# MODERN WORLD HISTORY



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# Bemidji State University

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Dan Allosso and Tom Williford

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS


Licensing

## 1: Chapters

- 1.1: Introduction
- 1.2: Modern World History Begins in Asia
- 1.3: Europe and Africa
- 1.4: The Americas and Columbus
- 1.5: Early Globalization and Revolutions
- 1.6: Troubled Nineteenth Century
- 1.7: Imperialism
- 1.8: The Great War
- 1.9: Modern Crisis
- 1.10: World War II
- 1.11: Decolonization
- 1.12: Cold War
- 1.13: Neoliberal Globalization
- 1.14: Limits to Growth?
- 1.15: Appendix A - Choosing a Chief Executive and Voting
- 1.16: Appendix B- Finance and Taxes

Index

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

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*A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in **Back Matter/Detailed Licensing**.*

# CHAPTER OVERVIEW

## 1: Chapters


1.1: Introduction
1.2: Modern World History Begins in Asia
1.3: Europe and Africa
1.4: The Americas and Columbus
1.5: Early Globalization and Revolutions
1.6: Troubled Nineteenth Century
1.7: Imperialism
1.8: The Great War
1.9: Modern Crisis
1.10: World War II
1.11: Decolonization
1.12: Cold War
1.13: Neoliberal Globalization
1.14: Limits to Growth?
1.15: Appendix A - Choosing a Chief Executive and Voting
1.16: Appendix B- Finance and Taxes



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# 1.1: Introduction

Welcome to Modern World History! This is the textbook for an undergraduate survey course taught at all the universities and most of the colleges in the Minnesota State system. Similar courses are taught at institutions around the United States and the world, so the authors have made the text available as an open educational resource that teachers and learners can read, adapt, and reuse to meet their needs. We'd like to hear from people who have found the text useful, and we're always open to questions and suggestions.

Readers of this text may have varying levels of familiarity with the events of World History before the modern period we will be covering. Occasionally understanding the text may require a bit of background that will help contextualize the material we are covering. This introduction will cover some of that background.

## The Agricultural Revolution

Farming developed in a number of different parts of the ancient world, before the beginning of recorded history. That means it's very difficult for historians to describe early agricultural societies in as much detail as we'd like. Also, because there are none of the written records historians typically use to understand the past, we rely to a much greater extent on archaeologists, anthropologists, and other specialists for the data that informs our histories. And because the science supporting these fields has advanced rapidly in recent years, our understanding of this prehistoric period has also changed – sometimes abruptly.



Figure: A neolithic (stone age) grindstone, used to process grain seeds collected by gatherers and later cultivated by farmers.

Farming was once believed to have developed in the Middle East at sites such as Jericho and Mesopotamia six or seven thousand years ago, where the ancestors of modern Europeans were usually credited with the invention of agriculture. More recently, responding to evidence of prehistoric farming in Africa, India, and China, some scholars suggested agriculture may have developed more or less independently in several regions of the world. But it was difficult to imagine how such parallel development could have occurred, with people in different parts of the world not only making the same basic discoveries but making them pretty much simultaneously. Even more recently, scientists have begun to suspect this confusion may reflect the difficulty of finding archaeological evidence, since plant materials decay in the ground much more quickly than arrowheads and stone spear points. And some have suggested we may have been thinking about agriculture wrong.

It now seems likely that agriculture began in a very gradual process that goes back much farther than we had imagined. Humans as a species began in southern Africa some 300,000 years ago and after a population crisis about 150,000 years ago, modern humans seem to have left Africa between 80,000 and 100,000 years ago. They were not the first members of the human family that left Africa: *Homo erectus*, Neanderthals, and Denisovans all lived in Europe and Asia until they were displaced by *Homo sapiens*.

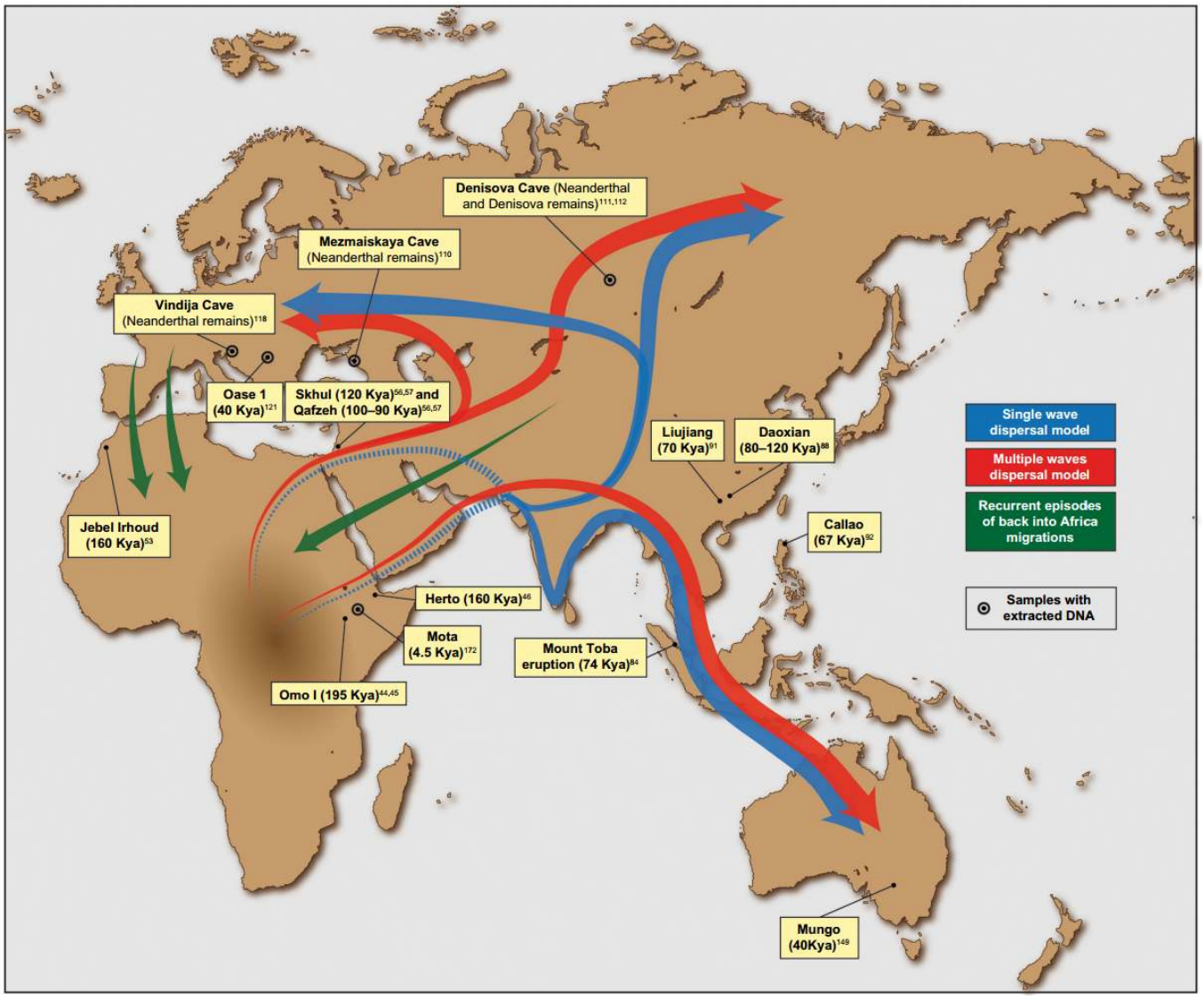



Figure: A recent (2015) map showing updated theories of human migration out of Africa, including major archaeological sites.

In the early millennia of their spread across the connected continents of Africa, Europe, and Asia, modern humans lived mobile lives as hunter-gatherers. According to archaeologists, many left traces of their presence in the area north of the Black Sea from about 80,000 to about 50,000 years ago. Although they may have favored certain locations for long periods of time, ancient people were forced to follow the herds they hunted and to seek new food sources when conditions changed. Climate changed very slowly, but the cycle of glaciation was a factor in human development; especially the most recent ice age which began about 36,000 years ago and lasted until about 11,000 years ago. This ice age displaced both animal and human populations, and also allowed some people to migrate to the Americas, as we will see.

Agriculture probably began when hunter-gatherers began favoring certain plants and weeding around them to help them grow larger and make them easier to reach. At some point, people discovered that seeds dropped into rubbish heaps sprouted into new plants. People probably began planting or transplanting their favorites closer to home, so they would not always have to go far, looking for food. This horticulture or part-time farming may have begun before these ancient humans began to spread from the Black Sea area westward into Europe and east into Asia, which would explain the seemingly coincidental parallel development of

farming across much of the globe. Various regions may have each developed their distinctive versions of what we now recognize as agriculture from a deep pool of common techniques.

Wheat was discovered in a region we call the fertile crescent, stretching from the Persian Gulf to the eastern Mediterranean. As cultivation spread and surpluses of grain were produced, civilizations like those of Egypt and Mesopotamia (today's Iraq) rose between 6,000 and 5,000 years ago. About the same time (possibly a bit earlier) residents of the Pearl River estuary in what is now China began cultivating rice in flooded fields called paddies. The three other staple crops of the modern world (corn, potatoes, and cassava) were developed between 9,000 and 7,000 years ago by natives of the Americas, as we will discuss below.

The transition from nomadic hunt-and-gather groups to more complex societies based on agriculture (and the specialization and segmentation of work) allowed for the development of sedentary cultures which established governments, writing and number systems, and hierarchal social systems able to build impressive structures, defend (and sometimes expand) their borders, and create art and music. Let's look briefly at the ancient societies of Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas to prepare for our coverage of them in the early modern period in the opening chapters.

here

- Is it significant that historians must rely on information from other fields like archaeology to tell the story of the ancient world?
- Why does it matter where agriculture first developed?
- Does considering human migrations in the deep past affect your opinions on race and ethnicity?

## Ancient Kingdoms of North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean

The ancient dynasties of the Egyptian empire developed along the Nile beginning around 3100 BCE, built on the wheat surpluses made possible by the annual flooding of the Nile River. Among the most visible and lasting achievements of the Egyptian empires are the pyramids of Giza, built between 2600-2400 BCE to serve as burial tombs for several emperors. The Egyptian empires lasted for nearly 2300 years before being conquered, in succession, by the Assyrians, Persians, and Greeks between about 700 BCE and 332 BCE.



Figure: The Giza pyramid complex, with Cairo in the background.

The societies of ancient Greece, particularly in Athens, directly influenced culture and intellectual life in Europe and the Middle East to the present day. Greek dramas and tragedies continue to be studied and performed; Pythagoras' mathematical discoveries are still taught in schools; and the thinking of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are the basis for Western philosophy and political science today. The words "democracy" and "republic" come from these ancient Greeks. Greek ideas and culture were adopted by the Romans and spread throughout their empire—indeed, many Greek gods became Roman gods under different names.

Ancient Rome was a republic for nearly 500 years, expanding its territory from the city of Rome on the western coast of the Italian peninsula to nearly all lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, including the former Greek and Egyptian empires and even

England. The Romans spread their language (Latin) and their Latin alphabet to western Europe in particular. After a period of political crisis, the Republic was replaced with an Emperor under Caesar Augustus in 27 BCE.

The Egyptian, Greek, Assyrian, Persian, and Roman empires all encountered the Hebrew people, who maintained their own independent kingdom of Israel around 1000 BCE. The Hebrew prophet Moses, influenced by spiritual ideas from the various societies, developed the concept of only one god for his people. Moses' monotheism was an unusual innovation in an era when most societies worshipped several gods and many honored the gods of other cultures. The Ten Commandments and the laws and regulations attributed to Moses in the Torah not only formed the basis of Judaism, but also Christianity and later Islam—all religions which only worship a single god.

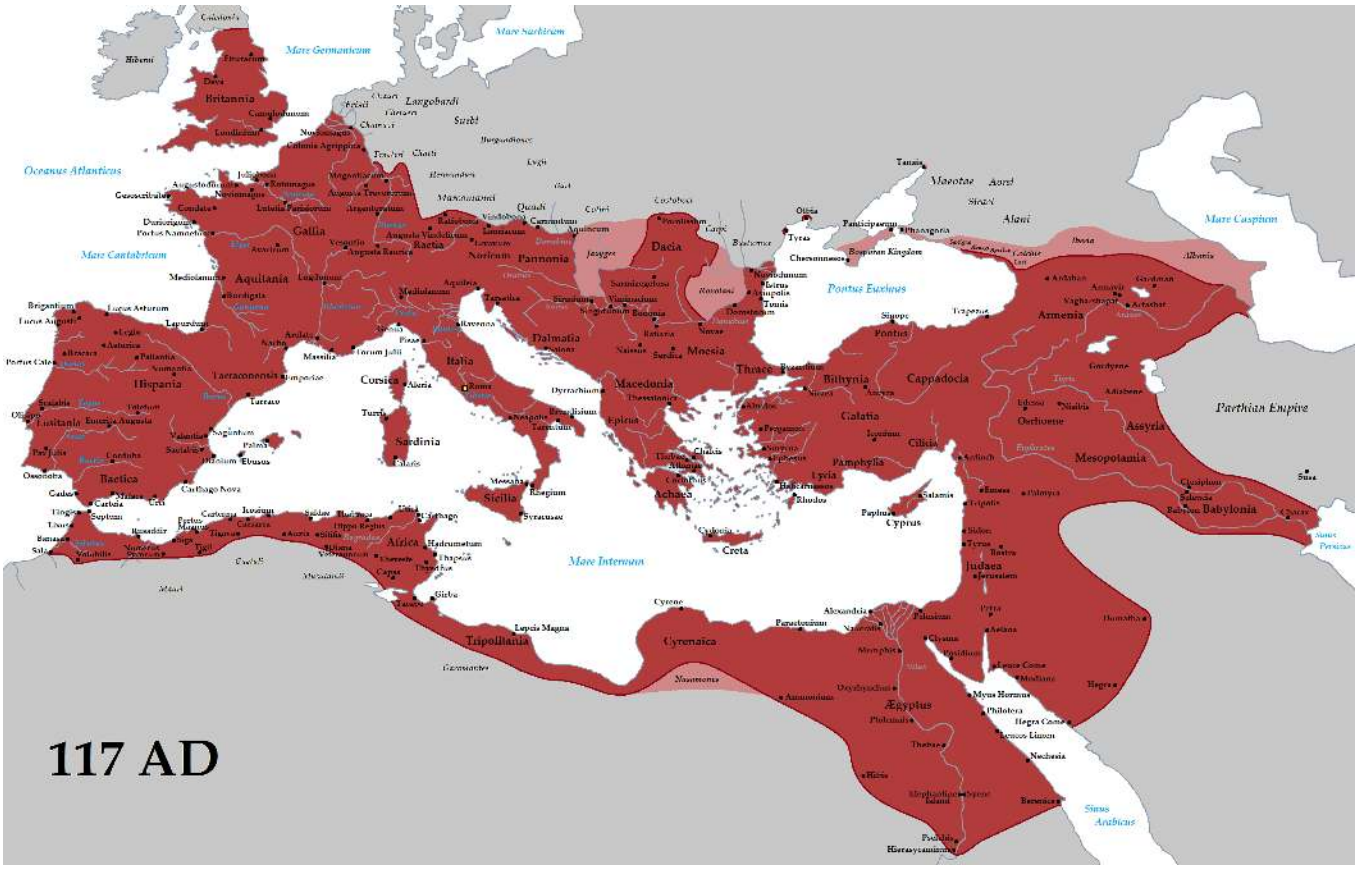



Figure: The Roman Empire at its greatest extent, in 117 CE.

