

Western Democracies Between the Wars



Objectives

- Summarize the domestic and foreign policy issues Europe faced after World War I.
- Compare the postwar economic situations in Britain, France, and the United States.
- Describe how the Great Depression began and spread and how Britain, France, and the United States tried to address it.

Terms and People

- **Maginot Line** – massive fortifications built by France along its German border
- **Kellogg-Briand Pact** – an agreement to renounce war as an instrument of national policy
- **disarmament** – the reduction of armed forces and weapons
- **general strike** – a strike by workers in many different industries at the same time

Terms and People (continued)

- **overproduction** – the situation that exists when production of goods exceeds demand
- **finance** – management of money matters
- **Federal Reserve** – the central banking system of the United States
- **Great Depression** – a time of global economic collapse

Terms and People (continued)

- **Franklin D. Roosevelt** – elected President of the United States in 1932
- **New Deal** – a massive package of economic and social programs introduced by FDR



What political and economic challenges did the leading democracies face in the 1920s and 1930s?

In 1919, **Britain, France, and the United States appeared powerful**, but even some of the victors' economies were ravaged after World War I.

Radical ideologies gained ground as governments struggled to deal with the effects of the war.

Postwar economic problems led to social unrest.

In Britain, the **Labour party** gained support among workers by promoting a gradual move toward **socialism**.



- **The upper and middle classes backed the Conservative party**, which held power during most the 1920s.
- Over **three million workers** took part in a massive **general strike** in 1926.
- **Parliament** then passed laws limiting workers' power to strike.

Britain had delayed action on **Irish independence** during the war.

- When Parliament failed to grant home rule in 1919, members of the **Irish Republican Army (IRA)** began a **guerrilla war** against British forces.
- By 1922, **moderates in Ireland and Britain** reached an agreement in which **most of Ireland became the Irish Free State. Northern Ireland remained under British rule.**

Like Britain, France faced political divisions.

- A series of quickly changing coalition governments held power.
- **The parties focused on how to get reparations from Germany, but they could not agree on an approach.**

The **United States** emerged from World War I in good economic shape.

- It had suffered very little loss of life or property during the war.
- **Americans' fear of radicals and Bolsheviks set off a "Red Scare" in 1919.**
- **Congress limited or excluded immigration from Europe. Earlier laws had excluded or limited immigrants from China and Japan.**

The former Allies faced a difficult international situation in addition to their own internal issues.


Britain	France
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tried to relax the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles• Tried to keep Germany strong so that Russia and France would not become too powerful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sought alliances to keep Germany's economy weak• Built the Maginot Line to protect its northern borders• Strengthened its military

Nations signed a **series of treaties** intended to keep the peace.

- Almost every independent nation signed the **Kellogg-Briand Pact** renouncing war. However, it included no way to enforce the ban.
- Countries pursued **disarmament**. The **United States, Britain, France, and Japan** signed treaties promising to reduce the size of their navies.
- The **League of Nations** worked to promote peace, but it proved weak and ineffective.

Postwar European economies began to recover in the 1920s. Manufacturing and trade returned, and the middle class became wealthier.

Some major European countries owed a great deal of money and were not financially stable.



- **Britain and France** owed a substantial **war debt to the United States.**
- **Germany's economy was failing under its crushing reparations.**

The United States emerged as the world's leading economic power. American loans and investments backed the recovery of Europe.

- A stable American economy appeared to benefit everyone.
- Attempts by the **Federal Reserve** to maintain stability in the stock market failed.
- In 1929, **overproduction of goods** and a crisis in **finance in the United States** led to a world economic collapse.

By the end of the **1920s**, an economic crisis had spread around the world.



Governments tried to protect their economies, but nothing helped.

The **Great Depression** spread around the world to **Latin America, Africa, and Asia.**

As millions lost their jobs in the United States, Great Britain, and Germany, people endured great hardship.

Throughout the world, governments tried many methods to solve the crisis, but with little success.

- **By 1931, one in four British workers was unemployed.**
- **Strikes brought down the government in France.**
- **Under U.S. President Herbert Hoover's policies of nonintervention, the economy did not improve.**

**In 1932, Americans elected a new president,
Franklin D. Roosevelt.**

Roosevelt introduced the **New Deal, a massive package of economic and social programs.**

- **Stock market regulations**
- **Protection of bank deposits**
- **Aid to farmers**
- **Job creation**
- **Social Security pensions**

The **New Deal failed to end the Great Depression**, but it did ease some of its effects.

The Great Depression caused many people to lose faith in the ability of democratic governments to solve problems.



Unemployed men in Britain take part in a "hunger march."

Some **European nations turned to authoritarian leaders** who promised to restore order and prosperity.