

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

THE COLD WAR

Objectives

A thorough study of Chapter 29 should enable the student to understand:

1. The background of United States relations with the Soviet Union before World War II.
2. The extent of collaboration between the United States and the Soviet Union during World War II and the differences of view that developed between the two nations concerning the nature of the postwar world.
3. The meaning of the doctrine of containment and the specific programs that implemented containment.
4. The problems of postwar readjustment in the United States, especially controlling inflation.
5. The nature of the Fair Deal—its successes and failures.
6. The significance of China's becoming communist to American foreign policy in Asia.
7. The circumstances that led to United States participation in a "limited" war in Korea.
8. The reaction of American public opinion to President Harry Truman's handling of the "police action" in Korea including his firing of General Douglas MacArthur.
9. The nature and extent of American fears of internal communist subversion during the early Cold War years.

Main Themes

1. How a legacy of mistrust between the United States and the Soviet Union combined with the events of World War II to cause the Cold War.
2. How the policy of containment led to an increasing United States involvement in crises around the world.
3. How World War II ended the Depression and ushered in an era of nervous prosperity.
4. That the turbulent postwar era climaxed in a period of hysterical anticommunism.

Glossary

1. "right-to-work": Nickname given by antiunion forces to section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act which allows states to prohibit union shops. In right-to-work states, a person cannot be required to join a union even if the majority of workers at the site are union members and have a collective bargaining agreement with management.
2. filibuster: A parliamentary practice that, in effect, allows a minority of United States senators to kill a bill that the majority favors by tying up the business of the chamber with continuous speech making. In the 1950s, a vote of two-thirds (now three-fifths) of the senators was needed to end a filibuster by cloture. Opponents of civil rights legislation were the main users of the filibuster in the decade and a half after World War II.

Pertinent Questions

ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR (768-770)

1. What had led to the deep mutual mistrust and tension between the Soviet Union and the United States before World War II?
2. At the time of World War II, how did the vision of the postwar world held by the United States differ from that of the Soviets and the British?
3. What was accomplished at the Casablanca and Teheran Conferences? What was left unresolved?
4. How did the Yalta Conference deal with the Polish and German questions?
5. Explain the basic structure of the United Nations and contrast its reception in the United States with that of the League of Nations.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE PEACE (770-775)

6. Contrast the attitudes of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman toward Stalin and the Russians. How did this difference play out at Potsdam?
7. Why did the U.S. continue to support Chiang Kai-shek even as his control of mainland China slipped away? How did events in China impact on United States attitudes toward Japan?
8. Explain the Truman Doctrine and containment. What new approach did these concepts substitute for Roosevelt's "one world" vision?
9. In what ways was the Marshall Plan the economic component of containment? How well did it work?
10. How did the National Security Act of 1947 reorganize national-security administration? What agencies were created?
11. Why did Stalin blockade Berlin? How did the United States respond and what resulted?
12. What was the basic commitment of NATO? How did the Soviets respond?
13. What events of 1949 thrust the Cold War into a new and seemingly more dangerous stage?

AMERICAN POLITICS AND SOCIETY AFTER THE WAR (775-779)

14. What kept the United States from experiencing another depression after the war? What economic challenges did the nation face?
15. How did reconversion affect the many women and minorities who had taken war-related jobs?
16. What was the Fair Deal? How did Congress react during President Truman's first term? Which of his goals was Truman able to accomplish through Congress or executive order after his surprising reelection in 1948?
17. Why did the Democratic Party split into factions in 1948? How did Truman manage to win the presidential election despite the problems within the party?
18. What were the Truman administration's domestic successes and failures after the 1948 election?
19. Describe how Americans were torn between pessimistic and optimistic views of the "Nuclear Age." Which view seemed to predominate in national opinion?

THE KOREAN WAR (779-782)

20. What caused the Korean War? What was the role of the United Nations?
21. How did the war's objectives change and how did the war turn into a stalemate?
22. Why did Truman dismiss Douglas MacArthur? Why was the decision so controversial?
23. What social and economic effects did the Korean War have in America?