Shortly after the Romans conquered the region of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish thinker, began preaching a new more peaceful and inclusive religion of salvation. He was turned over by enemies to the Romans, who crucified him in approximately 33 CE. His followers, led especially by Paul (said to have never met Jesus), preached that Jesus was the Son of God and invited Gentiles (people who were not Jews) to join the faith. The new religion was especially embraced by slaves in the Roman Empire who were attracted to the promise of forgiveness, of a single, all-powerful God's unending love, and of eternal life after death. The Romans, who saw the new religion as a challenge to state religious authority, sometimes persecuted Christians.

In 330 CE, the Roman Emperor Constantine banned persecution of Christians, and by 400 AC, Christianity had replaced the worship of Rome's traditional gods and goddesses as the state religion of the Roman Empire. Because Constantine embraced the new faith, the Roman Catholic Church is the most direct descendent of the Roman Empire. The Pope, leader of the Catholic Church, still lives in Rome, and the vestments of Catholic priests (and the clergy of some other liturgical Christian denominations) are similar to those worn by fourth-century Roman officials.

here

- On what types of historical evidence do you think references to people such as Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad are based? How might these sources differ from the archaeological sources mentioned previously?
- How do the cultures of ancient Europe continue to influence life in the modern world?

## The Eastern Roman Empire and the Fall of Rome

Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire to a second imperial capital in 330 CE. Byzantium, which he renamed Constantinople, was a powerful fortress controlling the Bosphorus Strait which connects the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The city of Byzantium, already a thousand years old when Constantine moved there, served as the eastern administrative center of the empire and continued using Greek, rather than Latin, as its official language. A somewhat separate Christian church developed in this Greek part of the empire, based on the idea that the different archbishops controlled spiritual matters as a group, and that the Pope in Rome was only another archbishop, equal to the others. After 1000 CE, Catholics in the west and the Greek Orthodox in the east split from one another.

During the fifth century CE, Germanic tribes from northern Europe invaded the Roman Empire. They, in turn, were fleeing from Attila the Hun and other invaders from Asia. Eventually, the city of Rome itself fell to the barbarians in 476 CE. Western Europe was divided up among various Germanic warlords. But although the empire had ended the Roman Catholic Church remained strong. Over the next 500 years, Christianity spread throughout the region and was embraced by local and regional rulers. The Church preserved much of the culture of the Roman Empire, including its language, Latin, which was used in liturgies and ceremonies until 1965.




Figure: When Rome fell in 476 CE, Western Europe was divided into a number of kingdoms, although the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire persisted.

Germanic languages were transformed through their contact with Latin speakers. The English language is a good example of both Germanic and Latin influences. Consider how time is measured: the months of the year are all from the Roman calendar, with the first six months named after Roman gods, and July and August named after the early emperors Julius Caesar and Caesar Augustus. The remaining months are ordinal numbers seven through ten—although in a confusing change, the Catholic Church decided to begin the calendar in January, making "December" the twelfth month instead of the tenth. The days of the week, however, reveal both Latin and Germanic influences: Saturday, Sunday, and Monday come from the sacred Roman orbs in the sky—Spanish, French and other more Latin languages continue in this vein for the other four days, but not English, which honors the barbarian gods Tieu, Woden, Thor, and Frija for the remainder of the week.

The Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) lasted for nearly another 1000 years after the fall of Rome. You can tell which European peoples were converted by Catholic missionaries and which were proselytized by Orthodox preachers by looking at their alphabets —Russia, the Ukraine, and Bulgaria, for example, use the Greek-based "Cyrillic" alphabet, while all western European languages use a version of the Latin alphabet.

## Islam and Its Influence

In 610 CE, the Prophet Muhammad began preaching and organizing a new religion—Islam—on the Arabian Peninsula in the region of Mecca. The Prophet's teachings, later gathered in the Holy Quran, built upon Judaism and Christianity. Mecca itself was long a site of religious pilgrimage honoring the Hebrew patriarch Abraham, and Jesus is considered as an important prophet in Islam. By the time of Muhammad's passing in 632, Islam was well-established in the eastern Arabian Peninsula; within the next one hundred years, it became the dominant religion in North Africa, the Middle East, and Persia. By 1200, Muslim rulers also dominated South Asia and the Iberian Peninsula.



Figure: An 18th-century map of Mecca, showing the Al-Haram Mosque and the Ka'bah, which millions of Muslims visit on pilgrimages every year.

Islam brought stability to the region and trade, learning, and the exchange of ideas flourished. The extent of Muslim trade is notable in the establishment of a center of Islamic study in Timbuktu in the middle of northern Sub-Saharan Africa, located across the Sahara Desert from Mecca in today's Mali. Religious conversion often accompanied Arab merchant activity. Indeed, the nation with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia, is a South East Asian archipelago located thousands of miles from the Arabian Peninsula; Arab traders first introduced their religion there in the 1200s. The Arab world benefitted from relatively stable administrations and commercial links that allowed merchants to bring new technology, science, and mathematics from India and China to the region, which Arab scholars refined in their own centers of learning.

Muslims, like Christians, Jews, and followers of all other world religions, may share common sacred writings and liturgical traditions, but are also divided by different theological interpretations and religious practices. In Islam, a principal division stems from an early debate over who should have led the religion after the Prophet: should it have been a member of his family, or simply anyone who was an effective and dynamic leader? Sunnis, 90% of Muslims today, stem from the group who believed in the latter, while Shi'ites, some 10% of all Muslims, include the (often martyred) descendants of the Prophet as early principle imams (spiritual leaders) of Islam. As will be discussed later, the rulers of Persia—today's Iran—embraced Shi'ism, while most of their

neighbors are Sunni. Although Sunnis and Shi'ites fought one another in the early years of Islam, many have also lived together in relative peace for centuries, until the last few decades (which will be examined in later chapters).

here

- How do you think the memory of the Roman Empire affected Europeans?
- How did conflict between Muslims and Christians shape European history?

## The Center of World Population: Asia

After thousands of years of hunting and gathering, the ancient people of northern China began cultivating millet and rice at about the same time and in much the same way that people of the Middle East grew wheat and people of the Americas grew maize, potatoes, and cassava. China's recorded history began about 2000 BCE, or over four thousand years ago, so historians have a pretty good idea what happened there in the distant past. Based on irrigated rice agriculture, the population of China grew to 50 to 60 million people as early as 2,000 years ago. This population was originally divided into several small kingdoms whose ruling families were connected through political marriages. Beginning in 221 BCE, the most influential and powerful family organized the kingdoms into an empire covering much of the territory of modern China. This empire lasted over two thousand years under a series of over a dozen dynasties until the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and the establishment of the Republic of China.

In the region that is now Pakistan and India, Indus Valley cities such as Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, which reached their maturity by about 2600 BCE, each housed 30,000 to 60,000 people. These cultures grew on an agricultural base focused on wheat, barley, and millet. The permanent nature of sedentary agricultural societies led thinkers to consider in more complex ways how people should live correctly in the world, which led to the establishment of both religious and civil structures that are the ancestors and sources of many of the world governments and religions which still exist today. During the Vedic period in India, Hinduism took root beginning around 2000 BCE, based on stories of gods and goddesses, and their relationships with one another and the world. The spiritual richness of South Asia inspired the Buddha (who was originally from today's Nepal) to engage in his own spiritual journey to enlightenment in the fifth century BCE. Buddhist ideas inspired the spiritual aspects of Chinese, Japanese, and Southeast Asian thought.

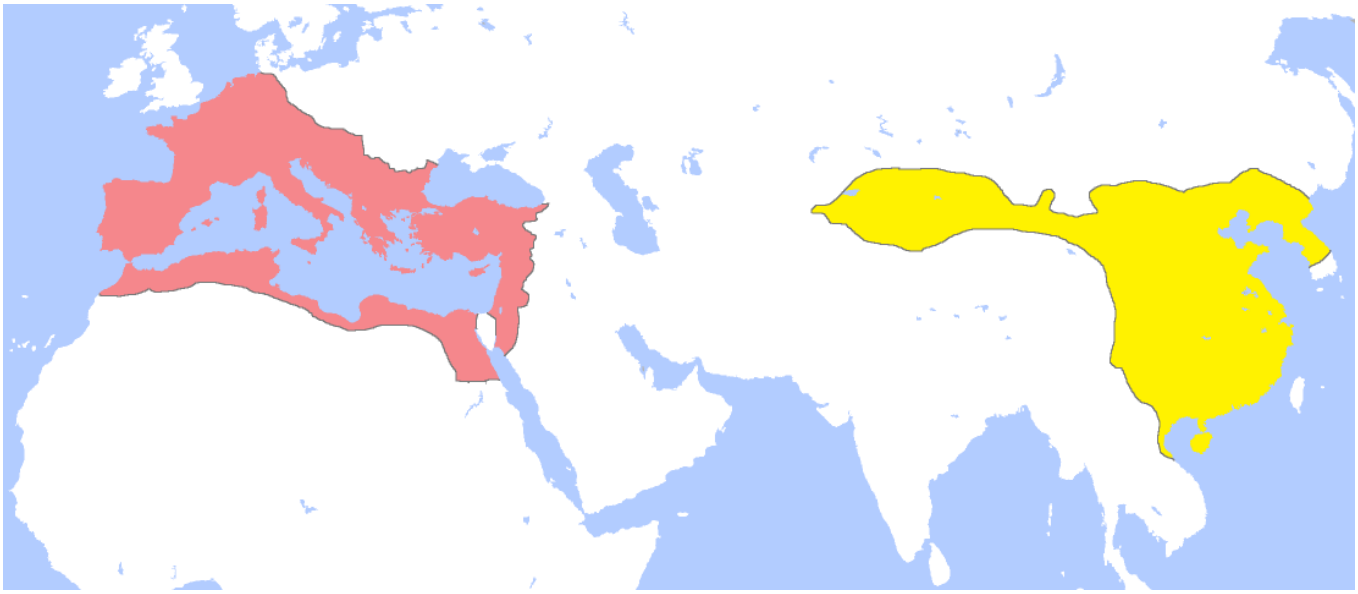


Figure: The extent of the Roman and Han Empires around the year 1 CE.

The earliest emperors of China began large public works programs including construction of what they called Long Walls which later formed the basis of the Great Wall, partly to protect from northern tribes and partly to expand their territory northward. Around 200 BCE, the second Chinese dynasty, the Han, established a trade route called the Silk Road linking China through central Asia with Europe. Artifacts from the Roman Empire have been found in China and silk (which China developed before 3000 BCE) became a luxury fabric in Greece and Rome. The next dynasty, the Sui, dug the Grand Canal to connect the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers in the sixth century CE. The canal allowed rice, wheat, and millet to be transported on a protected inland waterway instead

of being shipped on the ocean where shipments could be threatened by pirates. China also led the world in iron, copper, and porcelain production as well as in the “Four Great Inventions”: the compass, gunpowder, paper-making, and printing.

here

- Is it significant that China and India have always been centers of world population?
- Why do agricultural surpluses encourage the building of cities, kingdoms, and empires?
- Is it surprising to you that the Han and Roman Empires existed at the same time and that there was trade between Asia and Europe via the Silk Road?

## The Isolated Americas

The people living in the Americas were separated by climate change from Eurasia for nearly 12,000 years after the end of the ice age that had created Beringia between what is now Alaska and Siberia, and allowed Eurasians to cross over into the Americas. During this period, which we should remember is twice as long as recorded history, the Native Americans were not idle. When they had arrived in the Americas, they found very few large animal species available to domesticate. Like the Europeans, Asians, and Africans, Native Americans experienced their own agricultural revolution after a long period of hunting and gathering; but instead of domesticating cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs, and chickens, Americans developed certain plants, creating three of the world’s current top five staple crops.



Figure: An image depicting Teosinte, a Maize-teosinte hybrid, and Maize, developed 7,000 to 10,000 years ago in central Mexico.

Staple crops produce the foods that provide the greatest percentage of the calories people eat. It might surprise you that today only about fifteen staple crops account for 90% of the calories people eat every day. The top five are responsible for nearly three quarters, including feed for the animals whose meat we eat. They were all discovered/invented by ancient people between six and ten thousand years ago, and three of the five were invented in the Americas. The world’s five top five staples today (in order of importance) are maize (corn), rice, wheat, potatoes, and cassava. Only rice and wheat were known to Europe, Asia, and Africa before contact with the Americas. Natives of what is now Mexico developed maize from a native grass called teosinte beginning about nine thousand years ago, and its use spread to nearly every part of the Americas. Over generations, women (who were the farmers in ancient Mexico) selectively bred the grass to produce more and bigger seeds. Maize is currently the most important staple in the world for both human and animal feed, as well as in industrial uses like High Fructose Corn Syrup, plastics and fuel.

Andean natives in what is now Peru and Bolivia created many varieties of potatoes beginning 10,000 years ago. Andean women developed different varieties for different growing conditions and learned to freeze dry potatoes for long-term storage. And the people of the Amazon region not only discovered manioc trees growing in the rainforest, but developed processes to turn the trees' poisonous roots into cassava (what we know as tapioca) between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago. Raw cassava root is toxic. So in addition to domesticating the plant, Amazonian tree farmers had to develop technologies (combinations of boiling, drying, and chemical leaching) to remove the cyanide compounds and make the manioc useful. Along with rice and wheat developed in Eurasia, maize, potatoes, and manioc are the most important staple crops in the modern world, feeding billions of people. We have ancient native Americans to thank for them.



