Consequences of World War II

Class 8

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The Marshall Plan

The Economic Recovery Program, which Secretary of State George C. Marshall announced in June 1947, committed the United States to the reconstruction of war-torn Europe

- Marshall believed that the greatest threat to western interests in Europe was not Russian invasion but the risk that hunger, poverty, and despair would lead Western European voters to elect Communists to power, creating a Communist Europe.
- The goal of the program was to get Western Europe back on its feet and it succeeded marvelously

Stalin refused to accept such aid or allow its Eastern European satellites to do so

- It led to the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia

The Full Emergence of the Cold War

The Communist coup d'etat in Czechoslovakia and the blockade of Berlin persuaded the Western European recipients of Marshall Plan aid that they needed military protection as well

This led the Europeans to request the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

- This committed the United States for the first time ever to the peaceful defense of Europe

It also led to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany [West Germany]

- This in turn led to the creation of the Democratic Republic of Germany [East Germany]

The Atomic Bomb

Uranium

Uranium is a silvery-white, slightly radioactive metal that readily forms a uranium oxide when exposed to air

- It was discovered in pitchblende in 1789 by Martin Heinrich Klaproth
- It was first isolated in 1841 by Eugene Melchior Pelegot
- Prior to the Atomic Age, it was used primarily as a colorant in glass

There are six isotopes of uranium with the most common being U-238 (99.274%) and U-235 (0.72%)

- The other 4 isotopes combined equal 0.006%

Discovery of Nuclear Fission

In 1932, John Cockroft and Ernest Walton had split lithium atoms into two alpha particles by bombarding them with protons from a particle accelerator.

This led Leo Szilard in September 1933 to conceive of the possibility of a chain reaction using neutrons

- His attempts to create a chain reaction failed because he used the wrong elements

Italian physicist Enrico Fermi wanted to see if neutrons acting on uranium could generate transuranic elements, which they did

Otto Hahn and Friedrich Strassman did research along these lines and found evidence not only of transuranic elements but also of other elements, such as barium (whose atomic weight was half that of uranium)

Lisa Meitner and Otto Frisch suggested that the uranium nucleus when struck by a neutron split in two and at the same time released a tremendous amount of energy

Leading to Einstein's Letter

In mid-January 1939, Niels Bohr went to Princeton to meet with Albert Einstein and told one of his former students, J.A. Wheeler, of Hahn's & Strassman's research and Meitner's and Frisch's suggestion

- Soon after, word spread throughout the East Coast physics community

At a subsequent meeting in Washington, Bohr and Fermi discussed the problem of fission and Fermi put forward the idea that neutrons would be emitted during fission and that a tremendous amount of energy would be released

The possibility that Nazi Germany might be initiating research into this area led nuclear scientists to have Albert Einstein send his famous letter (drafted by Leo Szilard) to Roosevelt informing him of the issue

- This led Roosevelt to appoint an Advisory Committee on Uranium

U235 & Plutonium

In June 1940, the Advisory Committee on Uranium became a subcommittee of the National Defense Research Committee

- Investigation of key problems was contracted out to various universities and manufacturing corporations

Continued research had found that fission normally occurred only in U-235 while U-238 absorbed neutrons

- The problem is that U-235 and U-238 are chemically indistinguishable

It was also found that U-238, when it absorbs a neutron, becomes first Neptunium and then Plutonium (which is also fissionable)

- Plutonium, being a different (and toxic) element could, in theory, be chemically separated from uranium

On to the Manhattan Project - 1

A report from the National Academy of Sciences in November 1941 confirmed that uranium fission bombs could decide the outcome of the war

- The report concluded that the amount of uranium required for explosive fission would be between 2 kg and 100 kg and that a maximum explosion could be obtained by rapidly bringing together two subcritical masses of uranium

On 6 December, a Uranium subcommittee meeting, chaired by Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) Chairman Vannevar Bush, decided to make the uranium fission project an “all-out effort” and have the OSRD take over the project

On to the Manhattan Project - 2

In August 1942, a new District of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Manhattan District, was set up to carry out the necessary work in connection with the atom bomb project

On 17 September 1942, BGEN Leslie R. Groves was put in complete charge of the Manhattan Project

A major problem confronting the Manhattan Project was separating U-235 from U-238

- To do so, three major techniques were used – gaseous diffusion, electromagnetism, and high-speed centrifuges

The Manhattan Project

On 2 December 1942, a team led by Enrico Fermi carried out the first controlled chain reaction in the world's first atomic reactor.

