing Japan to that region as a force for economic development rather than as a military occupier. Nevertheless, bitterness over wartime op-

**al-Sadat** (al-seh-DAT) **Aswan** (AS-wahn)
pression remained strong, and Japan had to move slowly in developing new regional markets for its manufactured goods. The Cold War isolated Japan and excluded it from most world political issues. It thus provided an exceptionally favorable environment for Japan to develop its economic strength.

Three industries that took advantage of government aid and the newest technologies paved the way for Japan’s emergence as an economic superpower after 1975. Electricity was in short supply in 1950; Tokyo itself suffered evening power outages. Projects producing 60 million kilowatts of electricity were completed between 1951 and 1970, almost a third through dams on Japan’s many rivers. Between 1960 and 1970 steel production more than quadrupled, reaching 15.7 percent of the total capacity of countries outside the Soviet bloc. The shipbuilding industry produced six times as much tonnage in 1970 as in 1960, almost half the new tonnage produced worldwide outside the Soviet bloc.

While Japan benefited from being outside the Cold War, China was deeply involved in Cold War politics. When Mao Zedong* and the communists defeated the nationalists in 1949 and established the People’s Republic of China (PRC), their main ally and source of arms was the Soviet Union. By 1956, however, the PRC and the Soviet Union were beginning to diverge politically, partly in reaction to the Soviet rejection of Stalinism and partly because of China’s reluctance to be cast forever in the role of student. Mao had his own notions of communism, focusing strongly on the peasantry, whom the Soviets ignored in favor of the industrial working class.

Mao’s Great Leap Forward in 1958 was supposed to vault China into the ranks of world industrial powers by maximizing the use of labor in small-scale, village-level industries and by mass collectivization in agriculture. These policies demonstrated Mao’s willingness to carry out massive economic and social projects of his own devising in the face of criticism by the Soviets and by traditional economists. However, these revolutionary reforms failed comprehensively by 1962, leading to an estimated 30 million deaths.

In 1966 Mao instituted another radical nationwide program, the Cultural Revolution. Ordering the mass mobilization of Chinese youth into Red Guard units, his goal was to kindle revolutionary fervor in a new generation to ward off the stagnation and bureaucratization he saw in the Soviet Union. But this was also a strategy for increasing Mao’s power within the Communist Party. Red Guard units criticized and purged teachers, party officials, and intellectuals for “bourgeois values.” The young militants themselves suffered from factionalism, which caused more violence. Executions, beatings, and incarcerations were widespread, leading to a half-million deaths and three million purged by 1971. Finally, Mao admitted that attacks on individuals had gotten out of hand and intervened to reestablish order. The last years of the Cultural Revolution were dominated by radicals led by Mao’s wife Jiang Qing*, who focused on restrictions on artistic and intellectual activity.

In the meantime, the rift between the PRC and the Soviet Union had opened so wide that U.S. President Richard Nixon (served 1969–1974), by reputation a

Mao Zedong (maow dzuh-dong)

Jiang Qing (jyahn ching)
The Middle East

The superpowers could not control all dangerous international disputes. Independence had come gradually to the Arab countries of the Middle East. Britain granted Syria and Lebanon independence after World War II. Iraq, Egypt, and Jordan enjoyed nominal independence between the two world wars but remained under indirect British control until the 1950s. Military coups overthrew King Faruq of Egypt in 1952 and King Faisal II of Iraq in 1958. King Husayn of Jordan dismissed his British military commander in 1956 in response to the Suez crisis, but his poor desert country remained dependent on British and later American financial aid.

Overshadowing all Arab politics, however, was the struggle with Israel. British policy on Palestine between the two world wars oscillated between sentiment favoring Zionist Jews—who emigrated to Palestine, encouraged by the Balfour Declaration—and sentiment for the indigenous Palestinian Arabs, who felt themselves being pushed aside and suspected that the Zionists were aiming at an independent state. As more and more Jews sought a safe haven from persecution by the Nazis, Arabs felt more and more threatened. The Arabs unleashed a guerrilla uprising against the British in 1936, and Jewish groups turned to militant tactics a few years later. Occasionally, Arabs and Jews confronted each other in riots or killings, making it clear that peaceful coexistence in Palestine would be difficult or impossible to achieve.