Figure: Cassava roots need to be processed to remove poisons before they can be eaten.

Of course, eating nothing but maize, potatoes, and cassava would be a very bland diet. The indigenous in central Mexico developed other plants to flavor their cuisine: the various types of hot peppers, beans, and tomatoes present in Mexican food today were enjoyed by the Olmecs, Toltecs, and Mexica hundreds of years before their encounter with Europeans in the sixteenth century. The Meso-Americans also ground cocoa beans and added hot water, peppers, and honey to make hot chocolate–even today, millions of Latin Americans begin and end their day with a cup, prepared in a traditional *olleta* with a hand-held *batidor*, using chunks of chocolate. However, such a delicious drink was originally reserved for the nobility, and cocoa beans themselves were often used as a kind of currency.

here

- Why would it matter that there were no large animal species in the Americas for natives to domesticate?
- Is it significant that the people breeding new staple crops in the Americas were mostly women?

We will look more closely in the next several chapters at the cultures of all these regions, as they entered the modern era. Although the people of each continent and region developed different traditions and customs, their agriculturally-based cultures shared a lot of similarities and their civilizations were all comparably advanced at the beginning of our survey. with that introduction, let's begin.

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# 1.2: Modern World History Begins in Asia



Figure: , discovered in 1974 by farmers in Xi'an China.

We begin our survey of modern world history in Asia. This may surprise many who grew up believing that most of the important events of modern history happened in the West. Don't worry, we'll add Europe, Africa, and the Americas to the story soon enough. But before we do that, it's important to understand that the histories of China and India are as old as western history if not older, and Asia has always been the center of world population. So, let's look at how Asia achieved that global preeminence.

As mentioned in the Introduction, civilization began in India about 4,600 years ago and China's recorded history began about 2000 BCE. Based on irrigated rice agriculture, the population of China grew to 50 to 60 million people as early as 2,000 years ago. This population was originally divided into several small kingdoms whose ruling families were connected through political marriages. Beginning in 221 BCE, the Chinese created an empire that lasted over two thousand years under a series of more than a dozen dynasties. The early imperial governments began construction of the called Long Walls, and dug the Grand Canal to connect the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers in the sixth century CE. China held a monopoly on the creation of silk, which was a closely-held state secret for millennia, and led the world in iron, copper, and porcelain production as well as a variety of technological inventions including the compass, gunpowder, paper-making, mechanical clocks, and moveable type printing.

The social stability that allowed Chinese culture to produce these innovations was based on not only the imperial form of government, but on an elaborate system of professional civil service. The early establishment of a professional administrative class of "scholar-officials" was a remarkable element of imperial Chinese rule that made it more stable, longer-lasting, and at least potentially less oppressive than empires in other parts of the world. The imperial courts sent thousands of highly-educated administrators throughout the empire and China was ruled not by hereditary nobles or even elected representatives, but by a class of men who had received rigorous training and had passed very stringent examinations to prove themselves qualified to lead.

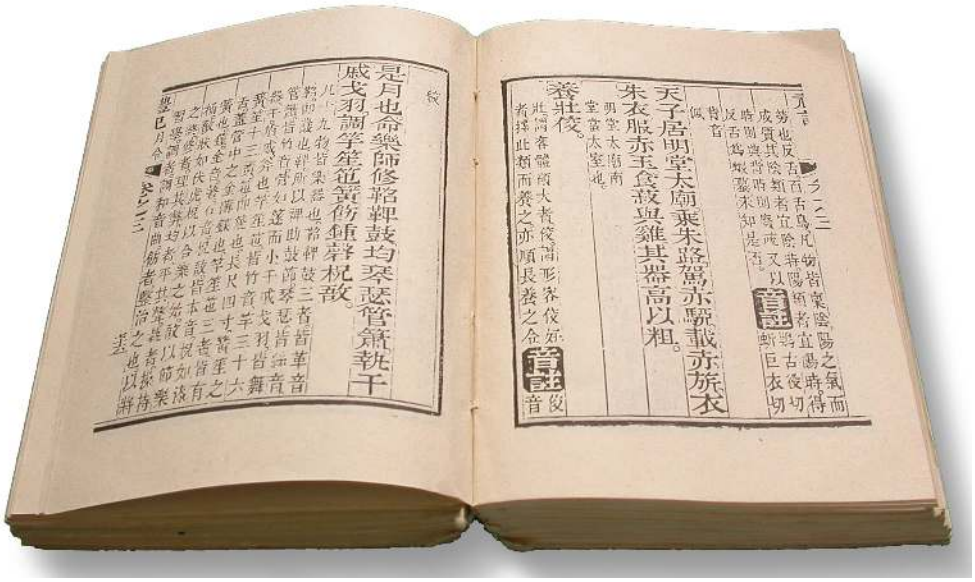


Figure: The Liji or Book of Rites was one of the five Classic Confucian texts.

Young men who wanted to become civil administrators in China entered training schools that concentrated on calligraphy and the teachings of Confucius. Calligraphy in China equaled literacy. Chinese language is based on characters rather than on an alphabet, and is said to be the world's oldest continually-used writing system. A dictionary published in 1039 CE listed 53,525 characters, and a 2004 Chinese dictionary included 106,230. Most Chinese words are made of one or more characters. For comparison, the English alphabet uses 26 letters and the average American has a practical vocabulary of about 10,000 words. While a foreigner learning Chinese today would be judged proficient on the national exam (the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi or HSK) with a vocabulary of about 9,000 words, they would need to know the 2,865 characters that made up these words in order to study at a Chinese university or work in a Chinese business.




Figure: Now about 600 years old, this portrait of Confucius was drawn nearly two thousand years after his death.

In addition to literacy, civil service training focused on the philosophy of Confucius, a Chinese philosopher who had lived from 551 to 479 BCE. Kong Fuzi (Master Kong—he is known as "Confucius" in the West) taught principles derived from what he described as old Chinese classics. Confucius claimed he was not so much creating a new philosophy as preserving and combining the best traditions of the past, which was very appropriate in a culture devoted to reverence of its ancestors. He traveled as a teacher and advisor of local rulers, and his practical philosophy spread. Confucian ideas about conduct focus on five basic virtues: seriousness, generosity, sincerity, diligence, and kindness.

When a student asked him “Is there any one word that could guide a person throughout life?” Confucius replied, “How about ‘reciprocity’! Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself.” (*Analects* XV.24) The Chinese, who valued silver higher than gold, called this the silver rule. Confucian social morality is based on this reciprocity and on empathy and understanding others rather than on divinely ordained rules. Although Confucius occasionally talked about heaven and an afterlife, his moral system was not based on the idea of supernatural rewards and punishments. Confucian morality is secular rather than religious, which left room for the Emperor to be a representative of Divinity and claim “the Mandate of Heaven” without the Chinese Empire becoming a theocracy.



Figure: Ming Dynasty painting of the highest-level Confucian examination at the imperial palace.

Centuries after his death, Confucian ideas became the basis of civil service education in imperial China. Scholars would travel to testing centers and sit for exams that often took days to complete. They brought food and a bedroll and remained in their small testing cells until they had completed the exam. There were four increasingly-difficult levels of testing: County, District, Province, and Imperial. The highest exam was administered by the emperor himself and passing it qualified a scholar for assignments in the imperial court. The exams were extremely difficult and at each level more people failed than passed. But the exams were also democratic in a way: even a scholar from a poor family could take the exam if he could educate himself; success on the top exam was a ticket to the highest levels of imperial society. Over the centuries, the scholars became an upper class in Chinese society, a gentry based on educational merit rather than merely on birth or wealth. Although there were times when the system was corrupted, for most of its history Chinese society was run by educated men rather than by nobles who had inherited their positions.



Figure: Although several earlier governments tried to eliminate footbinding, the practice persisted in China until the Communist Revolution in 1949. These girls were among the last to have their feet bound in the 1930s.

Confucianism is not a perfect philosophy, since it accepted and even reinforced certain societal injustices. Confucius incorporated traditional Chinese ancestor-worship into his system, which implied a degree of sacredness for ancestral practices. For this reason, Confucian principles perpetuated and exacerbated the oppression of women, who had no standing in the male-dominated family structure. Girls were considered an expense to their birth families, since they only became valuable when they married and bore sons for their new families. Female infanticide has been a problem throughout Chinese history, as was, until the last century, the practice of foot-binding, which rendered generations of Chinese women crippled and semi-mobile for the sake of what amounted to a fetish of Chinese fashion.

But despite its faults, Confucian civil service insured that for much of its history the Chinese empire, its various districts and regions, and even small communities were run by educated administrators and magistrates rather than by random rulers who achieved power by conquest or inheritance.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why do you think the teachings of Confucius were such a powerful influence on Chinese society?
- How was the Confucian civil service potentially more effective than rule by hereditary nobles?
- The Confucian civil service was a central feature of Chinese imperial culture for centuries. What were its advantages and disadvantages?




Figure: This time-lapse map of the Mongol Empire shows the expansion of the Khanate after Genghis Khan's 1227 death. The purple area in the east is Kublai Khan's Yuan Empire.

The Chinese Empire did face conquest several times, but Chinese culture and social organization managed to absorb its conquerors. In 1271, the Mongol leader Kublai Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, defeated the Chinese army and established the Yuan dynasty, which that lasted 98 years until 1368. Although Kublai Khan never completely conquered China despite 65 years of struggle, Yuan rule marked the first time the Chinese Empire was controlled by foreigners. The Khan distrusted Confucian officials, but he did not completely replace them as regional administrators. Still, through the Yuan dynasty, China was exposed to foreign cultures, especially Islamic cartography, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, food, and clothing, while likewise, the West encountered Chinese culture and technological advances in a serious way. The Silk Road, the ancient trade route connecting China with Europe had languished for several centuries under the Islamic Caliphate in the Middle East; it was reestablished and in 1271 the Venetian merchants Niccolo, Maffeo, and Marco Polo visited Kublai Khan at his summer palace in Shangdu (Xanadu). The Mongol rulers also patronized China's new printing industry, which helped spread the idea of moveable type printing into Europe.



Figure: An illustrated page from the 1298 Travels of Marco Polo depicts Kublai Khan battling the King of Burma with elephants.

Despite the fact that China's Mongol Yuan rulers abandoned many of their own traditions and adopted the ways of the people they had conquered, the ethnic Han Chinese majority continued to resent being ruled by foreigners. Along with exposure to foreign cultures, the Mongols' reopening of the Silk Road brought foreign diseases to China. Bubonic Plague, the "Black Death" that killed a quarter of the European population in the 14th century, actually hit China first. The plague began in central Kyrgystan and killed up to 25 million people in China in the 1330s and 1340s, about 15 years before it first arrived in Constantinople. As in Europe, famine and social chaos followed the plague when agriculture failed to produce enough to feed the survivors.

A young man named Zhu Yuanzhang, born during the plague years, watched his entire family die in famines that swept through southern China in the 1340s. After taking refuge in a Buddhist monastery, Zhu joined local rebels when the monastery was destroyed by Yuan forces trying to contain a local insurrection. Zhu joined forces with a rebel army called the Red Turbans and rose quickly through the ranks. Zhu married the daughter of the founder of the Red Turbans and inherited his leadership position after eliminating several rival generals. In 1356, the 28-year old general conquered the ancient city of Nanjing and made it his base. In 1368, Zhu led his troops north and chased the Yuans out of their capital of Dadu (now Beijing). The Mongols retreated to Mongolia and Zhu claimed the Mandate of Heaven and declared himself the first emperor of the Ming (brilliant) Dynasty.

**Question for Discussion**

What were the main positive and negative results of the Mongol conquest of China?



Figure: Zhu Yuanzhang, the Hongwu Emperor, reigned from 1368 to 1398.

Zhu Yuanzhang called himself the Hongwu Emperor (expansive and martial) and made Nanjing his capital. Imperial titles like "Hongwu" relate to the reign of each emperor, in which they declare the nature of their particular rule. These titles are not the actual name of the emperor, but this is how they are known in Chinese history.

Hongwu ruled for thirty years and tried to return the empire to its ethnic Chinese roots. Hongwu issued decrees abolishing Mongol dress and requiring people to abandon their Mongol-influenced names in favor of traditional Han Chinese names. Administration of the empire by Confucian scholars was reinstated, along with the elaborate system of civil service examinations. Remembering the suffering and famines during his youth, partly caused by the flooding of the Yangtze River, Hongwu promoted public works and infrastructure projects including new dikes and irrigation systems to serve an agricultural system dominated by paddy rice. He organized the building or repair of nearly 41,000 reservoirs and planted over a billion trees in his land reclamation program. Hongwu distributed land to peasants and forced many to move to less populated areas. During his three-decade reign, China's population recovered from plague and famine, and grew from 60 to 100 million.



Figure: Statue of Zhu Di, the Yongle Emperor, at his tomb in Beijing.

Hongwu had fought his way to prominence by eliminating his rivals and trusting only his family. But when his first son, the crown prince, died, Hongwu left his throne to the son of his favorite son, rather than picking one of his other sons.. Hongwu's grandson became emperor at 20, but his reign was a short one. His uncle Zhu Di, the emperor's younger son, had been passed over for the crown but remained prince of a northern territory around Dadu, the previous Yuan capital close to the Mongol border. In 1402 Zhu Di overthrew his nephew and declared himself the Yongle (perpetual happiness) Emperor.

Yongle tried to erase the memory of his rebellion by purging a large number of Confucian scholars in the capital of Nanjing and moving the government to his home in Dadu, which he renamed Beijing. Yongle ruled through an extensive network of court eunuchs who formed his palace guard and secret police. Yongle repaired and reopened China's Grand Canal, the 1,104-mile waterway that linked the Yellow and Yangxi Rivers and enabled the new capital to receive rice shipments from the south. Between 1406 and 1420, he also directed 100,000 artisans and 1 million laborers in building the Forbidden City in Beijing as a permanent imperial residence.

**Question for Discussion**

How did the early Ming emperors try to change the society they ruled? Would you consider most of their changes positive or negative for the Chinese people?



Figure: Statue of Admiral Zheng He located in Melaka, Malaysia.