- Subsequently, larger atomic piles were created to produce more and more plutonium

To research the design, triggering mechanism, and likely effects of detonating an atom bomb in a secure environment, an experimental laboratory was set up in Los Alamos, NM

By the end of 1944, massive plants were at work producing relatively pure U-235 and Pu-239

By July 1945, the problems of getting enough U-235 and Pu-239 and of designing a workable bomb had been solved

The Two Different Bombs

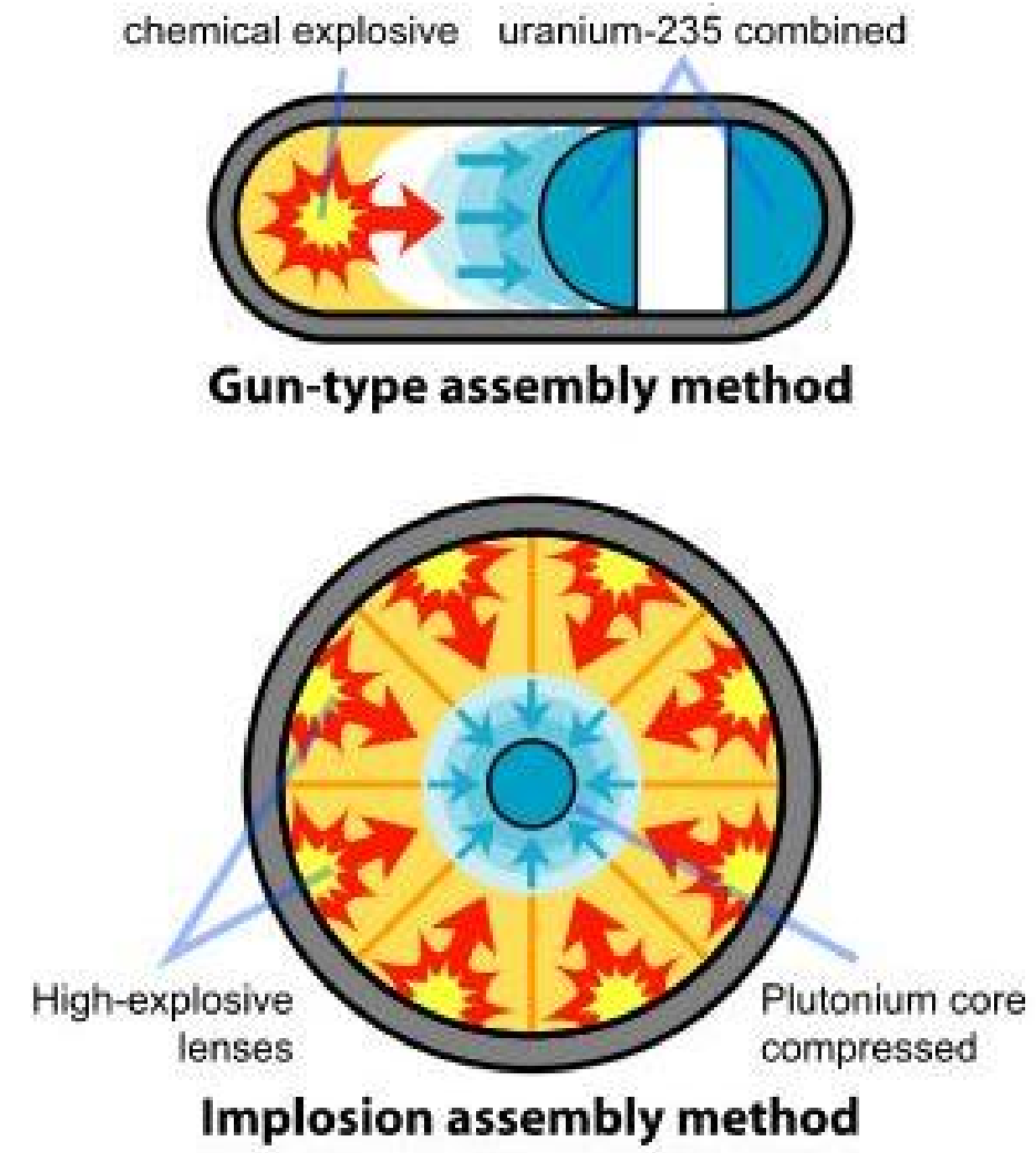
By 1945, there was enough uranium for one bomb and enough plutonium for two bombs

There was some doubt as to whether the plutonium bomb would work

- The plutonium bomb required the implosion of the plutonium by the simultaneous explosion of different explosive charges from different directions
- Thus the test of the bomb at Alamagordo NM on 12 July 1945

The different techniques for achieving critical mass resulted in two very different looking bombs

