

The Century: Peter Jennings The Best Years: 1946-1952

1. What does Churchill warn the world about in Missouri in 1946? How is it received in the USSR?

Churchill warned the world about one more tyrant in Europe that needs to be brought down or things may end up the same that they did with the Nazis. Stalin said that he saw this speech as an act of war.

2. What was the situation for American GI's after WWII? What was the GI Bill?

When millions of men began coming home from war they found that there were very few available jobs for them to take and they feared that they may be facing permanent unemployment. However, before the war ended congress knew that GI's would have a hard time getting back to normal lives so in 1944 they passed the GI Bill. The bill made it so that veterans would get low cost mortgages and higher education.

3. Explain the transformation of the American economy between 1945-1947.

The American economy was booming and now people who had been saving up money during the war could finally spend it on the consumer goods that were unavailable during the conflict. The American industry could also bring in millions of workers with the high demand for consumer goods the factories switched from making tanks and planes to making refrigerators and cars.

4. What is Levittown and why is it important for America's middle class?

Levittown was just a nick name for the four large suburban developments that William Levitt had constructed for returning veterans. The developments were important because they were cheap so veterans didn't have to spend so much; but, perhaps what made the homes so desirable was the fact that they were separated from each other and they were all identical: white picket fence, green lawn, nice kitchen, and the latest technology in home appliance.

5. What was the baby boom and how do women's roles change?

After WW2 millions of young men began returning home to the girls they wrote letters to while they weren't fighting and one thing led to another and

before you knew it there were millions of newborns all over the country. Of course this made women feel that they simply existed to give birth, take care of the kids, and get her husband a sandwich.

6. What situation did Black veterans confront after WWII? How does President Truman respond?

Black veterans were hoping that their service would help stop the differences between whites and blacks instead when they returned home things were basically the same as how they once were where people continued to be separated by skin color. President Truman was so outraged at this that he ordered that the military as well as congress no longer be segregated.

7. Who is Jackie Robinson and why is he significant for baseball and America itself?

Jackie Robinson was the first African American to join a Major League baseball team, The Brooklyn Dodgers. Baseball was very important to America at the time and when people saw Jackie walk out onto the field he received cheers and scorns; but as time progressed the cheers began to drown out the scorns.

8. What is America's place in the world and how did Americans feel about themselves after the war?

America emerged from the war as the world's greatest superpower and now the US had influence in Europe as well as Asia and across the Pacific. Americans felt pretty good about their new way of life; with the way they were living many people felt that America truly was the greatest country on the planet.

9. How had Russia been impacted by the war? Germany? The rest of Europe?

Europe had been devastated from years of war and Russia suffered the most casualties with their loss of 20 million people. Germany's further looked the worst because now instead of simply having to pay for the war damage with money and then be left to repair Germany would certainly regret their actions. The victors which consisted of The US, Britain, France, and Russia would divide Germany and Berlin the Germans weren't allowed to have a military or a police force.

10. What is the Marshall Plan and what did the U.S. fear would happen without aid?

The Marshall Plan's goal was to make Europe strong again so that if there was a Soviet invasion then these nations would be strong enough that they could successfully repel a Soviet invasion. Also, if the Soviet Union was able to send this aid to these nations then favor in Europe would tip towards communism.

11. How did Soviet troops treat the German people during and after the war? Why?

The Soviets were extremely harsh to the countries they had taken from the Nazis during WW2 but no country saw harsher treatment than Germany itself. The Soviets were furious at the treatment Russian's had gotten from German soldiers during the war and Russia wanted revenge.

12. What does Stalin do to try and get the U.S. out of West Berlin? How does the U.S. respond?

Stalin orders that a blockade be set up in West Berlin hoping that this would drive the US out of Germany altogether. America responds by sending thousands of tons of supplies by air to West Berlin every day for eleven months to keep West Berlin strong finally Stalin ordered the Blockade to be lifted.

13. What happens in China in 1949 that shocks America?

In 1949 the civil war in China ended with a communist victory this led to more fear and distrust towards the communist world. Now while America was gaining support in Western Europe the Soviets were gaining support in Asia.

14. Why does the U.S. send troops to Korea in 1950? What other nations also had troops there?

With the communist backed North Korean invasion of South Korea UN forces immediately sent troops to fight the communists. UN forces consisted of American, British, South Korean, Canadian, French, Turkish, Australian, Colombian, Greek, etc. While communist forces were made up of North Korean, Chinese, and had the support of the Soviet Union even though the Soviet only gave medical support, vehicles, and weapons.

15. How did the American people view the Korean War?

Many Americans felt that the war in Korea wasn't quite as important as WW2 had been that's why the Korean war is often seen as a forgotten war. Perhaps many Americans also felt that they were tired of war because only five years ago they fought the bloodiest war in human history.

16. Who is Joseph McCarthy and why was he able to do what he did? How was Hollywood involved?

Joseph McCarthy was a Senator from Wisconsin who became famous from his constant beliefs that Soviet spies had infiltrated the US and soon he gained so much support that he began what could be called witch hunts only they hunted down suspected communists. Hollywood saw the worst of the Red Scare when numerous workers, directors, and movie stars began to be suspected of being communists and were banned from the movie business.

17. Why does Truman fire MacArthur?

MacArthur wanted to send troops all the way into China and use the atomic bomb to crush the Chinese forces but Truman refused to use the bomb again. MacArthur continued to demand an invasion or the use of the bomb and finally Truman fired MacArthur for insubordination.

18. What was the hydrogen bomb and why did it signal a new age in the Cold War?

The hydrogen bomb was a whole new weapons that was 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb's dropped of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This new weapon made it clear that if war should break out it would mean total destruction of the world.

19. What impact does television have on politics and society?

Television helped shape who we would become in society because many people thought that the people they saw on TV was what an ideal American should be. Politicians used this method to get the public on their side by making the people feel more connected to them TV is oftener seen as what made the US what it is today.