One of Yongle's most trusted subordinates was the eunuch admiral Zheng He (1371-1433), the son of a Muslim soldier from southwestern China. At the age of ten Zheng He was captured, castrated, and sent to serve Prince Zhu Di in Dadu. Castration was a common practice throughout the ancient and early modern world, used in China to insure loyalty by eliminating conflict between family and duty. Educated in the prince's household, Zheng He became a loyal soldier and later a general. Zheng He helped Zhu Di depose his nephew and take control of the empire, and the new Yongle Emperor appointed Zheng He admiral of his fleet and sent him on seven expeditions between 1405 and 1430.



Figure: Zheng He's flagship compared to the caravel Santa Maria used by Columbus 87 years later.

Zheng He's first expedition left China in July 1405 with 62 large ships, over 200 smaller ships, and 28,000 soldiers. The largest ships were 425 feet long, over six times the length of the 65-foot caravels the Spanish and Portuguese would use on their explorations nearly a century later. China's four-decked, 1,500-ton flagships had shallow drafts to allow them to navigate in river estuaries and watertight bulkheads to protect them from sinking. Their nine masts were up to two hundred feet tall and fitted with rattan sails.

Zheng He's fleet was not interested in establishing colonies, but in exacting tribute and opening trade relationships throughout South Asia. The fleet traded for ivory, spices, ointments, exotic woods, giraffes, zebras, and ostriches; while also demanding tribute from the rulers of nations like Sumatra and Sri Lanka. Often, when local leaders seemed unwilling to submit, Zheng He seized them and brought them to Beijing where they could be convinced of the overwhelming power of the Chinese Empire. Among the places Zheng visited were Bangkok, Java, Melaka, Burma, the east and west coasts of India, Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, Jedda on the Red Sea, and Mogadishu and Mombasa on the east coast of Africa. Ninety-five delegations from Southeast Asia and other more distant nations reached the Yongle Emperor's court during his 22-year reign, and he established a College of Translators to handle all the correspondence he received from foreign contacts. Zheng He's seven expeditions extracted tribute from many neighboring kingdoms, and Yongle trusted him so completely that he sent Zheng He blank scrolls with his imperial seal on them, to use in whatever way he chose.

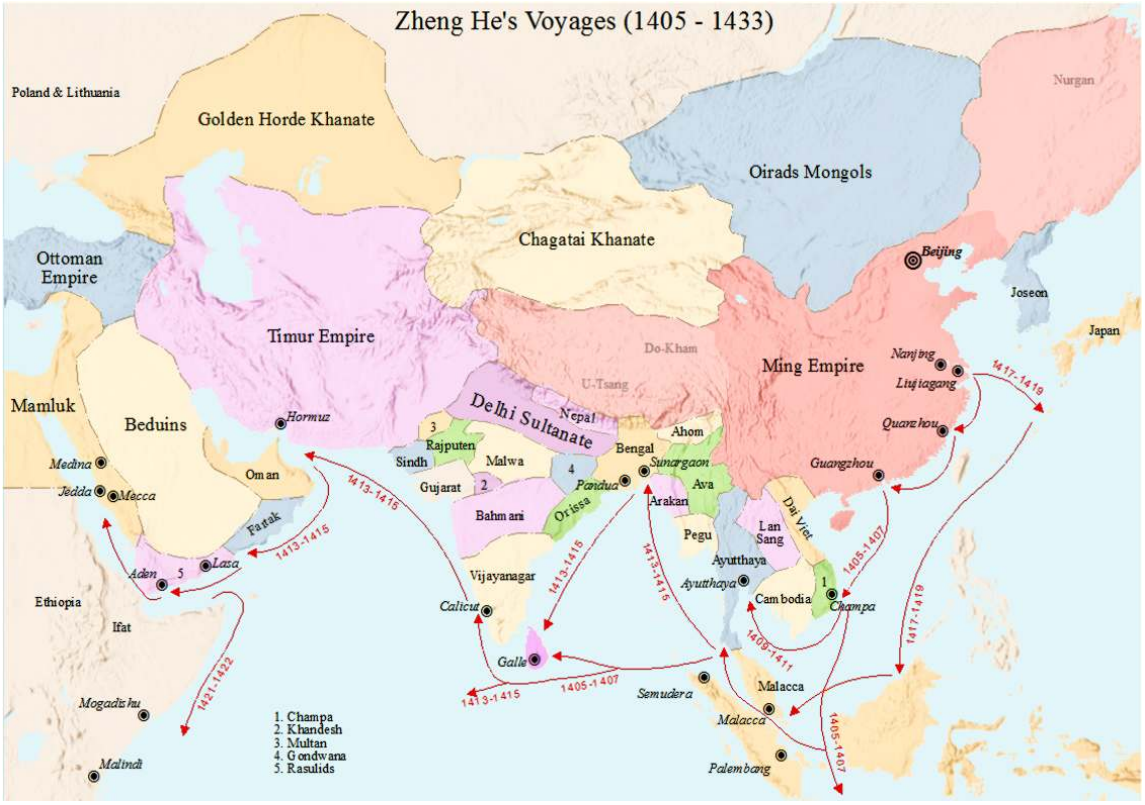



Figure: The seven voyages of Zheng He, 1405-1433.

For many centuries the voyages of Zheng He were not featured in histories of China, even in China itself. As historians have rediscovered these expeditions, the superiority of Chinese naval technology has challenged the belief that western nations were the first to establish maritime power. One of the most interesting questions about Zheng He's voyages is, "Why did they end?" China did not establish offshore colonies, perhaps partly because there was so much territory available on the empire's northern and western frontiers. China's rapidly-growing population was a ready market for most of the empire's farm products and manufactures, and the international trade that interested China already found its way to the empire without much effort on China's part. And unlike European kings, the Yongle emperor was not interested in evangelizing Confucianism or Buddhism to the rest of the world—the Spanish and Portuguese, in particular, wanted to convert the world to Catholic Christianity, which became not only a goal but a justification for conquest and colonization.

When the Yongle Emperor's son and grandson inherited the throne, Zheng He's expeditions gradually became less of a priority. After a final voyage in 1433, expeditions were halted and the fleet was retired and ultimately burned. Ending China's navy was one of the major changes made by Yongle's descendants. The burning of the Chinese fleet left a power vacuum in the South China Sea, which in the sixteenth century was filled by Japanese and Chinese coastal pirates. Finally, shortly after Yongle and Zheng He's deaths, China was challenged from the north again. Sixteen years after Zheng He's final expedition, Yongle's great grandson, the sixth Ming emperor, was captured and held hostage by Mongol raiders in 1449.

### Questions for Discussion

- What do you think was the most significant element of Zheng He's seafaring missions?
- With such a commanding technological lead, why did China turn away from the outside world and suspend exploration?
- What might the world look like now, if the Chinese Empire had continued along the lines begun by Zheng He?



Figure: The Great Wall of China at Jinshanling

The alarmed Chinese turned their attention to their border defenses and rebuilt the crumbling Long Walls into a 1,550-mile long fortification with hundreds of guard towers. The Long Walls had existed since the beginning of the Chinese Empire, but had failed to hold off Mongol invaders. Under the Mings the Great Wall was improved and extended, especially around the capital of Beijing and the agricultural heartland in the Liaodong Province north of the Korean Peninsula. These defenses enabled the Chinese population to rise from 100 million in 1500 to 160 million in 1600. However, the threat of a Manchurian land invasion from the north was taken very seriously, to the detriment of authorizing further naval expeditions. China's turning away from the ocean was a momentous decision in world history, opening the door for Southeast Asians, Muslims, and eventually Europeans to dominate the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.



Figure: The Forbidden City as depicted in 1500.

As the generations passed, Ming emperors and their courts became increasingly isolated in the Forbidden City the Yongle Emperor had built. Some were incompetent rulers, others were just uninterested in ruling. Similar to other new imperial dynasties, the Ming Dynasty began by concentrating political power in the Emperor and in the civil servants chosen through the Confucian examination process. As time passed, a ruling class grew and power shifted as the new elite protected their lands and possessions from taxation. Corrupt officials siphoned funds designated for public works into their own pockets and infrastructure such as dams and dikes crumbled. Eventually, irrigation systems failed and peasants died in widespread famines.

At the same time, Manchuria was being unified under strong military leaders who had adopted Chinese ways and who even employed Confucian administrators. In 1644, a Ming government official dealing with a local peasant insurrection that threatened Beijing asked the Manchurians for military aid. Of course, once the Manchu armies were past the Wall, there was no way to send them back. They took control of Beijing and declared the end of the Ming Empire and the beginning of a new dynasty, the Qing (pure).



Figure: Qing emperor Qianlong in ceremonial Manchurian armor, ca. 1758.

We will return later to the history of China, the Qing Dynasty, and what came after. For now, the point of beginning modern world history with China is that in terms of population and economic power, it was the center of the world in 1500 when our survey of Modern World History begins. In 1500, the Chinese population was growing rapidly, the Ming Empire had a standing army of over a million soldiers and the Chinese navy of Zheng He had recently projected the empire's power throughout Asia. The Chinese economy produced one quarter of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) in 1500, followed by India which produced nearly another quarter. In comparison, the fourteen nations of western Europe produced just about half of China's GDP or only one-eight of the global total production. The largest European economy, in Italy, produced only about one-sixth of China's output.

The Ming Empire's population in 1500 was about 125 million. The next largest empires were Southern India's Vijayanagara Empire (16 million), followed by the Inca Empire of South America (12 million), the Ottoman Empire (11 million), the Spanish Empire (about 8.5 million), and the Ashikaga Shogunate of Japan (8 million). Keep the immense mass of China and the gravity exerted by its economy in mind as we move on to discuss events like the creation of a Spanish colonial empire in the Americas—Spanish-American mines produced the silver that accidentally became the world's currency, filling not only the treasuries Europe, but also that of China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

### Questions for Discussion

- Discuss the symbolism of the Great Wall in Chinese culture.
- Does the size, complexity, and age of the Chinese Empire alter your understanding of the early modern world?

**Primary Source Supplement #1: 99 Famous Sayings attributed to Confucius:**



Figure: Painting of Confucius discovered recently in a Western Han tomb, dated approx. 202 BCE to 9 CE.

Confucius (551-479 BCE) is the most famous philosopher of China. The teachings of Kong Fuzi (Master Kong—known as "Confucius" in the West) were the basis of regulating relationships in Chinese society. For centuries, would-be civil servants needed to study Confucian precepts for the examinations used to choose imperial administrators. Much of Confucian teaching comes in the form of short aphorisms. Drawing on ancient Chinese customs of patriarchy, filial piety, and veneration of ancestors, Confucianism was extremely chauvinistic and led to centuries of oppression of women in Chinese culture–when Confucius said "man" or "he", he actually meant it. However, that doesn't mean Confucius didn't make some thought-provoking statements, if we expand them to include all people. Here are 99 aphorisms considered noteworthy by contemporary collectors of quotes :

"The man who says he can, and the man who says he cannot, are both correct."

"Your life is what your thoughts make it."

"Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance."

"The man who asks a question is a fool for a minute, the man who does not ask is a fool for life."

"The journey with a thousand miles begins with one step."

"Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

"You are what you think."

"Looking at small advantages prevents great affairs from being accomplished."

"All people are the same; only their habits differ."

"Learn avidly. Question it repeatedly. Analyze it carefully. Then put what you have learned into practice intelligently."

"We have two lives, and the second begins when we realize we only have one."

"If you are the smartest person in the room, then you are in the wrong room."

"Act with kindness but do not expect gratitude."

"Worry not that no one knows you; seek to be worth knowing."

"The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones."

"When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps."

"The essence of knowledge is, having it, to use it."

"One joy dispels a hundred cares."

"When you see a good person, think of becoming like her/him. When you see someone not so good, reflect on your own weak points."

"I slept and dreamt life is beauty, I woke and found life is duty."

"They must often change who would remain constant in happiness and wisdom."

"Don't complain about the snow on your neighbor's roof when your own doorstep is unclean."

"A lion chased me up a tree, and I greatly enjoyed the view from the top."

"Be not ashamed of mistakes and thus make them crimes."

“The superior man is modest in his speech but exceeds in his actions.”

“Be strict with yourself but least reproachful of others and complaint is kept afar.”

“Roads were made for journeys not destinations.”

“No matter how busy you may think you are you must find time for reading or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance.”

“Think of tomorrow, the past can’t be mended.”

“Respect yourself and others will respect you.”

“To be wronged is nothing, unless you continue to remember it.”

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”

“By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.”

“Learn as if you were not reaching your goal and as though you were scared of missing it.”

“Never contract friendship with a man that is not better than thyself.”

“He who knows all the answers has not been asked all the questions.”

“Those who cannot forgive others break the bridge over which they themselves must pass.”

“Those who know the truth are not equal to those who love it.”

“The superior man thinks always of virtue; the common man thinks of comfort.”

“The superior man acts before he speaks, and afterwards speaks according to his action.”

“Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure.”

“Only the wisest and stupidest of men never change.”

“Study the past if you would define the future.”

“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

“Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.”

“Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.”

“The superior man makes the difficulty to be overcome his first interest; success only comes later.”

“If you make a mistake and do not correct it, this is called a mistake.”

“Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace.”

“To see the right and not to do it is cowardice.”

“Virtuous people often revenge themselves for the constraints to which they submit by the boredom which they inspire.”

“He who acts with a constant view to his own advantage will be much murmured against.”

“The superior man is distressed by the limitations of his ability; he is not distressed by the fact that men do not recognize the ability that he has.”

“To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage, or of principle.”

“When anger rises, think of the consequences.”

“To know what you know and what you do not know, that is true knowledge.”

“I want you to be everything that’s you, deep at the center of your being.”

“The object of the superior man is truth.”

“When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them.”

“To go beyond is as wrong as to fall short.”

“If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people.”

“If you look into your own heart, and you find nothing wrong there, what is there to worry about? What is there to fear?”

“It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.”

“Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors.”

“Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without.”

“The superior man does not, even for the space of a single meal, act contrary to virtue. In moments of haste, he cleaves to it. In seasons of danger, he cleaves to it.”

“The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential: these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.”

“Go before the people with your example and be laborious in their affairs.”

“When we see persons of worth, we should think of equaling them; when we see persons of a contrary character, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves.”

“If we don’t know life, how can we know death?”

“The expectations of life depend upon diligence; the mechanic that would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools.”

“He who speaks without modesty will find it difficult to make his words good.”