Two Types of Atomic Bombs



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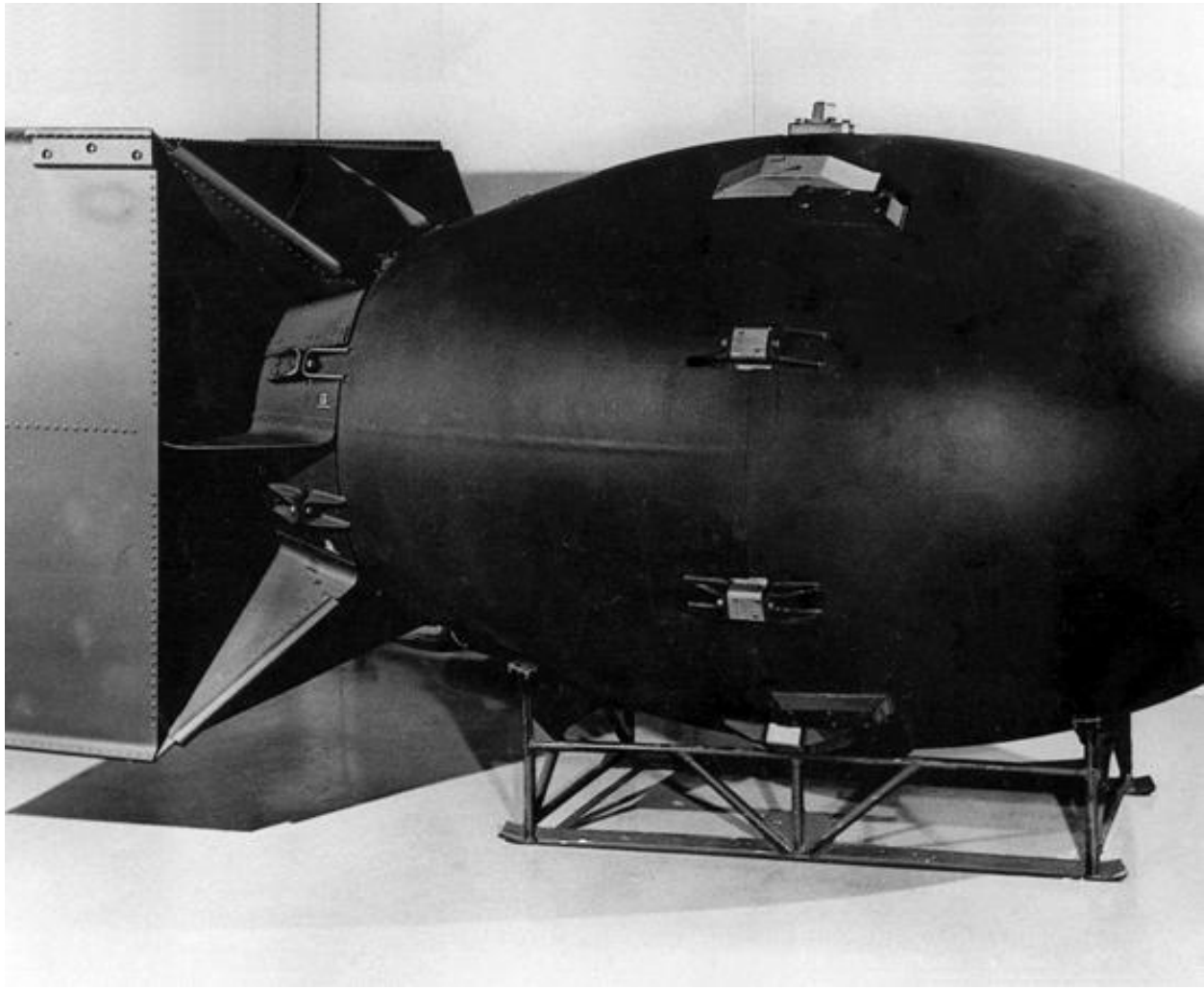
nium Bomb
pped on Hiroshima

"Fat Man" – the Plutonium Bomb dropped on Nagasaki



To Drop or Not to Drop

Before the Trinity test at Alamagordo, many doubted that a plutonium bomb would work

The decision to use the bomb against Japan was neither easily reached nor unanimous

- ADM William Leahy, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, GEN Dwight Eisenhower, and Leo Szilard opposed using the bomb
- Secretary of State James Byrnes, Vannevar Bush, MGEN Leslie Groves, GEN George C. Marshall, and Robert Oppenheimer favored use of the bomb

The proponents of using the bomb won out

- Truman's attitude was that the bomb would save American lives that would otherwise be lost in an invasion. There was no point in wasting American live if a way existed to save them