THE CRUSADE AGAINST SUBVERSION (782-787)

24. What factors combined to create the anticommunist paranoia that led to the national mood that allowed the rise to prominence of Sen. Joseph McCarthy?
25. How did McCarthy exploit the existing mood of hysteria? What sorts of tactics did he use in his attacks on alleged subversion?
26. What personalities and policies led to the Republican victory in the presidential election of 1952?

WHERE HISTORIANS DISAGREE: ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR (770-771)

27. What is the "post-revisionist" view of the origins and nature of the Cold War?

WHERE HISTORIANS DISAGREE: MCCARTHYISM (784-785)

28. Most historians agree that the anti-communist mood of the late 1940s and early 1950s led to excessive governmental actions, but was it an episode of paranoid and politically motivated response to an insignificant radical few or an overly hysterical reaction to a legitimate threat to American security?

Identification

Identify each of the following and explain why it is important within the context of the chapter.

1. Mao Zedong
2. George F. Kennan
3. Czechoslovakian coup
4. Selective Service System
5. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)
6. Warsaw Pact
7. Formosa (Taiwan)
8. NSC-68
9. GI Bill of Rights
10. Taft-Hartley Act
11. "right-to-work" laws
12. Strom Thurmond and the "Dixiecrats"
13. Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
14. Thomas E. Dewey
15. *film noir*
16. Syngman Rhee
17. 38th parallel
18. House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)
19. Hollywood blacklist
20. Alger Hiss
21. J. Edgar Hoover
22. McCarran Internal Security Act
23. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
24. Adlai E. Stevenson
25. Dwight D. Eisenhower

Interpretive Questions

Based on what you have filled in, answer the following. On some of the questions you will need to consult the narrative in your text for information or explanation.

1. Why was the form of government in Poland such a difficult issue to resolve?
2. Why was Germany divided and why was Berlin divided even though it lay in the Russian zone? What caused the United States, Great Britain, and France to combine their zones into a single nation?
3. Explain the policy of the Truman Doctrine. What was to be contained? Where? What developments were the catalyst for Truman's promulgation of the policy? What was the economic manifestation of the idea?
4. Why was the Soviet Union so suspicious of the West and so insistent on control of East Germany and the nations along the Soviet border? Were the Soviet concerns justified?

Summary

The mutual hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union grew out of ideological incompatibility and concrete actions stretching back to World War I and before. The alliance of convenience and necessity against Germany temporarily muted the tensions, but disagreement over the timing of the second front and antagonistic visions of postwar Europe pushed the two nations into a "cold war" only a few months after the victory over the Axis. The Cold War was marked by confrontation and the fear of potential military conflict. The United States vowed to contain communism by any means available.

Meanwhile, the American people, exhausted from a decade and a half of depression and war, turned away from economic reform. They were worried about the alleged Soviet threat in Europe, especially after Russia exploded its own atomic bomb in 1949. They were dismayed by the communist victory in China and perplexed by the limited war in Korea. Many Americans latched onto charges of domestic communist subversion as an explanation for the nation's inability to control world events. No one exploited this mood more effectively than did Joseph McCarthy.

Review Questions

These questions are to be answered with essays. This will allow you to explore relationships between individuals, events, and attitudes of the period under review.

1. The United States hotly protested Stalin's actions in Poland, East Germany, and the rest of Eastern Europe as a violation of the "one world" principle of the Atlantic Charter and a departure from the agreements reached at Yalta and Potsdam. Aside from pushing for creation of the United Nations, did American policy actually abide by its own principles or was it just as much based on national self-interest as the Soviet Union's?
2. Explain how the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, support for Chiang Kai-shek, and the Korean War were based on the policy of containment. What did that policy concede to the Soviets? How did NSC-68 refine the doctrine? What geopolitical realities limited American options in Asia and Eastern Europe?
3. What general factors made the United States susceptible to the anticommunist paranoia of 1947 to 1953? What activities fanned the fury and paved the way for the rise of McCarthy?