“What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.”

“Without feelings of respect, what is there to distinguish men from beasts?”

“You cannot open a book without learning something.”

“A gentleman would be ashamed should his deeds not match his words.”

“When a person should be spoken with, and you don’t speak with them, you lose them. When a person shouldn’t be spoken with and you speak to them, you waste your breath. The wise do not lose people, nor do they waste their breath.”

“To see and listen to the wicked is already the beginning of wickedness.”

“Wherever you go, go with all your heart.”

“Give a bowl of rice to a man and you will feed him for a day. Teach him how to grow his own rice and you will save his life.”

“Study the past, if you would divine the future.”

“It is more shameful to distrust our friends than to be deceived by them.”

“Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated.”

“Silence is a true friend who never betrays.”

“By three methods we may learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.”

“Wisdom, compassion, and courage are the three universally recognized moral qualities of men.”

“Death and life have their determined appointments; riches and honors depend upon heaven.”

“Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it.”

“The more man meditates upon good thoughts, the better will be his world and the world at large.”

“He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.”

“If you don’t want to do something, don’t impose on others.”

“It is easy to hate and it is difficult to love. This is how the whole scheme of things works. All good things are difficult to achieve and bad things are very easy to get.”

"The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home."

"The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell."

"Never give a sword to a man who can't dance."

"We should feel sorrow, but not sink under its oppression."

"Imagination is more important than knowledge."

"When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it – this is knowledge."

Source: http://www.quoteambition.com/famous-confucius-quotes/

**Primary Source Supplement #2: Zheng He's Voyages**

*The Ming Shi-lu* (*The Veritable Records of the Ming*) are the imperial annals of the Ming Dynasty emperors (1368-1644). The National University of Singapore has published an online archive of over 2,800 pages of Geoff Wade's translations of the annals . They contain a wealth of information about Ming China, including twenty-two references to Chinese Admiral Zheng He and his diplomatic voyages, dated from July 1405 to March 1431. Here are some entries, describing Zheng He's missions and incidents related to them. In several, Zheng is described as being sent as an emissary to *fan* countries. The Mandarin word *fan* translates roughly as ordinary or mortal, suggesting the attitude of the Chinese emperors toward foreign nations and their rulers. The English word "enfeoff" is also not well known. It means to grant something to a lesser lord or noble, like a fiefdom. Entries are dated by imperial era dates, with western calendar dates in parentheses:

"The eunuch Zheng He and others were sent to take Imperial orders of instruction to the various countries in the Western Ocean, and to confer upon the kings of those countries patterned fine silks and variegated thin silks interwoven with gold thread, as appropriate."

Yongle: Year 3, Month 6, Day 15 (11 Jul 1405)

"The Eunuch Director Zheng He who had been sent to the various countries of the Western Ocean, returned, bringing the pirate Chen Zuyi and others in fetters. Previously, when he had arrived at Old Port, he came across Zuyi and so on and sent people to bring them to negotiated pacification. Zuyi and the others feigned surrender but secretly plotted to attack the Imperial army. He and the others found out about this and, marshalling the troops, prepared defenses. When the forces led by Zuyi attacked, He sent his troops out to do battle. Zuyi suffered a great defeat. Over 5,000 of the bandit gang were killed, while ten of the bandit ships were burnt and seven captured. Further, two false bronze seals were seized and three prisoners, including Zuyi, were taken alive. When they arrived at the capital, it was ordered that all the prisoners be beheaded."

Yongle: Year 5, Month 9, Day 2 (2 Oct 1407)

"The eunuch Zheng He and others, who had been sent as envoys to the various countries in the Western Ocean, returned and presented Yalie Kunaier, the captured king of the country of Sri Lanka, and his family members. Previously, He and the others had been sent as envoys to the various *fan* countries. However, when they reached Sri Lanka, Yalie Kunaier was insulting and disrespectful. He wished to harm He, but He came to know of this and left. Yalie Kunaier also acted in an unfriendly way to neighboring countries and repeatedly intercepted and robbed their envoys. All the *fan* countries suffered from his actions. When He returned, he again passed Sri Lanka and the king enticed him to the country. The king then had his son Nayan demand gold, silver and precious objects, but He would not give these to him. The king then secretly dispatched over 50,000 *fan* troops to rob He's ships. They also felled trees to create obstructions and impede He's route of return, so that he could not render assistance. He and the others found out about this and they gathered their force and set off back to their ships. However, the route had already been blocked. He thus spoke to his subordinates, saying: 'The majority of the troops have already been dispatched. The middle of the country will be empty.' He also said: 'Our merchants and troops are isolated and nervous and will be unable to act. If they are attacked by surprise, the attackers will achieve their purpose.' Thus, he secretly ordered persons to go to the ships by another route with orders that the government troops were to fight to the death in opposing the attackers. He then personally led 2,000 of his troops through a by-path and attacked the royal city by surprise. They took the city and captured alive Yalie Kunaier, his family members and chieftains. The *fan* army returned and surrounded the city and several battles were fought, but He greatly defeated them. He and the others subsequently returned to the Court. The assembled ministers requested that the king be executed. The

Emperor pitied the king for his stupidity and ignorance and leniently ordered that he and the others be released and given food and clothing. The Ministry of Rites was ordered to deliberate on and select a worthy member of the family to be established as the country's king in order to handle the country's sacrifices."

Yongle: Year 9, Month 6, Day 16 (6 Jul 1411)

"As the envoys from the various countries of Calicut, Java, Melaka, Champa, Sri Lanka, Mogadishu, Liushan, Nanboli, Bulawa, Aden, Samudera, Malin, Lasa, Hormuz, Cochin, Nanwuli, Shaliwanni and Pahang, as well as from the Old Port Pacification Superintendency, were departing to return home, suits of clothing made from patterned fine silks were conferred upon all of them. The eunuch Zheng He and others were sent with Imperial orders as well as embroidered fine silks, silk gauzes, variegated thin silks and other goods to confer upon the kings of these countries, to confer a seal upon Keyili, the king of the country of Cochin, and to enfeoff a mountain in his country as the 'Mountain Which Protects the Country'.

The Emperor personally composed and conferred an inscription for the tablet, as follows:

'The civilizing influences and Heaven and Earth intermingle. Everything which is covered and contained has been placed in the charge of the Moulder, who manifests the benevolence of the Creator. The world does not have two ultimate principles and people do not have two hearts. They are sorrowful or happy in the same way and have the same feelings and desires. How can they be divided into the near and the distant!

One who is outstanding in ruling the people should do his best to treat the people as his children. The Book of Odes says: `The Imperial domain stretches for thousands of li, and there the people have settled, while the borders reach to the four seas.' The Book of Documents says: 'To the East, extending to the sea, to the West reaching to the shifting sands and stretching to the limits of North and South, culture and civilizing influences reach to the four seas.' I rule all under Heaven and soothe and govern the Chinese and the *yi*. I look on all equally and do not differentiate between one and the other. I promote the ways of the ancient Sagely Emperors and Perspicacious Kings, so as to accord with the will of Heaven and Earth. I wish all of the distant lands and foreign regions to have their proper places.

Those who respond to the influences and move towards culture are not singular. The country of Cochin is far away in the South-west, on the shore of the vast ocean, further distant than the other *fan* countries. It has long inclined towards Chinese culture and been accepting of civilizing influences. When the Imperial orders arrived, the people there went down on their hands and knees and were greatly excited. They loyally came to allegiance and then, looking to Heaven, they bowed and all said: `How fortunate we are that the civilizing influences of the Chinese sages should reach us. For the last several years, the country has had fertile soil, and the people have had houses in which to live, enough fish and turtles to eat, and enough cloth and silk to make clothes. Parents have looked after their children and the young have respected their elders. Everything has been prosperous and pleasing. There has been no oppression or contention. In the mountains no savage beasts have appeared and in the streams no noxious fishes have been seen. The sea has brought forth treasures and the forests have produced excellent woods. Everything has been in bountiful supply, several times more bountiful than in ordinary times. There have been no destructive winds, and damaging rains have not occurred. Confusion has been eliminated and there is no evil to be found. This is all indeed the result of the civilizing influences of the Sage.' I possess but slight virtuous power. How could I have been capable of this! Is it not the elders and people who brought this about? I am now enfeoffing Keyili as king of the country and conferring upon him a seal so that he can govern the people. I am also enfeoffing the mountain in the country as 'Mountain Which Protects the Country'. An engraved tablet is to be erected on this mountain to record these facts forever. It will also be engraved as follows: The high peak which rules the land, guards this ocean state, It spits fire and fumes, bringing great prosperity to the country below, It brings rain and sunshine in a timely way, and soothes away troubles, It brings fertile soil and drives off evil vapors, It shelters the people, and eliminates calamities and disharmony, Families are joyful together, and people have plenty throughout the year, The mountain's height is as the ocean's depths! This poem is inscribed to record all for prosperity."

Yongle: Year 14, Month 12, Day 10 (28 Dec 1416)

"The envoys from the 16 countries of Hormuz and so on departed on their return to their countries. Paper money and *biao-li* of silks were conferred upon them. In addition, the Eunuch Director Zheng He and others were sent with Imperial orders, together with brocades, fine silks, silk gauzes, damasks and thin silks to confer upon the kings of these countries. They departed together with the envoys."

Yongle: Year 19, Month 1, Day 30 (3 Mar 1421)

“The Eunuch Director Zheng He and others were sent with an Imperial proclamation to go and instruct the various *fan* countries. The proclamation read: ‘I have respectfully taken on the mandate of Heaven and reverently inherited the Great Rule from the Taizu Gao Emperor, the Taizong Wen Emperor and the Renzong Zhao Emperor. I rule over the ten thousand states, manifest the supreme benevolence of my ancestors and spread peace to all things. I have already issued a general amnesty to all under Heaven and declared the commencement of the Xuande reign. All has begun anew. You, the various *fan* countries far across the ocean, will not yet have heard. Now I am especially sending the Eunuch Directors Zheng He and Wang Jinghong carrying this proclamation with which to instruct you. You must all respect and accord with the Way of Heaven, care for your people and keep them in peace. Thus will you all enjoy the prosperity of Great Peace.’ Variegated silks, as appropriate, were to be conferred upon the rulers or chiefs of all 20 countries through which the eunuchs were to pass, including Hormuz, Sri Lanka, Calicut, Melaka, Cochin, Bulawa, Mogadishu, Nanboli, Samudera, Lasa, Liushan, Aru, Ganbali, Aden, Zuofaer, Zhubu, Jiayile and so on, as well as the Old Port Pacification Superintendency.

Xuande: Year 5, Month 6, Day 9 (29 Jun 1430)

“The chieftain Wubaochina and others from the country of Melaka, arrived at the Court. They advised that the king of their country wanted to personally come to Court and offer tribute, but that he had been obstructed by the king of the country of Siam. They also said that Siam had long wanted to invade their country and that their country wanted to memorialize but had had no one who could write the memorial. At this time, the king had ordered that these three ministers secretly attach themselves to a Samuderan tribute ship and come to Court. They requested that the Court send people to instruct the king of Siam to no longer oppress or mistreat their country and that thereby they would be unendingly grateful for the Court’s grace. The Emperor ordered the Auxiliary Ministry of Rites to confer rewards upon Wubaochina and the others and to send them back to their country with the ships of the eunuch director Zheng He. Zheng He was ordered to take Imperial orders of instruction for the king of the country of Siam as follows:

‘I rule all under Heaven and look on all equally. You have been able to respect the Court and have repeatedly sent envoys to come to Court and offer tribute. I am pleased with your service. However, recently, it has been heard that the king of the country of Melaka wanted to personally come to Court, but was obstructed by you. In my opinion, this certainly cannot have been your will, king. Rather, it must have been some of your attendants, who are unable to think deeply about things, who have obstructed avenues and started strife with neighboring states. How can such actions be a way to long maintain prosperity? You, king should respect my orders, develop good relations with your neighbors, examine and instruct your subordinates and not act recklessly or aggressively. Then it will be seen that you are able to respect Heaven and serve the superior, protect the country and the people’s peace and maintain good relations with neighboring states. This will accord with my will of looking on all equally.’

The Ministry of Rites said:

‘There are precedents for conferring rewards on tribute envoys from the various *fan*. However, Wubaochina did not bring any tribute and there is no precedent on which to base rewards.’

The Emperor said:

‘This distant person has come tens of thousands of *li* from abroad to complain of injustice. How can we not reward him!’

Accordingly, ramie-silk clothing, *biao-li* of variegated silks, silks and cotton cloth were conferred upon him in the same quantities as those conferred upon tribute envoys from other countries.

Xuande: Year 6, Month 2, Day 7 (20 Mar 1431)

Source: Geoff Wade, translator, *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu: An Open Access Resource*, Singapore: Asia Research Institute and the Singapore E-Press, National University of Singapore, http://epress.nus.edu.sg/msl/person/zheng-he, accessed July 02, 2018

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# 1.3: Europe and Africa

This chapter of our story is bracketed by two population disasters. It begins in the 14th century with the Black Death and ends with the American depopulation of the Columbian Exchange, which we'll talk about next time.