After the war, under intense pressure to resettle European Jewish refugees, Britain conceded that it saw no way of resolving the dilemma and turned the Palestine problem over to the United Nations. In November 1947 the General Assembly voted in favor of partitioning Palestine into two states, one Jewish and the other Arab. The Jewish community made plans to declare independence, while the Palestinians, who felt that the proposed land division was unfair, reacted with horror and took up arms. When Israel declared its independence in May 1948, neighboring Arab countries sent armies to help the Palestinians crush the newborn state.

Israel prevailed on all fronts. Some 700,000 Palestinians became refugees, finding shelter in United Nations refugee camps in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the Gaza Strip (a bit of coastal land on the Egyptian-Israeli border). The right of these refugees to return home remains a focal point of Arab politics. In 1967 Israel responded to threatening military moves by Egypt’s Nasir by preemptively attacking Egyptian and Syrian air bases. In six days Israel won a smashing victory. When Jordan entered the war, Israel won control of Jerusalem, which it had previously split with Jordan, and the West Bank. Acquiring all of Jerusalem satisfied Jews’ deep longing to return to their holiest city, but Palestinians continued to regard Jerusalem as their destined capital, and Muslims in many countries protested Israeli control of the Dome of the Rock, a revered Islamic shrine located in the city. Israel also occupied the Gaza Strip, the strategic Golan Heights in southern Syria, and the entire Sinai Peninsula (see Map 31.3). These acquisitions resulted in a new wave of Palestinian refugees.

The rival claims to Palestine continued to plague Middle Eastern politics. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), headed by Yasir Arafat, waged guerrilla war against Israel, frequently engaging in acts of terrorism. The militarized Israelis were able to blunt or absorb these attacks and launch counterstrikes that likewise involved assassinations and bombings. Though the United States was a firm friend to Israel and the Soviet Union armed the Arab states, neither superpower saw the struggle between Zionism and Palestinian nationalism as a vital concern—until oil became a political issue.

The phenomenal concentration of oil wealth in the Middle East—Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates—was not fully realized until after World War II, when demand for oil rose sharply as civilian economies recovered. In 1960, as a world oversupply diminished in the face of rising

Faruq (fuh-ROOK)  Faisal (FIE-suhl)  Husayn (hoo-SANE)

Arafat (AR-uh-fat)
demand, oil-producing states formed the **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** to promote their collective interest in higher revenues.

Oil politics and the Arab-Israeli conflict intersected in October 1973. A surprise Egyptian attack across the Suez Canal threw the Israelis into temporary disarray. Within days the war turned in Israel’s favor, and an Egyptian army was trapped at the canal’s southern end. The United States then arranged a cease fire and the disengagement of forces. But before that could happen, the Arab oil-producing countries voted to embargo oil shipments to the United States and the Netherlands as punishment for their support of Israel.

The implications of using oil as an economic weapon profoundly disturbed the worldwide oil industry. Prices rose—along with feelings of insecurity. In 1974 OPEC responded to the turmoil in the oil market by quadrupling prices, setting the stage for massive transfers of wealth to the producing countries and provoking a feeling of crisis throughout the consuming countries.

**The Emergence of Environmental Concerns**

The Cold War and the massive investments made in postwar economic recovery had focused public and governmental attention on technological innovations and enormous projects such as hydroelectric dams and nuclear power stations. Only a few people warned that untested technologies and all-out drives for industrial productivity were rapidly degrading the environment. The superpowers were particularly negligent of the environmental impact of pesticide and herbicide use, automobile exhaust, industrial waste disposal, and radiation.

The wave of student unrest that swept many parts of the world in 1968 and the early 1970s created a new awareness of environmental issues and a new constituency for environmental action. As the current of youth activism grew, governments in the West began to pass new environmental regulations. Earth Day, a benchmark of the new awareness, was first celebrated in 1970, the year in which the United States established its Environmental Protection Agency.