Chapter Self Test

After you have read the chapter in the text and done the exercises in the Study Guide, take the following self-test to see if you understand the material you have covered. Answers appear at the end of the Study Guide.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Circle the letter of the response that best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. Which was not a source of Soviet bitterness toward the United States in the period before the outbreak of World War II? The United States:
 - a. opposed the Bolshevik revolution that created the Soviet Union.
 - b. refused to have any economic contact with the Soviet Union in the 1930s.
 - c. refused to extend diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union government until 1933.
 - d. sent troops into the Soviet Union toward the end of World War I.
2. Which of the following was the most important source of Soviet resentment about Allied conduct of World War II?
 - a. The slowness of the Allies in opening a major second front.
 - b. The fact that Russia was not invited to the Casablanca Conference.
 - c. The refusal of the United States to include Russia in the lend lease program.
 - d. The refusal of the United States to have any official dealing with a communist government.
3. An important reason why Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill agreed at Casablanca (1943) to demand unconditional surrender of the Axis powers was to:
 - a. hasten the end of the war.
 - b. destroy the morale of the Axis powers.
 - c. encourage the Italians to split with Germany.
 - d. reassure the Russians that they would not be left abandoned to fight on alone.
4. At Yalta (1945), the Soviet Union gained territorial concessions in Asia in return for agreeing to:
 - a. join the United Nations.
 - b. enter the war against Japan.
 - c. give up reparations from Germany.
 - d. give up claims to Polish territory.
5. With respect to the countries of Europe liberated from Nazi control, the Yalta Conference provided for:
 - a. permanent Soviet occupation.
 - b. a system of United Nations mandates.
 - c. interim governments and subsequent free elections.
 - d. the withdrawal of the Red Army and immediate self-government.

6. When it became evident that Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist forces were losing the Chinese civil war to Mao Zedong's communists, the Truman administration devoted increased attention to the revitalization of what nation as a strong pro-Western force in Asia?
 - a. India
 - b. Indonesia
 - c. Japan
 - d. The Philippines
7. The concept of the policy of containment was most closely associated with:
 - a. Douglas MacArthur.
 - b. George F. Kennan.
 - c. George C. Marshall.
 - d. Henry A. Wallace.
8. The Truman Doctrine was initially promulgated in conjunction with U.S. assistance against Soviet pressures in:
 - a. Egypt.
 - b. Latin America.
 - c. Western Europe.
 - d. Greece and Turkey.
9. The result of the Marshall Plan aid to the countries of Western Europe was that:
 - a. the recipient nations underwent a remarkable economic recovery.
 - b. communist influence actually increased in the countries receiving the aid.
 - c. the United States economy was nearly bankrupted by this giveaway program.
 - d. the recipient nations engaged in bitter competition with one another to gain the largest share of the aid.
10. Three of the following were significant features of the National Security Act of 1947. Which is the *exception*?
 - a. It established the CIA.
 - b. It abolished the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
 - c. It created the National Security Council.
 - d. It combined the functions of secretary of war and secretary of navy under one secretary of defense.
11. Truman's response to the Berlin blockade was to:
 - a. abandon the Western-occupied portions of Berlin.
 - b. airlift all necessary supplies into Berlin for almost a year.
 - c. give up plans for uniting the three Western zones of Germany.
 - d. use military force to break the blockade of land routes into Berlin.
12. The NATO agreement (1949) required that every member must:
 - a. consider an attack on one as an attack on all.
 - b. refer all cases of armed aggression to the United Nations.
 - c. confer with one another in case of an attack on any member.
 - d. do none of the above.