## Nations and Empires

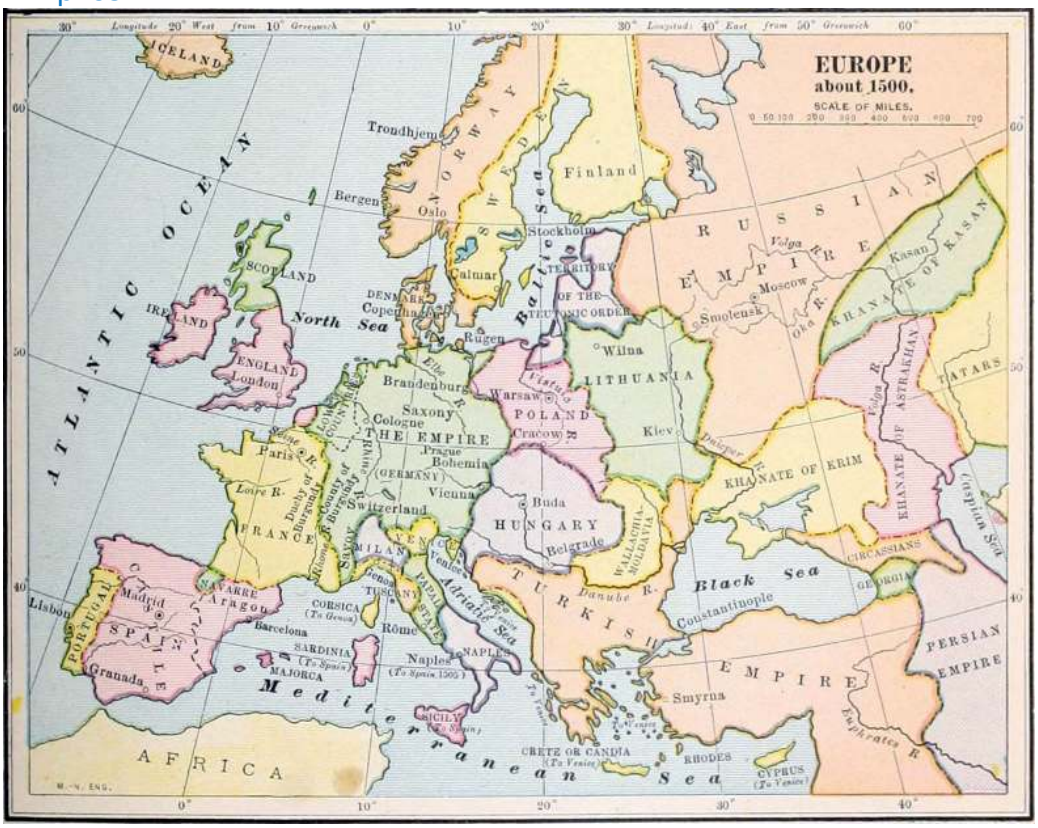
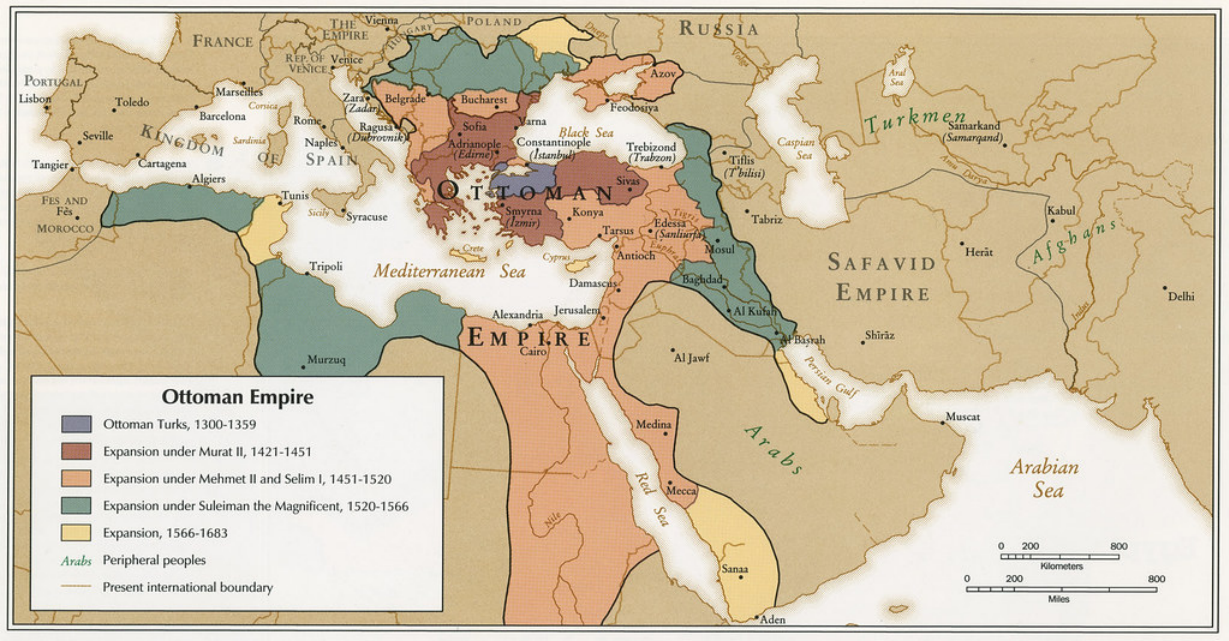



Figure: Map of Europe in 1500, showing the major national boundaries.

One of the major changes in Europe in the early modern period, which we take for granted today, is the beginning of a tendency toward nations rather than empires. Although some European rulers like Napoleon, Queen Victoria, and later Hitler tried to expand the scale of their realms into empires, these were exceptions that proved the rule (and Victoria's British Empire was outside Europe). Europe's nations were identified by factors like ethnicity, language, customs, and religion. Often these nations fought neighbors that were defined by different identities. This made European nations unlike the empires of Asia and the near east that typically included wide varieties of cultures and ethnicities within their borders.

The first, oldest, and largest Asian empire was China, as we've already discussed. But there were four additional empires that set the scene for the early modern period, and whose histories helped shape the world today. These were the Mughal Empire in India, the Safavid Empire in Persia (Iran), the Russian Empire on Europe's eastern border, and the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. The Ottomans were a Muslim dynasty that rose on the borders of the Byzantine Empire in the 1300s and became a world power when Sultan Mehmed II (called Mehmed the Conqueror ) overwhelmed the defenders of Constantinople in 1453.

Constantinople had been the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire (also called the Byzantine Empire) since the Emperor Constantine had moved his government there in 330 CE. The city was strategically important because it controlled the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits that connected the Mediterranean Sea with the Black Sea. This made it the gateway between Europe and Asia. Mehmed took the city as his new capital and renamed it Istanbul. The Sultan allowed Christians and Jews to continue living in Istanbul and granted the Eastern Orthodox Church autonomy as long as they accepted Ottoman authority. But many Christian refugees fled the city and found their ways to cities like Venice and Florence, where they helped ignite the period known as the Renaissance.




Istanbul quickly became the largest Eurasian city outside China. Under Sultans like Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566), the Ottomans expanded into Europe and nearly captured Vienna in 1529 and again in 1683. They controlled shipping in the western Mediterranean and the trade routes and major markets connecting to the Silk Road such as Cairo and Baghdad. The high cost of doing business in the Ottoman-controlled Middle East created an incentive for European merchants to seek other ways of reaching Asia. The Ottomans were actually quite tolerant of ethnic, language, and religious diversity, and their empire was multi-ethnic and multicultural. Local languages, religions, and even self-government were allowed as long as people remained loyal to the empire and paid their taxes.



Figure: Janissaries in the Battle of Vienna, 1683

In regions that were too poor to pay in money or produce, the Ottomans often took a tax in the form of people. For example, young boys were taken as tribute captives from villages in the Balkans. They were converted to Islam, educated, and trained into an elite fighting force called the Janissaries who reported directly to the Emperor. Because they were personally loyal to one man, the Janissaries became politically powerful. Fear that the private army would betray him and name another heir Sultan caused new rulers to assassinate all their brothers as soon as they took the throne. The Janissaries were the Ottomans' most effective weapon from 1363 to 1826, when the sultan decided to disband them in favor of a modern military. The Janissaries mutinied and marched on the Sultan's palace, but several thousand were wiped out by modern artillery and the survivors executed.

The Ottoman Empire tried to modernize in other ways as well, but fell behind its European neighbors in the nineteenth century and finally met its end during the First World War. We'll return to that story in a few chapters.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why did Istanbul rapidly become the largest city outside China?
- Why was it dangerous that the Janissaries reported personally to the Sultan?

The Safavid Empire of Persia (1501-1736) was a Shiite Muslim dynasty that controlled the region from the eastern border of the Ottoman Empire, through Iran, and into what is now Afghanistan, Georgia, Armenia, and Pakistan. The Safavid's greatest ruler, Shah Abbas the Great, moved his capital to Isfahan in central Iran. The ancient Persian city had once been a home for Israelite refugees freed from the Babylonian Captivity by Cyrus the Great in the 6 th century BCE. Shah Abbas continued the tradition of settling refugees in Isfahan, welcoming hundreds of thousands of Armenians in the early 1600s from the disputed border region separating the Shiite Safavid Empire from the Sunni Ottoman Empire. After the Armenian genocide in 1915, during World War One, the Armenian quarter of Isfahan became one of the oldest and largest Armenian centers in the world.

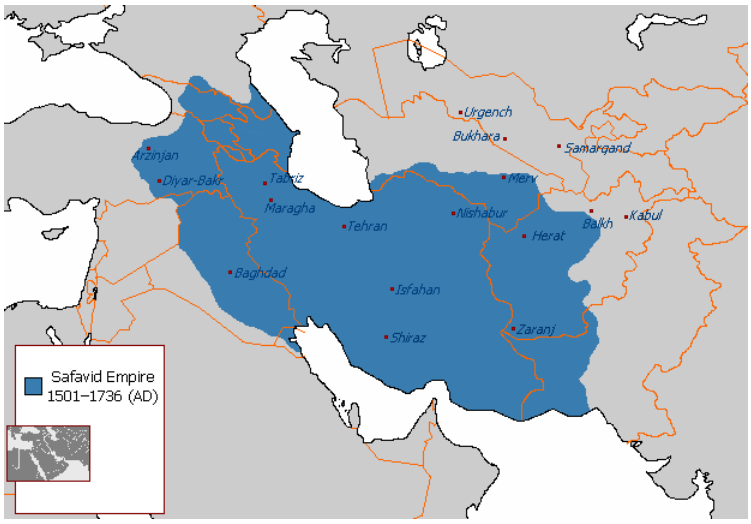



Figure: The maximum extent of the Safavid Empire under Shah Abbas

The Mughal Empire of India was established in 1526 by a Persian-speaking dynasty that traced its authority back to Genghis Khan's second son, Chagatai. The empire formed in a region that had been conquered by Tamerlane, a Mongol leader who consolidated the remains of several khanates. Tamerlane wanted to reassemble Genghis's Mongol Empire, and he also considered himself "the Sword of Islam." He died in 1405 on his way to a planned invasion of Ming China which his successor immediately called off.

Inspired by Tamerlane's fusion of cultures and religious movements, a new religion called Sikhism developed in the Punjab in the 15th century by combining elements of the traditional Hinduism of the region with Islam. Sikhs opposed India's caste system, while becoming legendary warriors on the sub-continent.

The Mughals (from whom we get the term mogul) ruled a wealthy empire that included most of the Indian subcontinent and large parts of Afghanistan. It lasted until 1857 and at its peak ruled a population of over 150 million people.



Figure: The Taj Mahal

The Mughal golden age began in 1556 with the reign of Akbar the Great, who expanded the empire's territory but allowed his Indian subjects to keep their languages and religions. Hinduism, which is still the dominant religion of India, is based on ancient traditions and practices originating centuries before the development of Judaism and other religions in the Middle East. It is a polytheistic religion in which the stories of the relations among the gods and goddesses help explain the human condition. Unlike Muslims and Christians, differences related to religious practice have rarely divided Hindus.

Akbar's grandson Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658) was also an accomplished military leader, but his reign is remembered for its architectural achievements. Among them is the Taj Mahal, built as a tomb for Jahan's favorite wife Mumtaz Mahal.

The Russian Empire grew out of resistance to Mongol rule and the fall of Constantinople. A ruler of the Grand Duchy of Moscow named Ivan III (later called Ivan the Great) refused to pay tribute to the Golden Horde and after the death of the last Greek Orthodox Christian emperor, Ivan decided his kingdom would become the new Rome. Ivan (r. 1462-1505) tripled the size of his state and rebuilt the Kremlin in Moscow. His grandson, Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible, r. 1547-1584) was the first to declare himself Tsar of all the Russias—a title which is Russian for "Caesar." He annexed the khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberia and recruited Cossacks from southern Russia and Ukraine to colonize Siberia.

Russia became the largest kingdom in the world, stretching from the Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean, but much of it was unoccupied and primitive. Peter I (Peter the Great, r. 1672-1725) visited Europe in disguise for 18 months to study shipbuilding and new administrative techniques that he used to modernize his realm and establish the Russian Empire. We'll return to Russia later, but let's explore some of the things that attracted Peter to Europe in the late 1600s.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why were the Ottomans and the Safavids always at war?
- What was the advantage for empires like the Mughal of letting subject peoples retain their languages, religions, and customs?
- What attracted Peter the Great to study Europe?