Hiroshima

At 8:16 AM on 6 August, the uranium bomb detonated 1,900 feet over the city of Hiroshima, turning the city to ashes

The American scientists who created the bomb underestimated both the blast effect and the radiation produced by the bomb

Among the soldiers and sailors who were expecting to assault Japan, the bomb was met with wonder and jubilation

It was only later, after the publication of John Hersey's *Hiroshima* in 1946, that people began to question the decision to drop the bomb

Consequences - 1

One of the consequences of Hiroshima was a long scholarly (and sometimes political) controversy over whether it was right to use the bomb

- Many have argued that Japan was near surrender and that a blockade and conventional bombing would have eventually forced either a Japanese surrender or an overthrow of the regime
- Others have argued that the Japanese militarists were determined to fight to the end and that the shock of the bomb was necessary to induce surrender

As Stimson and Szilard feared, Hiroshima prompted Stalin to give top priority to Russia's nuclear bomb program.

- This gave rise to the nuclear arms race and the fear of nuclear war

Consequences - 2

The fact that Russia got the bomb in 1949 came as a great shock to the American people

- The fact of Soviet espionage at Los Alamos and the belief that Russia was too backward to produce a bomb on its own led to the belief that Russian spies stole the atom bomb, thus giving rise to anti-communist hysteria and MacCarthyism

The fact of the atom bomb raised the question of delivery of the bomb to its target

- This led to the race to build long-range bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and nuclear submarine-launched missiles

Consequences - 3

Although there were times when Russia and the United States came close to war, the Bomb played a major role in preventing the outbreak of war between the two powers

- Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) did have a deterrent effect, leading the two powers to be cautious in their dealings with each other

Reinforced and modified the current of apocalyptic/millenarian thought in American culture

- Before the Atomic Age, end-of-the-world or apocalyptic beliefs were limited to fundamentalist religious groups who believed that the end of the world required some form of divine intervention
- With the Atomic Age, a secular apocalypticism arose, based on the likelihood of nuclear war

Consequences - 4

Since nuclear chain reactions could occur slowly in a reactor as well as explosively in a bomb, nuclear scientists realized that nuclear energy could be used to generate electricity

- Unlike conventional power plants which consumed vast quantities of coal, oil or natural gas, nuclear plants would consume very little uranium or plutonium and theoretically could generate electricity cheaper than conventional power plants
  - Nuclear power enthusiasts claimed that the electricity generated would be “too cheap to meter”
  - In addition, nuclear power did not cause air pollution
- As a result, nuclear power came to generate about 19% of America’s electricity

Demographic Changes in Europe

Germany & Eastern Europe Before the War

Before World War II, East-Central Europe generally lacked clearly shaped ethnic settlement areas.

- Rather, outside of some ethnic majority areas, there were vast mixed areas and abundant smaller pockets settled by various ethnicities.
- Often different ethnic groups shared the same area but belonged to different socio-economic classes
  - Rural landowners and industrialists were often disproportionately German
  - Urban professionals and entrepreneurs ns were often disproportionately Jewish or German

Despite its economic backwardness, Eastern Europe had a vibrant Yiddish culture

Germany was a world leader in culture, science, and technology

Europe After the War

An ethnically heterogeneous Eastern Europe had become a set of ethnically homogeneous nation-states ruled by Communists

A vibrant Yiddish-speaking culture had been totally destroyed

Much of Germany's and Eastern Europe's intellectual capital had been either destroyed or frightened into fleeing or was expelled

Germany was no longer a world leader in culture, science, and technology

Eastern Europe had become a cultural backwater

The United States, Great Britain, Palestine, and the British Dominions of Canada, Australia, and South Africa, saw an influx of displaced persons and refugees from Eastern Europe

Reasons for this Change

The flight of a large number of the German Jews from pre-war Nazi Germany

- Part of this was the large-scale intellectual migration of European intellectuals, artists, writers, and scientists to the United States

The mass extermination of the European Jews

- Also, the large scale murder of the Roma and many of the educated elite of Eastern Europe

The bringing of forced labor from elsewhere in Europe to the Reich

- Not all of them wanted to return home after the war

The large number of civilian and military war casualties

The flight and later the expulsion of the Germans from Eastern Europe

The migration of Jewish Holocaust survivors out of Europe (mostly to Palestine and America)

