

Chapter Summary

The Resurgence of Conservatism, 1980–1992

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do you think the resurgence of conservative ideas has changed society?

This chapter discusses how discontent encouraged Americans to return to conservative views and elect Ronald Reagan president; the chapter follows Reagan's domestic and foreign policies, as well as the fall of the Soviet Union; it discusses increased wealth in the '80s, new social activism, and how President Bush's domestic policies affected the 1992 election.

The New Conservatism

- The Cold War encouraged a strong foreign policy.
- Fundamental differences about the economy and social issues divided liberals and conservatives.
- Fear of communism encouraged some to turn to conservative ideas.
- Americans became tired of protests and violence.
- The Sunbelt population supported conservative ideas.
- Rising taxes and government regulations turned voters to conservative ideas.
- Western and Southern conservatives supported the Republican Party.
- The Protestant evangelical movement helped mobilize conservative voters, creating the "Moral Majority."

The Reagan Years

- Ronald Reagan turned to conservatism during the 1980's.
- Reagan was elected president in 1980 and reelected in 1984.
- Reagan supported supply-side economics and pushed large tax cuts through Congress.
- A debate over expanding government programs shaped domestic policies.
- Deregulation spurred a boom in oil, transportation, and communication.
- Several conservative judges were nominated as Supreme Court justices.

- The United States began a military buildup.
- Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union.
- The Iran-Contra scandal marred Reagan's second term.

Life in the '80s

- Young, ambitious, urban professionals were called "yuppies."
- Innovations in retailing and broadcasting changed American society.
- New social activist groups formed.
- The AIDS epidemic was identified.

The End of the Cold War

- Gorbachev instituted *perestroika* and *glasnost*.
- The Soviet Union collapsed.
- East and West Germany reunited.
- Chinese students protested in Tiananmen Square.
- U.S. troops invaded Panama and captured Noriega.
- Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait; The United States and its allies launched "Desert Storm."
- Increased spending led to record deficits; Bush raised taxes.
- Savings and loan institutions collapsed.
- Bill Clinton was the first Baby Boomer to be elected president.