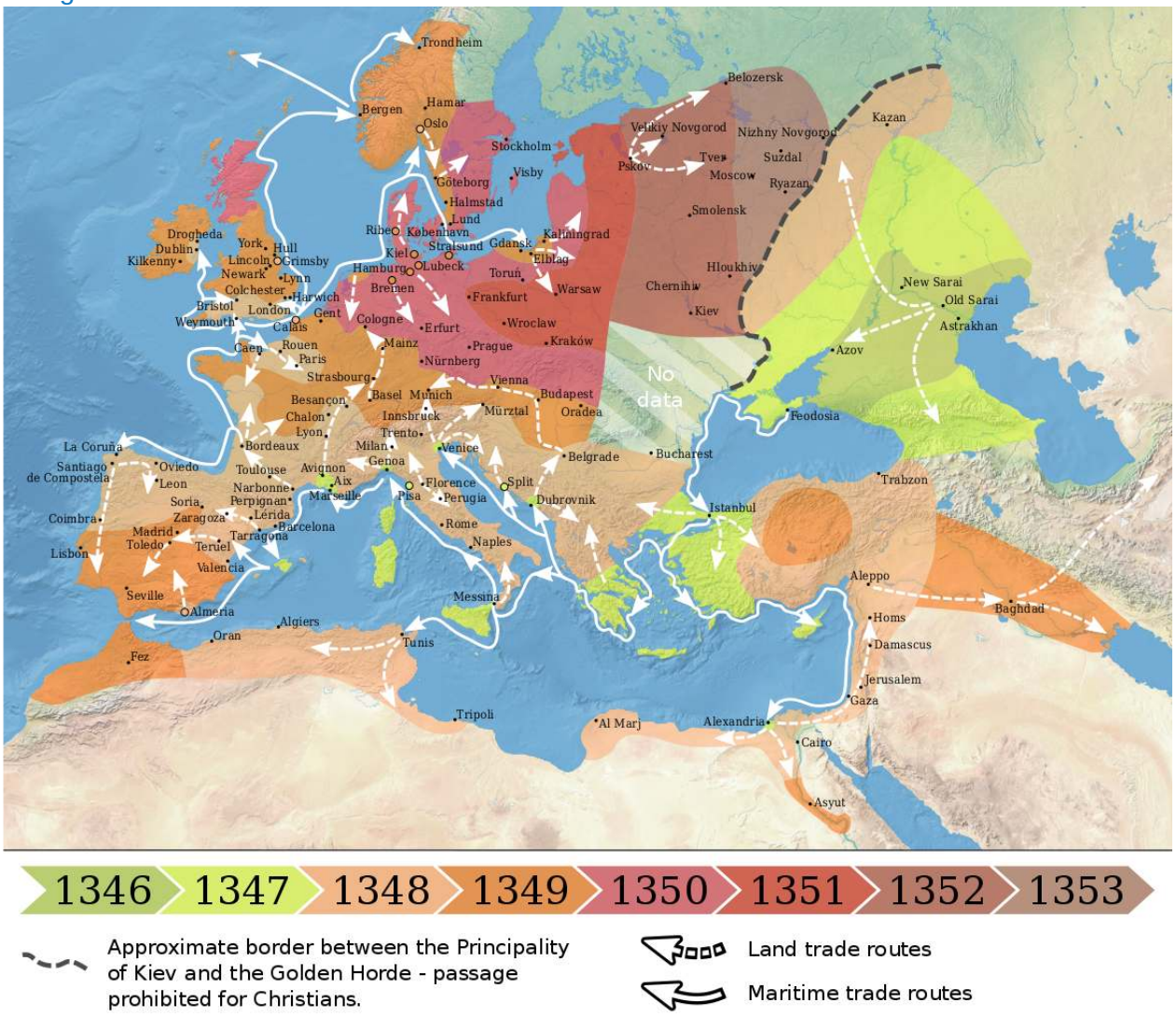



Figure: Map of the spread of bubonic plague in Europe

Europe's Dark Ages ended in the 15 th century, after the disaster of the Black Death. Even before the bubonic plague arrived, harsh winters and rainy summers beginning around 1310 had caused widespread famine. Feudal lords squeezed their peasants for crops and labor, and states raised taxes. Several million died during the famine, and then two thirds of Europe's population disappeared between the plague's arrival in 1347 and 1353. This depopulation threatened the power of the Church and the nobility, as surviving peasants became less patient with the taxes and labor demands of their bishops and lords. Peasant revolts in France and England in the second half of the 14 th century showed the feudal system of the Middle Ages was coming to an end.

Unlike the new eastern Muslim empires and the continuing Chinese Empire, Europe was unable to reunify under a single leader and create its own empire—although Austria's Hapsburg dynasty did its best to lead an alliance optimistically named the Holy Roman Empire for centuries. Too many languages and local centers of power competed for dominance, and the Catholic Church (Europe's largest landowner) was unable to exercise secular as well as spiritual power. Instead the church found itself pulled into regional contests for power, and in 1309 a French-born Pope moved his residence to Avignon. Seven popes resided in France under the control of the French king until 1378, when another French-born Pope decided to move back to Rome. But the French rulers and a growing class of aristocratic French cardinals were unwilling to give up the power that came with having their own Pope. For another sixty years there were two competing Papal Courts, one in Rome and a rival in Avignon. Although the Avignon Popes have been called Anti-Popes, it's important to understand that the conflict was primarily about political power rather than about theology or religious doctrine. But theological conflicts were right around the corner.



Figure: Papal Palace in Avignon, France



Figure: Gutenberg's first complete book was probably this Bible. He printed about 180 copies of it in 1455.

The arrival of the printing press in Europe in the middle of the fifteenth century allowed critics of the church like the friar Martin Luther to publish books and pamphlets calling for reform. Printing was a Chinese invention that was improved by Johannes Gutenberg, a German goldsmith who understood that moveable type was much more useful for an alphabet-based language than for a character-based system like Chinese. Printing spread classical Greek and Roman texts that had been carried to Europe by refugees from Constantinople, helping ignite the Renaissance (literally "rebirth") of Europe. A new philosophy called Humanism focused scholars on learning that was not contained in Scripture or in church-approved sources, and on skepticism toward the decrees of religious authorities. Some Renaissance geniuses like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo did not directly challenge the claims of political and religious authorities. Others like Machiavelli and Galileo did. The encounter with the Americas (the topic of the next chapter) also upset a traditional understanding of the world's origin and history that did not account for the existence of these continents. And religious reformers like Martin Luther used the ability to print books to radically change the way Europeans thought about their Christianity and the Catholic Church.

### Questions for Discussion

- Do you think the existence of the Church in Europe was a significant factor in preventing an empire from forming?
- How did the spread of new knowledge encourage humanism and skepticism?



Figure: A portrait of Martin Luther as an Augistinian monk, before his break from the Catholic Church

Martin Luther (1483-1546) was an Augustinian monk who began the Protestant Reformation as a reaction against what he perceived as a betrayal of Christian ideals by the wealthy and self-indulgent Catholic Church. The Church had long gone through cycles of corruption and reform, which was usually led by new religious orders of monks (such as the Franciscans and Dominicans in the early 13th century). Among Among Luther's radical ideas was that the Catholic Church and the Papacy were so corrupt and far away from the teachings of Jesus that Christianity needed to be reestablished, rather than reformed.

Luther received a Doctorate in Theology in 1512 and joined the faculty of the University of Wittenberg in Germany. In 1516 the Catholic Church began selling indulgences to raise money for the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Indulgences were basically tickets for "time off" in purgatory (the place souls went to purify before entering heaven), and Luther objected on theological grounds; he also criticized the wealthy Pope for taxing the poor to build an unnecessary Vatican monument he could easily afford himself. Luther did not intend to split from the Catholic Church, but after his 95 Theses were translated from Latin to German, his criticism of the church and his new approach to theology caught on.

Luther was tried for heresy (no laughing matter: Czech religious reformer Jan Hus had been burned at the stake in 1415) and was excommunicated in 1521. The church banned Luther's books, but Luther was a prolific writer who went on to publish scores of works using the new printing press condemning the Roman church. Luther translated the Bible into German and wrote a hymnal, so Germans could worship in their own language and understand what they were saying at church—Latin was still the official language of the Catholic Church (and would remain so until 1965).

Printing presses and expanding European literacy helped accelerate the Reformation.



Figure: Galileo's middle finger, preserved in the science museum of Florence, Italy

Many members of the nobility, particularly in northern Germany and Scandinavia, embraced Luther's ideas not only for theological reasons but also for political reasons: they would no longer need to pay tribute and pledge to submit their authority to the Pope in Rome. The Reformation was not the only challenge that alarmed religious authorities into reacting with persecution. When Galileo used a telescope to prove Copernicus's new theories that extended understanding of planetary motion beyond the second-century theories of Ptolemy, it was not the ancient Greeks who put him under house arrest for the rest of his life and nearly burned him as a heretic, but the Catholic Church—Copernicus and Galileo were rejecting a human-centered world founded by God Himself. Galileo's challenge to the Church's outdated description of the natural world was the first of many disputes that science has had (and continues to have) with religious authority.

To be fair, though, the idea that new data should challenge centuries of intellectual and theological tradition was as radical as the idea that the Earth orbits around the Sun and not vice versa. The Church, and European society in general, sought to have eternal and unchanging answers for social and personal conditions. Although today we are accustomed to the idea that new information that can reorganize the ways we understand the world is always becoming available, this was not part of the early modern worldview—which makes Galileo and Luther such radical figures in European and Western history.

As challenges became more frequent, some people tried to resist them by force. The Inquisition and persecution of witches flourished because authorities felt threatened. And the doctrine of papal infallibility did not even exist until the First Vatican Council in 1868 when science had gained a pretty substantial lead over faith…something to think about, since it implies that the Catholic Church never seemed to need to declare infallibility until it was challenged (curiously, the Papacy has only used that authority once, in 1950 in relation to doctrines concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus).

### Questions for Discussion

- Was Luther justified in criticizing Church leaders in the Vatican?
- What other motivations did people have for rejecting Roman authority, beyond theological differences?
- Was the Church's reaction to the challenges of new doctrines and new information about he world appropriate?



Figure: 13th century illustration depicting scholars in a public library in Baghdad

The development of science in Europe during the Renaissance would not have been possible without the contributions made by Muslim scholars. During the period when Europe was suffering an intellectual “Dark Age” in the centuries following the fall of Rome, the embrace of Islam in North Africa, the Middle East, and beyond created stability that encouraged the establishment of trade routes to China, which was accompanied by an exchange of ideas and technology. While medieval monks in Europe were busy copying illuminated Latin Bibles and hymnals, scholars like Al-Khwarizmi (780-850) the inventor of algebra, Al-Kindi (801-873) philosopher and musician Al-Zahrawi (936-1013) the father of surgery, Ibn Al-Haytham (965-1040) physicist and father of optics), Al-Biruni (973-1050), historian and scientist, Ibn Sina (980-1037) astronomer and physician, and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) philosopher and scientist, not only preserved classical Greek philosophy and science that was lost in Europe but made important original contributions to knowledge and culture. Arab mathematicians were also impressed with the Indian number system, which included the concept of zero—in the 1200s, western Europeans began to change from Roman numerals (which did not have a zero) to Arabic numerals. There would be no computers without this revolutionary change in mathematics…try dividing using Roman numerals. Arab scholars helped trigger the Renaissance which led to both the European Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution that produced the modern world we live in today.

In most of their kingdoms and caliphates, Muslim sovereigns respected Jews and Christians as “people of the book.” This was especially important in the Iberian Peninsula—present-day Portugal and Spain—parts of which were dominated by Muslim rulers from 711 to 1492. The introduction of ideas in astronomy, navigation, and mathematics in Iberia soon spread to other parts of Europe. In 1492, Christopher Columbus was able to sail to the New World partly because of Arab naval and navigation technology.

The European philosophers and scientists who led the Enlightenment were dominated by Isaac Newton (1643-1727), who co-invented calculus and produced the first unified theory of nature. Newton’s *Principia Mathematica* (first published in 1687) created a foundation for all the physics and engineering that followed it, and his theories were basically undisputed until Einstein and quantum physics took up the challenge of describing the universe at the macroscopic and microscopic levels in the early 20 th century. Other important Enlightenment thinkers included Émilie du Châtelet , a French aristocrat who studied and translated both Newton and his chief rival, German mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Leibniz was the other inventor of Calculus, and the version we now use is actually based a little bit more on his notation system than on Newton’s. These scholars and their colleagues described their field as “natural science” and they tried to find natural laws for society, politics, and the economy to parallel Newton’s discoveries of gravity and optics. John Locke, Adam Smith, and Voltaire formulated ideas about natural rights and society that epitomized what English speakers called Enlightenment and what Germans like philosopher Immanuel Kant called *aufklärung* (literally, a “clearing up”) . Kant famously explained that his aufklärung was humanity’s emergence from its self-imposed adolescence.



Figure: The Prague Orloj, or Astronomical Clock, dates back to 1410.

One of the consequences of Newton's physics and other Enlightenment ideas was a crisis in religion. Although Newton himself seems to have believed in a God of some type, the universe he described in his theories did not require a personal deity to be actively engaged in making things happen. Newton's universe seemed more like one of the new mechanical clocks that were just becoming popular. These complex machines might require a mechanical engineer or a watchmaker to design and build them, but once made and wound they could be left to themselves. Absorbing this watchmaker metaphor, many Enlightenment thinkers rejected the popular religious vision of an activist God who was involved in the day-to-day operation of the world, who rewarded the righteous and punished sinners, or who chose sides in history. The Protestant idea of predestination suggested that there was no free will, and that from God's perspective time and chance did not really exist—Newton and other European scientists challenged that notion. Many also began to doubt traditional stories of the deity's interference in history, including the Christian story of Jesus.

For example, Scottish philosopher David Hume wrote an essay on miracles in 1748 that was widely influential and is still a required text for philosophy students. Hume did not argue that miracles could not happen, but that people who believed in miracles were usually not talking about events they had witnessed themselves, but only retelling stories of miracles they had heard or read about (for instance, in the Christian Bible). For Hume, the issue that divided religious believers from skeptics was not actually miracles, but testimony about miracles reported to have happened years, decades, or even centuries ago.

In contrast, Hume argued, laws of nature could be deduced right now because they continued to operate and their effects could be seen every day. Hume left this essay out of the first edition of his book, *An Enquiry into Human Understanding* , to avoid antagonizing the faithful. But it found its way into print and remains an important challenge to traditions that seek to assert their authority based on supernatural claims.

### Questions for Discussion

- How did Muslim scholars contribute to building the modern world?
- Do you think the term Enlightenment (or aufklärung) is an accurate description of the change in our understanding of the world produced by the new "natural science"?
- Were philosophers such as David Hume justified in suggesting that supernatural claims were problematic?



Figure: The old Town Hall where the Bank of Amsterdam was founded in 1609

European intellectuals also considered economic questions. Capitalism, the idea that invested wealth can be an engine for economic, social, and technological development, was most famously explained by the English philosopher Adam Smith. An agricultural revolution contributed to increased crop production and population growth in the 1400s, and that led to a surplus population being able to gather in towns and cities to engage in artisanal activities—metropolises which were once mainly centers of commerce and government and Church administration, began to produce goods for trade as well. Even before the development of mechanized textile factories in Great Britain, for example, weavers lived and worked in districts like East London for generations. People began to specialize in particular trades, making products for customers beyond their own families and neighborhoods. Some general-purpose craftsmen like blacksmiths became increasingly specialized, focusing on manufacturing products with broader, mass markets (for example guns or carriage-springs, rather than just horseshoes, nails, hinges, and whatever the locals needed from day to day).

Banks in Europe began forming financial networks that standardized prices across larger regions, such as in Italy, the Low Countries and along the Baltic coast. When transportation and communication are poor, there are many opportunities for arbitrage: buying products cheap where they are abundant and then selling them for a profit where they are scarce. As networks improved, these opportunities decreased – or at least were pushed farther away.

Politics and finance were connected at this time: capitalism did not develop in a vacuum. Although Adam Smith famously described the “Invisible Hand” of market forces in 1776, merchants were heavily involved in government in England and Europe, influencing their nations’ policies and regulations to favor their own goals. Also, as described in later chapters, imperial expansion and colonial armies were indispensable for the spread of capitalism throughout the world.

**Question for Discussion**

Is it significant that the stories we tell about the capitalist system focus on the “Invisible Hand” and stress freedom, in spite of the close ties between business and government power?