Intellectual Migration

Field	Names
Science	Albert Einstein, Enrico Fermi, Edward Teller, Leo Szilard, Hans Bethe, Victor Weisskopf
Political & Social Science	Erik Erikson, Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Erich Fromm, Max Horkheimer, Paul Lazarsfeld, Theodore K Adorno
Anthropologists	Claude Levi-Strauss, Bronislaw Malinowski
Psychologists	Karen Horney, Bruno Bettelheim, Anna Freud
Philosophers	Jacques Maritain, Rudolf Carnap, Herbert Marcuse
Novelists & Playwrights	Thomas Mann, Erich Maria Remarque, Vladimir Nabokov, Bertold Brecht
Composers & Musicians	Igor Stravinski, Bela Bartok, Arnold Schoenberg, Paul Hindemith, Darius Milhaud, Kurt Weill, Arturo Toscanini, Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer, George Szell, Erich Leinsdorf, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Rudolf Serkin, Gregor Piatigorski
Architects	Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
Painters & Sculptors	Marc Chagall, Wassily Kandinski, Piet Mondrian, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, George Grosz, Andre Breton, Jacques Lipschitz, Salvador Dali, Joao Miro

A Note about the Holocaust

The Holocaust took one form in the Soviet Union and another in the rest of Europe

- In the Soviet Union (largely between June and November 1941), special task forces killed one million Soviet Jews, usually by mass shooting
- This created problems as far as the SS was concerned
  - First, it was inefficient – rounding up and shooting people individually or in small groups was time consuming
  - Second, the killers were having problems dealing with the guilt feelings and psychological stress involved in the killing of helpless men, women, and children
    - Too often, they were getting drunk, abusing family members when on leave, and freaking ou
- In the rest of Europe, the killilng began (except on an experimental basis) in 1942 and went through the stages noted in the following slide

The Holocaust outside the Soviet Union

The Holocaust Process outside the Soviet Union went through the following stages:

1. Creation of Ghettos
2. Transport of People to the Ghettos
3. Slow starvation of the ghetto
4. Creation of the Death Camps
5. Transport of ghetto inhabitants to either the Death Camps or a Concentration Camp
6. Culling of the new arrivals
7. Death for most; concentration camp slavery for the rest

Formation of Ghettos

Most Eastern European Jews lived in Jewish neighborhoods in the larger cities

In Poland and elsewhere, ghettos were formed in the weeks following the start of the war

- For the most part, the inhabitants remained in the ghettos until the decision was made to send them to either the death or concentration camps

The purpose of the ghetto was to cause a slow attrition of the Jewish population by starvation, disease, or suicide while the Germans decided what to do with the remaining occupants

The big problem in the ghetto was getting enough food

Nazi Concentration Camps

There were more than 9,000 concentration camps maintained by the Nazis. These consisted of:

- Transit camps to hold those recently arrested or chosen for transport to some other camp pending the arrival of a means of transport
- POW camps
- Camps for political prisoners
- Slave labor camps
- Camps for children whose parents were in slave labor camps
- Camps for medical experimentation
- Camps that primarily were killing centers – Chelmno, Sobibor, Belzec, Treblinka, Majdanek, and Auschwitz

From the Ghetto to the Camps

Adolf Eichmann would notify the Jewish Council of the ghetto how many Jews were to report for deportation each day

Those to be deported were assembled at a collection point – usually a train station – and crammed into freight cars

Although many died en route, the fate of those who arrived at their destination depended on whether they were sent to a concentration camp or a death camp

- If they were sent to a camp that was both a death camp and a labor camp like Auschwitz, roughly 25% would be selected for hard labor and the rest sent to the gas chambers

Camp Life

Since the food ration was grossly inadequate, inmates had to trade, scrounge, or trade for food

- This led to a system of bartering. Since exchanges among inmates or with non-inmate civilians in the factories were forbidden, trades had to be completed in secret

Life expectancy in the camps was generally short:

- Inmates could be beaten to death by the guards or Kapos or killed for even the slightest rule infraction
- Inmates often died of illness or gave up because they could not adjust to camp life
- In addition, there were periodic selections for the gas chamber
  - Often this happened on a periodic basis, such as every two weeks
  - This also happened when inmates became too weak to work or when new incoming inmates caused overcrowding, thus leading to a selection for death
- Of the 11 million who entered the concentration camps, only about 700,000 survived

The Liberation of the Camps

American journalists and soldiers were shocked and horrified by what they had seen in the camps

- The Allies ordered thousands of nearby residents to visit the camps and see the horrors up close
- The encounter with the concentration and death camps left the Allies with the conviction that World War II was the “good war” since it eliminated a regime that people could only regard as diabolically evil

Unfortunately, many who survived the Nazis died soon afterward, sometimes unwittingly at the hands of the Western Allies

Jewish Survivors

The Jews in the post-war displaced persons camps consisted of four separate categories of people

- Survivors of concentration and death camps
  - About 200,000 of the millions of Jews who entered the camps
- Those who spent the war in hiding
- Those who spent the war in the Soviet Union
- Those who fought with the partisans
- Those who had Aryan papers