The problem of finite natural resources became more broadly recognized when oil prices skyrocketed. Making gasoline engines and home heating systems more efficient and lowering highway speed limits to conserve fuel became matters of national debate in the United States, while poorer countries struggled to find the money to import oil. A widely read 1972 study called *The Limits of Growth* forecast a need to cut back on consumption of natural resources in the twenty-first century. As the most dangerous moments of the Cold War seemed to be passing, ecological and environmental problems of worldwide impact vied for public attention with superpower rivalry and Third World nation building.
Conclusion

The impact of the Second World War was so immense that for several decades people commonly referred to the time they were living in as the “postwar era,” not needing to specify which war they were referring to. The Cold War and the decolonization movement seemed to be logical extensions of World War II. The question of who would control the parts of Europe and Asia liberated from Axis occupation led to Churchill's notion of an iron curtain dividing East and West. The war exhaustion of the European imperialist powers encouraged Asian and African peoples to seek independence and embark on building their own nations.

Intellectuals often framed their understanding of the period in terms of a philosophical struggle between capitalism and socialism dating back to the nineteenth century. But for leaders facing the challenge of governing new nations and creating viable economies, economic philosophy was inextricably intertwined with questions of how to take advantage of the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.

There is some disagreement among historians about whether the postwar era ended in 1975. The end of the Vietnam War, the beginning of the world oil crisis, and the signing of the Helsinki Accords that brought a measure of agreement among Europeans on both sides of the iron curtain were pivotal events for some countries. But the number of independent countries in the world had grown enormously, and each was in the process of working out its own problems. What marks the mid-1970s as the end of an era, therefore, is not a single event so much as the emergence of new concerns. Young people in particular—the new generation that had no memories of World War II—seemed less concerned with the Cold War and the specter of nuclear annihilation and more interested in newly recognized threats to the world environment and in seeking opportunities for making their way in the world. For those in wealthier nations, this meant taking advantage of economic growth and increasing technological sophistication. For those in the developing world, it meant seeking the education and employment needed for playing active roles in the drama of nation building.

Key Terms
iron curtain
Cold War
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
United Nations

World Bank
Marshall Plan
European Community
Truman Doctrine
Warsaw Pact
Korean War
Vietnam War
Cuban missile crisis
Helsinki Accords
nonaligned nations
Third World
Cultural Revolution (China)
Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

Suggested Reading

The period since 1945 has been particularly rich in memoirs by government leaders. Some that are particularly relevant to the Cold War and decolonization are Dean Acheson (U.S. secretary of state under Truman), Present at the Creation (1969); Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (1970); and Anthony Eden (British prime minister), Full Circle (1960).

Geoffrey Barraclough, An Introduction to Contemporary History (1964), is a remarkable early effort at understanding the broad sweep of history during this period. See also David Reynolds, One World Divisible: A Global History Since 1945 (2000).


The nuclear arms race and the associated Soviet–U.S. competition in space are well covered by McGeorge Bundy, Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years (1988), and Walter MacDougall, The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age (1985). Among the many novels illustrating the alarming impact of the arms race on the general public are Philip Wylie, Tomorrow! (1954), and Nevil Shute, On the Beach (1970). At a technical and philosophical level, Herman Kahn’s On Thermonuclear War (1961) had a similar effect.


Notes


---

Document-Based Question

Identity and Independence in the Cold War Era

Using the following documents, analyze the experiences that shaped the identity of newly independent nations in Africa and Asia during the Cold War.

**DOCUMENT 1**
Map 31.1 Cold War Confrontation (p. 827)

**DOCUMENT 2**
The Vietnamese People at War (photo, p. 828)

**DOCUMENT 3**
Map 31.2 Decolonization, 1947–1990 (p. 831)

**DOCUMENT 4**
African Leaders Meet for Conference (photo, p. 833)

**DOCUMENT 5**
Quote from Malagasy politician Philibert Tsirinana (p. 834)

**DOCUMENT 6**
Race and the Struggle for Justice in South Africa (Diversity and Dominance, pp. 836–837)

**DOCUMENT 7**
Bandung Conference, 1955 (photo, p. 840)

In Document 6, how do Steve Biko and Desmond Tutu express different views of South African identity? What additional types of documents would help you understand the experiences that shaped the identity of newly independent nations in Africa and Asia during the Cold War?