

Aftermath of world war ii

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



The Aftermath of World War II Introduction: World War II ended with the surrender of the Axis powers. A week after Adolf Hitler committed suicide, Germany surrendered, on May 7th to the Western Allies, and on May 8th to the Soviet Union in 1945. Japan was able to pull through for few months, but soon atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the USA on August 6th and 9th respectively. This finally convinced the Japanese Government that they had no choice but to surrender. The Aftermath of World War II is often considered as a new era. During this period, international cooperation plans were aimed at rebuilding Europe and Japan. The United Nations was also inaugurated. These plans to promote international cooperation were being challenged due to hostilities from the Western Democracies and the Soviet Union. Soon, this developed into the Cold War. This conflict focused on spying and proxy wars between USA and the Soviet Union. The Cold War was based on the differences between the ideologies between the two powers, Communism for Soviets and Representative Democracy for Americans. The mutual distrust between the West and the new Eastern Bloc resulted in a military build-up which eventually resulted in the nuclear arms race.

Conditions During and Post-War: I] Countries Directly Involved: A) Britain - 1. Social Conditions - The Blackout The blackout began two days before the war began in Britain. Under blackout rules, everyone had to cover up their windows at night with black material. This was to make it difficult for German bombers to find their target in the dark. The Blitz During 1940, hardly any bombs were dropped on Britain. But Hitler planned to invade Britain. In September the Germans started bombing Britain's cities hoping they would panic and surrender. This

period was known as The Blitz. The Germans showered Britain with bombs. As the war continued people became used to this carnage and adjusted their lives where possible. Women's Lives 75, 000 women joined the Land Army in Britain to help grow more food. In 1941, women between the ages of 19-30 had to register for war work. Women were mostly secretaries, drivers, cooks and mechanics. Many joined the Women's Royal Voluntary Service. They provided meals and clothing for survivors and rescue workers. Men's Lives All fit young men had to join the army, navy or air force. British men were sent to Africa, the Far East and Europe. Home Guard units, comprising of men who were not fit enough, had to protect Britain from German parachute attacks.

2. Political Conditions - The Post-War Consensus is a name to an era in British political history which lasted from the end of World War II in 1945 to the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in 1979. Shortly after the surrender of Germany in May 1945, a general election was held in the UK. The result was a landslide victory for the Labour Party, whose leader was Clement Attlee. The policies undertaken and implemented by this Labour government laid the base of the consensus.

3. Economic Conditions - By 1900, the United States and Germany had developed large-scale industries; Britain's comparative economic advantage had lessened. London remained the financial and entrepreneurial capital of the world, until challenged by New York after 1918. The war saw an expansion of economic production, but also forced Britain to use up its financial reserves and borrow large sums from the U. S. Post-War The human and material losses of the war were enormous. Germany owed billions in reparations, but Britain in turn owed the U. S. billion in loan repayments.

With the end of war orders a serious depression hit the economy by 1921-22. In depressed areas the main social indicators pointed to terminal social and economic stagnation. B) France - 1. Social Conditions - Curfew Under German occupation, at night, the French had to close their shutters or windows and turn off any light. Without an Ausweis, it was forbidden to go out during the night. Education Propaganda was present in education to train the young people with the ideas of the new Vichy regime. However, there was no resumption in ideology as in other occupied countries. Teachers were not imprisoned and the programs were not modified overall. Civilian Reprisals There were German reprisals against civilians in occupied countries; in France, the Nazis built an execution chamber in the cellars of the former Ministry of Aviation building in Paris. The Resistance Although the majority of the occupied French population did not take part in active resistance, many resisted passively through different acts. Others assisted in the escape of downed US or British airmen who eventually found their way back to Britain, through Spain. 2. Political Conditions - During the war, Vichy France helped Germans to arrest other Frenchmen and Jews. Trials of prominent Vichy leaders took place. 10, 000 French collaborators were killed when people took justice into their own hands. 167, 000 people were tried, with over half acquitted and 27, 000 receiving jail sentences. It was policy to draw a veil over the Vichy years to conciliate and unite the nation. Charles DeGaulle led the French resistance movement during the war and afterwards became the President. He created many social programs to keep the standard of living high. Jean Monnet was appointed to head a committee to prepare a plan for the reconstruction and modernization of the French economy. The aim of the

plan was to raise industrial and agricultural output by 25% in 3 years. It eventually became a series of 5-year plans, called the Monnet Plan. 3.

Economic Conditions - In France, during the German Occupation, there were grave shortages of food and fuel. The prices doubled and wages fell. The infrastructure of transport, bridges, and railways had to be rebuilt. State intervention and the takeover of ailing industries were seen as necessary for the nation to recover. Big banks, insurance, gas, electricity, coal, and companies that had collaborated with the Nazis were taken over. II]

Countries Not Directly Involved: A) Albania - 1. Social Conditions - Mussolini ordered the invasion of Albania as part of his efforts to build an Italian Empire in the Mediterranean. Although not given great attention at the time, because of the greater focus on the Germans and Czechoslovakia. The Italians deposed King Zog. There was no real Albanian resistance to the Italians. After World War II, no reliable statistics on wartime losses existed, but the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration reported about 30, 000 Albanian war dead, 200 destroyed villages, 18, 000 destroyed houses, and about 100, 000 people left homeless. 2. Political Conditions - The Albanian Resistance of World War II was a movement of largely Communist persuasion directed against the occupying Italian and then German forces in Albania, which led to the successful liberation of the country in 1944. Post World War II, guerrilla leader Enver Hoxa seized power and established a Communist dictatorship, one of the most reclusive of the post-War Communist countries. Under Hoxa, Albania became the most paranoid and repressive country in the world. 3. Economic Conditions - Albania was Europe's poorest and most economically undeveloped country,

most people being peasant farmers. The country even in the 1930s had virtually no industry. The hydroelectric potential was also undeveloped. The country's primary resource was oil. The Italians after seizing control in 1939 built a pipeline. Italy like Germany once the War began had trouble obtaining crude oil. Thus the Albanian oil was of some importance. Albania also offered other raw materials, including bitumen, lignite, iron, chromite, copper, bauxite, manganese, and some gold.

B) Belgium - 1. Social Conditions - Belgium had been drawn into the war when the German armies marched into the country in 1940. Thousands of Belgians were deported to Nazi Germany as forced labourers. Many civilians put their lives at risk to save people from deportation and to harass the occupier. Soon, 2 underground organisations emerged: the " Secret Army" and the " White Brigade". Together, the people of the Belgian Resistance finally helped to oust the Germans from their country in 1944.

2. Political Conditions - King Leopold was an advocate of a more independent foreign policy for Belgium before World War II, Leopold twice urged mediation of the conflict between NAZI Germany and the Western Allies in the months immediately before and after the outbreak of war in 1939. Despite the German invasion in 1914, Belgian after the War returned to a policy of neutrality. King Leopold's policy of " armed neutrality" was whole heartily supported by the Belgian people.

3. Economic Conditions - ----- After the war, the government cancelled Belgium's debts. It was during this period that the well-known Belgian highways were built. At night, their streetlights make them easily seen from space. In addition, both the economy the average standard of living rose significantly.