What united all of them was a desire to get out of Europe and emigrate to either Palestine or America

- This reflected both a realization that there there was nothing to go back to – their families and communities had been destroyed and the visit of the charismatic David ben-Gurion to the camps

The German Removal from Eastern Europe

The removal of the Germans from Eastern Europe went through three somewhat overlapping phases

1. The spontaneous flight and evacuation of Germans in the face of the advancing Red Army from mid-1944 to early-1945
2. The disorganized expulsion of Germans immediately following the Wehrmacht's defeat
3. The organized expulsion following the Allied leaders'Potsdam Agreement which both defined the new borders of Central Europe and approved the orderly expulsion of Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary

Decisions to Expel

During the war, the Polish and Czech governments-in-exile stated that they would expel the German populations from their countries, citing the population transfer between Greece and Turkey in 1923 as a precedent

This policy was endorsed by the Allied governments

- Stalin advised the Polish Communists to create such conditions for the Germans that they would want to escape

As the Red Army advanced into the eastern parts of Germany and into the Balkans at the end of 1944, a mass flight of German refugees began

German Refugees in East Prussia

Bundesarchiv, Bild 146-1979-084-05
Foto: o.Ang. | März 1945

The Process of Expulsion

Toward the end of June 1945, word went round the villages and farms of Pomerania and Silesia that the Germans must get out

It was common for Polish and Russian police and soldiers to come to a German house and give its residents a half hour to pack and leave, with only the items they could carry or push in a handcart

Since the refugees were old men, women, and children, they were often robbed of their valuables by Polish and Russian soldiers and the women sometimes raped

A Humanitarian Disaster

The refugees had to feed themselves so that many suffered from hunger and thirst; many also suffered from exposure in winter and the heat in summer

The result of the expulsions was a humanitarian disaster

- An estimated 600,000 to 2,200,000 Germans died during the refugee flights from th advancing Soviet Army and the post-war expulsions from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and elsewhere in eastern Europe

Roughly 12 million Germans were expelled from Eastern Europe

- 7 million from the Eastern provinces of Germany that were annexed by the Soviet Union and Poland – East Prussia, Pomerania, Danzig, and Silesia
- 3 million from Czechoslovakia
- 2 million total from Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia

Other Population Movements

The roughly 12 million German expellees were only the largest part of a number of population transfers, expulsions, and movements

- In 1940, there was a population transfer of Germans living in the Baltic states (which had just been annexed by the Soviet Union) to German-occupied Poland
- In 1941-42, ethnic Germans living in Russia were deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan
- In 1945, over a million Poles living in parts of Poland annexed by the Soviet Union were resettled in areas annexed from Germany
- About 7,800,000 Eastern Europeans were brought to the Reich to labor for the Germans

Within those brought to the Reich, a large number of Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians in Germany had no desire to return to their homelands

Consequences

Turned an ethnically heterogeneous Eastern Europe into a set of ethnically homogeneous nation-states

- Fearful of the emergence of a united Germany,
- Supportive of a divided Germany,
- Ruled by native Communists seen as subservient to Russia
- Still possessed by a lingering anti-Semitism although there were virtually no Jews

Changed the demographic composition of both East and West Germany

- In East Germany, expellees constituted 24.2% of the total population
- In West Germany, they constituted 18% of the total population

Led many displaced persons and concentration camp survivors to emigrate out o Europe

Precluded West German acceptance of Potsdam and the new frontiers with Poland until 1991 and then only as part of a package that included German reunification and the evacuation of Russian troops from East Germany

The GI Bill

Why the GI Bill

There were several factors that contributed to the creation of the GI Bill

- The fear that there would be a depression after World War II just as there had been after World War I
  - Hence a desire to provide a buffer against unemployment by having veterans postpone their entry into the job market by going to either college or trade school
- The housing shortage in urban areas which would become potentially explosive when millions of GIs returned home
- The realization that the rise of Fascism and Nazism had been aided by the discontent of demobilized servicemen after World War I whose needs had been neglected
- The lobbying efforts of the American Legion and other veterans' organizations

Legislative History

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-346, 58 Stat. 284) aka the GI Bill of Rights was introduced in the house on January 10, 1944

The idea for the legislation came from Harry W. Colmery, a former nationa commander of the American Legion

- After initial opposition from other veterans' organizations, the Legion was able to persuade the Veterans of Foreign Wars to support and work for the legislation
- The Legion also persuaded the Hearst and Gannett newspaper chains to back the legislation

The Senate and House of Representatives passed different versions of the bill, necessitating the creation of a conference committee

