

Cold War and Contemporary Europe

AP European History

Contextualizing Cold War and Contemporary Europe

Unit 9 takes Europe from 1945 to the present. The same four key concepts as Unit 8 apply, but the emphasis shifts: a **polarised state order**, competing conceptions of **the individual and the state**, continued questioning of **objective knowledge**, and demographic and economic change reshaping everyday life.

The unit has two halves that must be held together - **division** until 1991, and **integration** running alongside and then beyond it.

Rebuilding Europe

Marshall Plan 马歇尔计划 funds from the United States financed an extensive reconstruction of industry and infrastructure and stimulated an economic revival in Western Europe.

The Marshall Plan is examinable in two directions at once: it rebuilt Western Europe, and by being refused for the Soviet bloc it helped harden the division that defines the rest of the unit.

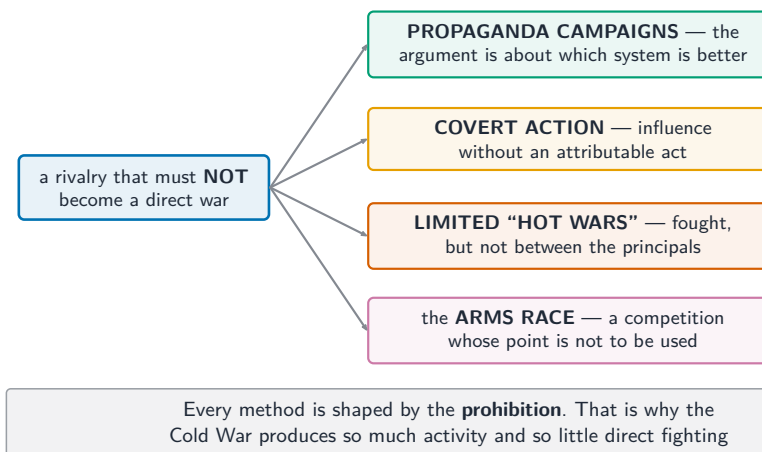
The Cold War

Despite efforts to maintain international cooperation through the newly created **United Nations** 联合国, deep-seated tensions between the two blocs produced the **Cold War**.

The CED lists how it was actually conducted, and the list is worth memorising because questions ask for methods:

- **propaganda campaigns** 宣传战;
- **covert actions** 秘密行动;
- **limited “hot wars”** 有限热战 in other regions;
- an **arms race** 军备竞赛.

Note what is absent: direct war between the principals. The methods list *is* the answer to “how could a conflict this intense produce no direct war”.



Two Superpowers Emerge

	Western Europe	The Soviet bloc
Rebuilt how?	Marshall Plan funds rebuild industry and infrastructure	central planning, extensive social welfare provision
Aligned with whom?	US military, political and economic influence; NATO	Soviet domination east of the Iron Curtain
What strained it?	growth funded the welfare state; stagnation put it in question	long economic stagnation; repression alternating with reform
How did it end?	integration deepens into the European Union	1989-91: peaceful revolution in most countries, violent conflict in some

Held apart for forty years - and then both halves face the same questions: sovereignty, migration, and what integration costs.

The division holds for forty years, and then both halves face the same questions

- The **United States** exerted strong military, political, and economic influence in Western Europe, leading to the creation of **NATO** 北约.
- Countries east of the **Iron Curtain** 铁幕 came under the military, political, and economic domination of the **Soviet Union**.
- Central and Eastern European nations within the Soviet bloc followed an economic

model based on **central planning** 中央计划 and extensive social welfare provision.

- Those nations' relationship with the Soviet Union **oscillated between repression and reform** - which is the CED's own phrase and a better answer than either alone.
- The rise of **new nationalisms** in Central and Eastern Europe eventually brought **peaceful revolution in most countries**, but **violent conflict in some**.

Postwar Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Atrocities

Nationalist and separatist movements, along with **ethnic conflict and ethnic cleansing**, periodically disrupted the post-war order. The examinable point is that 1945 did not end the problem of nationalism in Europe; it suppressed it in some places and postponed it in others.

Contemporary Western Democracies

Postwar economic growth supported an **increase in welfare benefits** 福利待遇; subsequent **economic stagnation** 经济停滞 led to criticism and scaling back of the **welfare state** 福利国家.

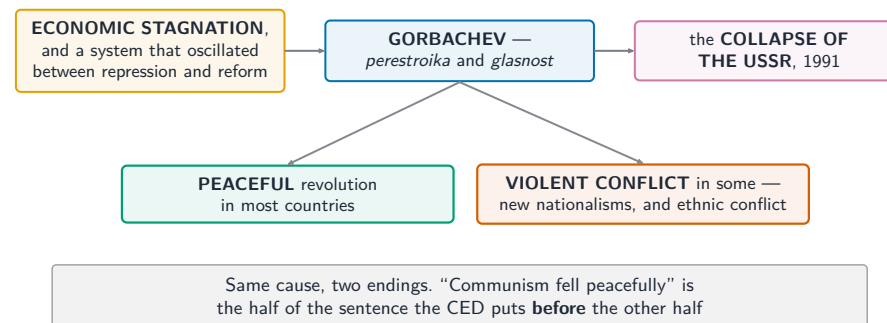
Hold both halves. Growth funded the welfare state; the end of growth is what put it under argument - which is a causal claim, not just a sequence of events.

