



The Making of Modern America: The Nation from 1945 to the Present

Gary A. Donaldson

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When World War II ended in 1945, America emerged as the only superpower. It had defeated Germany and Japan, it was the only nation with the bomb, and much of the rest of the world lay in ruins as a result of the war. In addition, the wartime economy had dragged the nation out of the worst depression in modern history. The United States seemed on the verge of its greatest age, and from that starting point, its people embarked on a journey through the next several decades of change. The Making of Modern America is the story of that journey. As Gary Donaldson chronicles, the second half of the twentieth century was, in fact, one of the most tumultuous eras in U.S. history: Nearly every minority group in the nation, including women, demanded equal rights and access; the Cold War kept Americans living in fear of a nuclear holocaust that might end civilization; the turbulent sixties galvanized the baby boom generation; and the war in Vietnam divided the nation. The end of the Cold War brought new challenges and opportunities, but the specter of international terrorism cast a pall over the beginning of a new century. At the end of the era, once again the United States stood alone as the sole superpower on earth, but the threats remained ominous and real. The nation was at war again, and the American people were perhaps more divided than they had been since the Vietnam era. The talk was of consensus, but the reality was conflict.

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