

The political consequences

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The political consequences

After 1945, the pre-war political landscape was transformed in most European countries. New political groupings, such as the Christian Democrats, heirs to the former Catholic parties, came into being or consolidated their positions. Other older groupings, such as the Communists, emerged from the conflict considerably strengthened by the role that they had played in the resistance and by the prestige acquired by the Soviet Union. The concept of European unity, considered by many as a bulwark against the return of nationalism, was generally viewed sympathetically. Western Europe was also aware that the United States and the USSR were extending their influence at the expense of the old continent and hoped to reclaim its place on the international stage by uniting the peoples of Europe.