The Fall of Communism

Following a long period of **economic stagnation**, Mikhail Gorbachev's 戈尔巴乔夫 internal reforms of **perestroika** 改革 and **glasnost** 开放 - despite being intended to strengthen the system - contributed to its collapse.

The **collapse of the USSR in 1991** ended the Cold War and led to the establishment of capitalist economies throughout Eastern Europe.

The shape of the argument matters: reform intended to save a system helped end it. That is the kind of claim an evaluation question rewards.



20th-Century Feminism

The lives of women were defined by **family and work responsibilities, economic changes, and feminism**. Across the century: expanding participation in paid work, especially during both wars; the extension of political rights; and organised movements that changed law and expectation in the postwar decades.

Decolonization

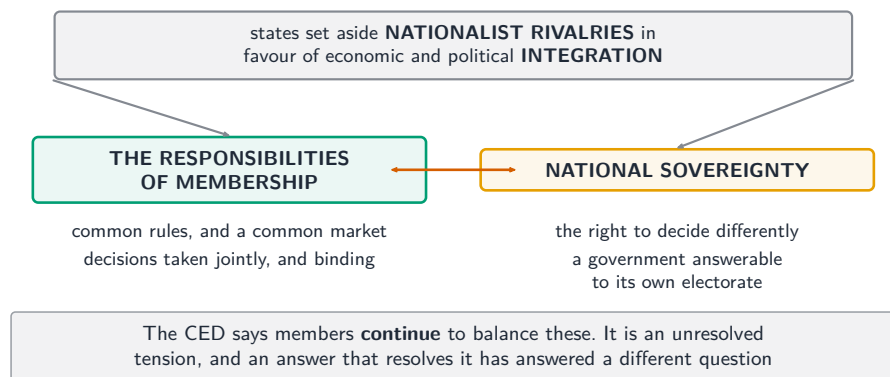
The process of **decolonisation** 去殖民化 occurred over the course of the century with **varying degrees of cooperation, interference, or resistance** from the European imperial powers.

The consequence for Europe itself is the part students omit: losing empire changed what a European state was, and it produced the migration examined two topics below.

The European Union

European states **began to set aside nationalist rivalries in favour of economic and political integration**, forming a series of institutions that became the **European Union** 欧盟.

And the tension the CED names explicitly: EU member nations **continue to balance questions of national sovereignty against the responsibilities of membership** in an international body. That balance is the examinable issue, not the institutional history.



Migration and Immigration

- Because of the **economic growth of the 1950s and 1960s**, **migrant workers** 外来劳工 from southern Europe, Asia, and Africa immigrated to northern and western Europe.
- Increased immigration **altered Europe's religious makeup** 宗教构成, causing debate and conflict over the **role of religion in public life**.

Note the CED's own causal order: economic growth created labour demand, and migration followed it. The debates came afterwards.

Technology and Globalization

- **Medical theories and technologies extended life** but posed social and moral questions that **eluded consensus** 未能形成共识.
- Increased imports of **US technology and popular culture** after the war generated **both enthusiasm and criticism** 既受欢迎也遭批评.
- New **communication and transportation technologies** multiplied connections across space and time, transforming daily life.
- **Green parties** 绿党 in Western and Central Europe challenged consumerism and urged **sustainable development** 可持续发展.

Culture, Arts, and Demographic Trends

- The effects of world war and economic depression **undermined confidence in science and human reason**, giving impetus to new intellectual currents.
- **Organised religion continued to play a role** in European social and cultural life despite these challenges - a continuity worth stating, because answers tend to assume simple secularisation.
- The arts were defined by **experimentation, self-expression, subjectivity**, and increasing global influence.
- **Mass production, new food technologies, and industrial efficiency** increased disposable income and created a **consumer culture** 消费文化.
- With postwar recovery the birth rate rose dramatically - the **baby boom** 婴儿潮 - often promoted by government policy.
- Various movements - **women's movements, political and social movements, gay and lesbian movements** - pressed for rights and recognition.
- **Intellectuals and youth reacted against perceived bourgeois materialism**, most significantly in the movements of the later 1960s.

Continuity and Change in the 20th and 21st Centuries

The unit's reasoning skill is **continuity and change**.

Worked example (a real AP exam question). AP European History short-answer questions here ask, for example, to "*Explain one way in which European integration after 1945 represented a change from earlier European international relations.*" A full-mark answer states the change against what it replaced: "*Before 1945 European states pursued national interest through competing alliances and, repeatedly, war. After 1945 states began to set aside those rivalries in favour of shared institutions, accepting binding common rules on trade and law - so a dispute between members became a matter for negotiation within an institution rather than a matter for the balance of power.*" Notice that a change claim needs the **prior state of affairs** to be named.

Exam tips

- The unit has **two simultaneous stories** - division until 1991 and integration throughout. Weak answers tell only one.
- Memorise the Cold War's **methods**: propaganda, covert action, limited hot wars, arms race. The absence of direct war is the point.
- "**Oscillated between repression and reform**" is the CED's phrase for the

Soviet bloc. It beats either half alone.

- Gorbachev's reforms were **intended to strengthen** the system. That irony is what an evaluation question is looking for.
- The **welfare state** grew on growth and was questioned when growth stopped. State the causal link.
- Migration followed **labour demand** created by the postwar boom. Get the causal order right before discussing the debates.