The Senate approved the Conference version of the bill on June 12th and the House approved it on June 13th

It became law on June 22, 1944

Key Provisions

Enabled veterans to receive $20 a week for 52 weeks while they were looking for work

Provided up to $500 a year for tuition and other educational expenses plus $50 a month subsistence for each month in uniform

Provided no down payment mortgages that were federally guaranteed

Provided small business loans for veterans seeking to establish a business

What the GI Bill Accomplished

Colleges were transformed from a bastion of elite youth into a middle-class entitlement

Large numbers of veterans from working-class backgrounds became college-educated members of the middle class

A nation of renters became a nation of suburban homeowners

Suburbs mushroomed and inner cities lost their members of the middle class

College

Roughly 8.8 million veterans took advantage of the GI Bill's education benefits

- 2.2 million attended colleges or universities
- 6.6 million attended some kind of educational institution (trade school, high school, vocational school, or seminary)

By 1947, half of all college students were veterans

Academically, veterans got better grades than non-veteran college students

Led to an expansion of college enrollments and the idea that people seeking to join the middle class should go to college

College - 2

The Bill's education benefits made possible the education of

- 14 Nobel Prize winners
- 2 Presidents (Gerald Ford & George H.W. Bush)
- 3 Supreme Court Justices
- 12 Senators
- 24 Pulitzer Prize winners
- 238,000 Teachers
- 91,000 Scientists
- 67,000 Doctors
- 450,000 Engineers
- 240,000 Accountants
- 17,000 Journalists

Famous GI Bill Grads

Authors – Gore Vidal, Norman Mailer, Frank McCourt, Art Buchwald, Mario Puzo

Stage & Screenwriters – Paddy Chayevsky, Rod Serling, Terry Southern, Aaron Spelling

Actors – Walter Matthau, Robert Duvall, Tony Curtis, Gene Hackman, Clint Eastwood, Paul Newman, Jason Robards, Charles Bronson, Harry Belafonte, Rod Steiger

Artists – Robert Rauschenberg, Leo Krikorian, Leroy Neiman

Poets – James Dickey, Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Education

The GI Bill gave rise to an entire vocational industry

- Before the war, there were 100 private vocational schools in the country
- By 1950, there were 10,000 vocational schools, providing training in everything from flying a plane to cooking a gourmet meal
- The Culinary Institute of America, founded in 1946, became the top chef training program in the country

Home Ownership - 1

The GI Bill helped touch off a home building boom

- In 1940, less than 1/3rd of American families owned their own home (and most of these were farm families)
- By 1949, 60% of American families were homeowners

Before the war, only 1 out every 6 Americans lived in the suburbs

- Housing construction was a craft industry with no two suburban houses looking alike

Within a couple of decades, a majority of Americans lived in the suburbs

- Suburban housing had taken on a “cookie-cutter” look

Home Ownership - 2

During the war, William Leavitt, a SEABEE who built military housing, saw the advantages of assembly-line construction using prefabricated building elements

Levitt had the idea of using these mass production techniques to build a whole neighborhood of cookie-cutter homes that could be sold cheaply to the returning veterans and their families

- Levitt sold his basic home for $7,990 on 25-year mortgages

After the first Levittown (in suburban Long Island), Levittown-like instant suburban communities began springing up all over the nation

The New Suburbs

One result of the GI Bill was the transformation of America into a nation where a majority of people lived in their own homes and in a suburb.

- Half of these homes (over 5 million) were bought under the GI Bill

The new home sparked an economic boom for the furniture, appliance, and houseware industries and for the builders of the economic infrastructure (roads, utilities, schools, department stores, service stations, and grocery stores) needed to support these new suburbs

The New Suburbs

For the GIs that bought these home, it meant leaving boarding houses, Quonset huts, and cramped apartments for houses with a backyard where one could barbecue and/or plant a garden in a community with swimming pools and other amenities

Home ownership gave the new owners a nest egg in the form of appreciating home equity.