13. Following their defeat in 1949 by the Chinese communists under Mao, Chiang Kai-shek and his nationalist followers:
- were executed.
 - were imprisoned.
 - fled to Thailand (Burma).
 - fled to the island of Formosa (Taiwan).
14. Which of the following is *not* an accurate explanation of why the United States avoided the general economic collapse that many feared would occur in 1946–1947 following the end of World War II?
- A multi-billion dollar tax cut.
 - The release of pent-up civilian consumer demand.
 - Significant government spending for veterans' benefits.
 - Military spending remained almost at wartime levels due to the Cold War.
15. Truman's domestic social and economic program after World War II was known as the:
- Fair Deal.
 - Square Deal.
 - New Frontier.
 - New Deal Revisited.
16. The significance of the midterm elections of 1946 was that:
- Truman's domestic policy won a vote of confidence.
 - the voting public demanded more radical governmental reforms.
 - the Republicans won control of both the House and the Senate.
 - in a political upset, the Democrats regained control of both the House and the Senate.
17. Truman's position on the Taft-Hartley Act was favorable to:
- farming.
 - big business.
 - organized labor.
 - southern conservatives.
18. In 1948, Strom Thurmond and the "Dixiecrats" opposed Truman's policy on _____, whereas Henry A. Wallace and the Progressives opposed Truman's _____ policy.
- civil rights, confrontational Cold War
 - the Cold War, aggressive civil rights
 - economic reconversion, the Social Security system
 - the Social Security system, economic reconversion
19. After the election of 1948, Truman succeeded in getting three of the following parts of his domestic program passed. Which one did Congress *not* approve?
- increase of the minimum wage
 - expansion of the Social Security system
 - federal construction of low-income housing
 - a civil rights act including the Fair Employment Practices Commission

20. When Japanese control of Korea ended as a result of Japanese defeat in World War II, Korea was:
- occupied entirely by United States forces.
 - occupied by the same four powers as in Germany.
 - united under the nationalist government of Syngman Rhee.
 - divided into United States and Soviet zones of occupation.

TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

Read each statement carefully. Mark true statements "T" and false statements "F."

1. According to "Where Historians Disagree," the new "post revisionist" literature on the Cold War tends to stress that U. S. actions were most responsible for creating the Cold War climate.
2. Franklin D. Roosevelt was committed to a "one world" vision that downplayed spheres of influence and stressed the importance of international cooperation.
3. One reason that the Soviet Union was able to obtain such favorable treatment at the Yalta Conference was the inexperience of the new President Harry Truman.
4. The plan for the postwar United Nations was agreed to by the Allies and others before the end of World War II.
5. The United States believed that the Soviet Union complied with the Yalta accords in Poland, but Great Britain argued that the Soviets had violated the spirit of Yalta.
6. By the late 1940s, the Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek was corrupt, incompetent, and lacking in broad popular support.
7. Mao Zedong and the Communists launched their eventual conquest of China from their stronghold on the island of Formosa.
8. The Truman Doctrine declared that the United States would intervene in foreign affairs only when U.S. economic or strategic interests were directly at stake.
9. The Marshall Plan was originally offered to the Soviet Union and the Eastern European nations but they declined to participate.
10. The Atomic Energy Commission was created to promote civilian use of nuclear energy while the Department of Defense would retain authority over military nuclear research and development.
11. The major weakness of NATO was that it lacked any provisions for cooperative military command.
12. Berlin was surrounded by the Soviet occupation zone in Germany.
13. The food and supplies that reached Berlin during the blockade were brought in by air.
14. Although the United States apparently expected that it would take Soviet scientists and technicians several more years to develop an atomic weapon, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb in 1949.
15. A major problem for returning servicemen after World War II was finding industrial jobs, since a large portion of the positions were now occupied by women.
16. The "right-to-work" provision of the Taft-Hartley Act allowed individual states to pass laws banning the so-called union shop in which workers in an organized plant had to join the union after they were hired, if they were not already members.
17. The Americans for Democratic Action was politically liberal.
18. One of the most influential anticommunist crusaders of the late 1940s and early 1950s, other than Joseph McCarthy, was Alger Hiss.

19. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg led the fight against McCarthyism.
20. In 1952, the Democrats were so split by the civil rights and anticommunist issues that they could not unify on a single nominee, so Adlai Stevenson and J. Edgar Hoover split the Democratic vote.