By creating an economy of scale, it made housing cheap enough so that non-veterans could buy also

Suburban Angst

The new suburbs lacked sufficient and convenient public transportation, making all of its inhabitants dependent on the car

The new suburbs, along with the post-war baby boom (to which it helped contribute) turned the working women of the 1940s into the stay-at-home housewife of the 1950s

- The boredom created by living in a car-dependent community with few of the cultural attractions of the city created the discontented women who became the feminists of the 1960s

The new suburbs were racially (and often religiously) segregated with Blacks, Orientals, Jews, and sometimes ethnic Catholics kept out

- Thus the new suburbs tended to be lily-white while the central cities lost their white middle class and became increasingly the residence of blacks and other minorities

Diverse Political Impacts

Suburban home ownership made parents of baby boomers supportive of new schools, parks, and other civic amenities

Home ownership also made homeowners sensitive to property taxes

- Thus when baby boomer children graduated from school, home owners became every more fiscally conservative, opposing property tax increases and bond issues

The GI Bill, although welfare, was “high-status welfare” who recipients did not think of themselves as welfare recipients but as being rewarded for services and sacrifices rendered

- Thus, recipients tended to favor welfare for the “deserving” (such as the elderly via Social Security, veterans via pensions, and students via educational grants) but oppose welfare for the “undeserving” (the lower classes)

Result: a tendency toward oscillating politics and ambivalent attitudes towards the role of government

Other Innovations

Employer Health Insurance - 1

In order to curb inflation, the Roosevelt Administration instituted wage and price controls

- Wage and price controls, however, did not cover fringe benefits

In order to get and retain workers in an environment of labor shortages, employers in the larger war industrial plants began offering new fringe benefits

- One of these was employee health insurance

In 1945, President Harry Truman proposed a system of public health insurance open to all Americans

- Denounced by the Chamber of Commerce, the American Hospital Association, and the American Medical Association as “Socialism,” the plan died in Congress

Employee Health Insurance - 2

Since many of the war plants were unionized and run by manufacturers whose peacetime workers were unionized, labor unions insisted in their postwar contract demands that the employers continue or institute employee health insurance

- Chrysler made tanks during World War II
- Ford made aircraft during World War II
- Kaiser Aluminum built ships during World War II
- Willys and other companies made Jeeps during World War II

By 1958, 75% of all American workers had some form of employer-provided health coverage or health insurance

Coffee breaks

Coffee, containing caffeine, is a stimulant

Two factors led to the large-scale institutionalization of the coffee break

- As the manpower shortage tightened, bosses felt the need to pamper their employees. Coffee breaks were one way of doing this
- With many employees working overtime and not getting enough sleep, employers saw coffee breaks as a way of keeping their employees awake and alert, especially when operating machinery

The need to separate coffee-drinking from the operation of machinery on the assembly line led to the coffee break room

Federal Income Tax Withholding

Prior to World War II, few Americans owed federal income tax and those that did paid the tax in full when they filed their federal income tax return for the prior year on March 15th.

Beardsley Ruml advocated both lowering the amount of income exempt from Federal income taxes and enacting a collection-at-the-source means of taxation whereby payments were deducted from employee paychecks

- This raised the number of Americans having to file federal income tax returns from 7 million in 1941 to 42 million in 1944

Federal Income Tax withholding proved popular since people preferred small installment payments to forking over a large sum on March 15th

Paperback Book

Paperback books are books with a thick paper or paperboard cover usually held together with glue

While originating in the 19th century, they languished until the later-1930s when Penguin Books and Pocket Books started publishing paperback reprints

Paperback book sales mushroomed in wartime due to both the desire of publishers to save paper stock and their popularity with Gis, sailors, and shift workers

- Paperbacks were light, relatively inexpensive, easy to mail, and available in formats handy for Gis and sailors

Plastics

The 1930s saw the initial commercial development of today's major thermoplastics – low-density polyethylene (LDPE), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polystyrene (PS), and polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) – and also polyamides (PA)

- Among the products of polyamides were nylon

World War II brought plastics into great demand as a replacement for scarce rubber, silk, and metals

In short order, plastics soon showed up a host of products

- Steering wheels, telephones, food containers, casings for radios & phonographs, shelves for refrigerators, covers for thermos bottles, soles for shoes, thread, underliners for helmets, kitchen utensils, and parachutes

Margarine

Margarine was created in response to a prize offering by Napoleon III for a butter substitute that could be used by the Armed Forces and the lower classes

Prior to World War II, people much preferred butter to margarine because dairy interests succeeded in getting legislation passed which prevented the coloring of margarine

World War II produced a shortage of butter, leading homemakers to use oleomargarine as a substitute

Due to housewife complaints, postwar state legislatures repealed the laws preventing the sale of colored margarine

Technological Innovations

World War II saw a whole host of technological and social innovations

- Some of these we have discussed; others are listed below

Innovations took two forms

- Something entirely new that came about because of the war
- Something that moved from R&D or experiment or a limited niche to widespread adoption

Among the other innovations we have not touched on

- Tee shirts
- Electronic computers
- Cruise missiles
- The Pentagon
- Vinyl Records
- Civil Air Patrol
- Jet planes
- Federal Impact Aid
- Radar
- The Jeep
- Armed Forces Radio
- Pizza as an American dish