## The *Reconquista* and Portuguese Trade with Africa



Figure: Depiction of the Muslim surrender of Granada to Ferdinand and Isabella, ending the Reconquista

In the next chapter, we will turn to the Americas and their discovery by Europeans. The backstory for this discovery and colonization is the *Reconquista*, a centuries-long effort by the Portuguese and Spanish to push the Muslim Moors back to Africa. Muslims had taken over most of the Iberian Peninsula beginning in 711. The *Reconquista* begun by Christian nobles in northern Spain took about 800 years to complete.

The Portuguese Christians “reconquered” more quickly, because Portugal does not extend as far into the south and the Spanish kings and princes had to contend with the fortified cities of Seville and Granada. However, Portugal also captured Ceuta, a Moroccan fortress in North Africa in 1415, which gave them control over the western Mediterranean and the Atlantic. After a brief but successful war with Castile, the principle kingdom in central Spain, Portugal turned its attention to exploring and acquiring territory along the coast of Africa in the 1430s and 1440s under the direction of Prince Henry the Navigator (Henry’s older brother Edward became King when their father died of the plague). The Portuguese were becoming merchants and traders while the Christian Spanish were still fighting Muslims.

Portuguese mariners, following the route established by Bartolomeu Dias and Vasco de Gama in 1488 and 1497, began sailing to Asia around southern Africa. They conquered coastal east African city-states, established colonies in Angola and Mozambique, and took advantage of a slave-trading network that provided possibly 10 million captives for Muslim slave auctions from the 9th century to the twentieth. Portuguese control of the African coast was one of the reasons the royal court in Lisbon showed little interest in Columbus’s proposal to sail west across the Atlantic to India; it is also why the Spanish were eager to take Columbus up on his plan in search of a route to Asia. We will return to Spain’s interest in Columbus in the next chapter.




Figure: Portuguese discoveries and explorations: first arrival places and dates, and main Portuguese spice trade routes in the Indian Ocean.

As mentioned above, in the wake of the Black Death peasants and artisans demanded and received better pay, leading to increased commercial activity in Europe in the late 1300s which included not only the important Mediterranean trade dominated by Italian merchants, but also in the Baltic and across the English Channel. However, economic expansion was limited by the availability of gold and silver coins, which had been used in exchange since the sixth century BCE in Greece and Persia.

Portuguese merchants were interested in developing a route around Africa to Asia for the trade in spice and silks, but they were pleased to find trade in sub-Saharan Africa as well. The story of the enormous gold reserves of Mansa Musa, Muslim ruler of Mali, were well known to Europeans, especially after he spent enormous amounts of gold in the Middle East during his pilgrimage to Mecca in the 1327. The Portuguese enquired about the availability of gold in every contact that they made in their explorations, and were not disappointed. Present-day Ghana in West Africa was known as the “gold coast” by European traders and imperialists until its independence in 1957, and is still second only to South Africa in gold production on the continent.

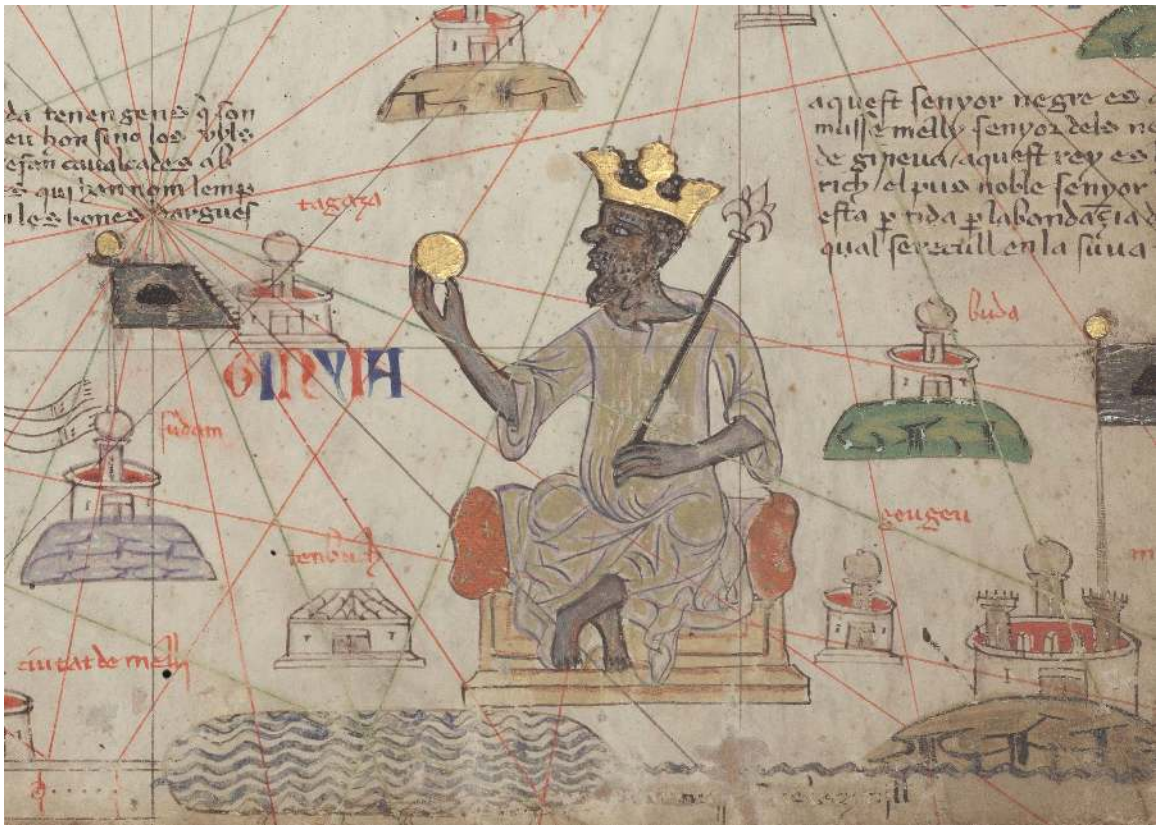


Figure: Detail from the Catalan Atlas of 1375 showing Mansa Musa sitting on a throne and holding a gold coin

African gold certainly aided in economic exchange in Europe, but it was not enough. As we will see in the next chapter, the search for gold was an important motivation for the exploration, conquest, and colonization of the Americas by the Spanish and Portuguese.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why did Portugal complete its *Reconquista* earlier than Spain?
- How did a lack of gold and silver slow economic growth in Europe?

## The African Slave Trade

As in most world societies in the 1400s, the institution of slavery was a traditional element in African kingdoms and chiefdoms. Captives were usually acquired through war or as for payment of debts, and enslaved for a period of time or even for life. However, enslaved captives often gained positions in the societies that had captured them, and their children were generally born free. African traders were willing to include this human cargo in commerce with the Portuguese and other Europeans, who readily accepted them as enslaved laborers and domestic servants.

The trade of enslaved people, especially from eastern Europe, had been important in many parts of that continent even into the 1400s. We have seen that in the Ottoman Empire, the Janissaries were eastern European captives who were trained as an elite military corps. The thriving economies of all of the Islamic empires, from Spain through Persia, also created a demand for enslaved people from Europe. The Vikings of northern Europe sold captives from Britain to the Middle East, as did the Frankish kings of western and central Europe, who enslaved prisoners-of-war from among the Slavic peoples of eastern Europe (as had the Romans before them). Although the demand for enslaved labor was less in Europe than in the more economically-developed Muslim world, some European slaves certainly served owners in the fiefdoms of the western Europe.

The human cargo brought to Europe from Africa by the Portuguese in the 1400s, however, became much more highly favored than that of eastern Europe: not only were dark-skinned people more exotic for service in the royal courts, they also could not escape by

simply blending in with the local population. One can easily imagine how this would lead to ideas of superior and inferior races—within a few generations, slave-owning “whites” would consider “blacks” to be only suited for enslavement.

However, what made the African slave trade so lucrative by the 1500s and into the beginning of the 1800s was not the demand for labor in Europe, but rather on sugar plantations on the islands of the Atlantic and later in Brazil and the Caribbean. The vast majority of the enslaved from Africa were used as forced labor in the back-breaking cultivation and processing of sugar cane. Portuguese trade with sub-Saharan Africa coincided with the discovery that sugar cane grew well on the eastern Atlantic islands off the African coast controlled by the Portuguese and Spanish in the 1400s.

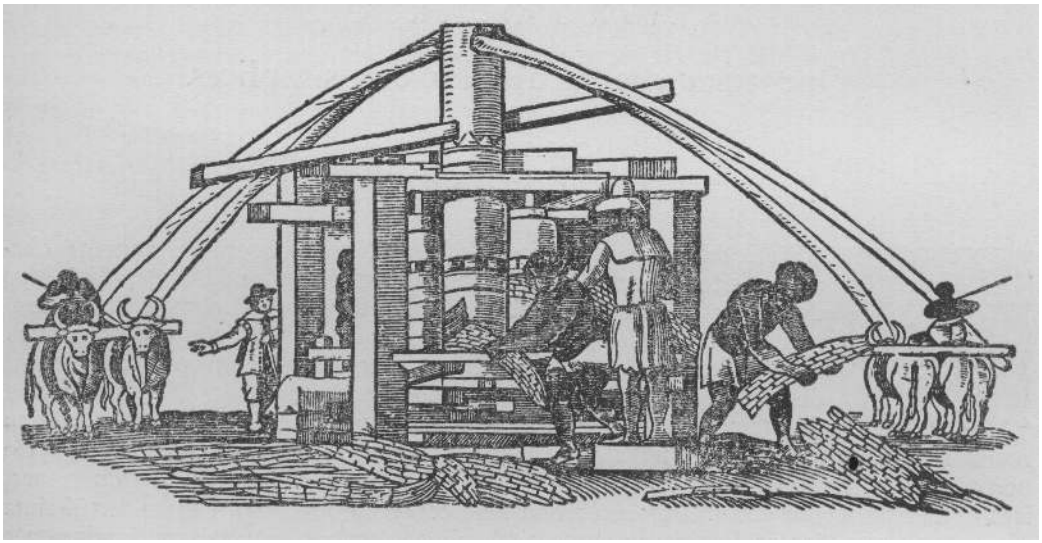


Figure: A Portuguese sugar mill, worked by African slaves, 1648

Sugar cane itself was first developed in the archipelagos of Southeast Asia. Arab traders brought the plant to the Middle East, where Europeans discovered sugar during the crusades and developed a taste for it through their commerce in the region. Sugar was at first considered an exotic medicinal, but once the Portuguese and Spanish began cultivating cane on the Madeiras and Canary Islands, a European addiction to sugar soon began—replacing honey as the region’s main sweetener.

Eventually, more than two thirds of all enslaved Africans in the Western Hemisphere were involved in cultivating, harvesting, and processing sugar cane in Brazil and the Caribbean. Sugar was such a lucrative cash crop for plantation owners, that they would import enslaved Africans, work them to death in three to five years, and bring in more. We will examine this history in a later chapter.

The Portuguese established the first European colony in sub-Saharan Africa, which they called Angola, in 1575, south of the powerful Kongo kingdom on the West African coast. The Kongolese royal family had converted to Christianity and the ruler, Afonso I, tried to negotiate as a peer with the rulers of Portugal. King Afonso was not able to prevent Portuguese slave traders from indiscriminately taking people with high social status in his kingdom as slaves. Generally only criminals and war captives were sold to foreign slavers, not the sons of noblemen and the king’s relatives. It is unclear whether King Afonso tried to ban all trade in slaves, or whether he compromised to avoid antagonizing his European allies. Either way, his ban was ineffective and the Portuguese carried off more and more slaves to their sugar plantations in Brazil.

Occasionally the Iberians tried to claim that they were doing the Africans a favor by Christianizing them. But conditions on sugar plantations were so harsh that slaves typically only survived a few years. So their conversions were not so much to prepare them for a life as Christians, but to save their souls when they perished from overwork and malnutrition. Over the next several centuries, nearly six times more Africans were forcibly sent to the Americas than Europeans who went willingly. In all, about 16 million Africans were shipped to the Americas in chains. About 4 million died on the way and were thrown overboard into the Atlantic.

### Questions for Discussion

- How was the slave trade practiced by the Portuguese different than earlier types of unfree labor?
- How significant was the European interest in sugar to the growth of slavery in the Atlantic world?

**Primary Source Supplement #1: King Afonso I of the Kongo's letters to João, King of Portugal**

Sir, Your Highness should know how our kingdom is being lost in so many ways that it is convenient to provide for the necessary remedy, since this is caused by the excessive freedom given by your agents and officials to the men and merchants who are allowed to come to this kingdom to set up shops with goods and many things which have been prohibited by us, and which they spread throughout our kingdoms and domains in such an abundance that many of our vassals, whom we had in obedience, do not comply because they have the things in greater abundance than we ourselves; and it was with these things that we had them content and subjected under our vassalage and jurisdiction, so it is doing a great harm not only to the service of God, but the security and peace of our kingdoms and state as well.

And we cannot reckon how great the damage is, since the mentioned merchants are taking every day our natives, sons of the land and the sons of our noblemen and vassals and our relatives, because the thieves and men of bad conscience grab them wishing to have the things and wares of this kingdom which they are ambitious of; they grab them and get them to be sold; and so great, Sir, is the corruption and licentiousness that our country is being completely depopulated, and Your Highness should not agree with this nor accept it as in your service. And to avoid it we need from those your kingdoms no more than some priests and a few people to reach in schools, and no other goods except wine and flour for the holy sacrament. That is why we beg of Your Highness to help and assist us in this matter, commanding your factors that they should not send here either merchants or wares, because it is our will that in these kingdoms there should not be any trade of slaves nor outlet for them. Concerning what is referred above, again we beg of Your Highness to agree with it, since otherwise we cannot remedy such an obvious damage. Pray Our Lord in His mercy to have Your Highness under His guard and let you do forever the things of His service. I kiss your hands many times.

(dated July 6, 1526)

Moreover, Sir, in our kingdoms there is another great inconvenience which is of little service to God, and this is that many of our people, keenly desirous as they are of the wares and things of your kingdoms, which are brought here by your people, and in order to satisfy their voracious appetite, seize many of our people, freed and exempt men, and very often it happens that they kidnap even noblemen and the sons of noblemen, and our relatives, and take them to be sold to the white men who are in our kingdoms; and for this purpose they have concealed them; and others are brought during the night so that they might not be recognized.

And as soon as they are taken by the white men they are immediately ironed and branded with fire, and when they are carried to be embarked, if they are caught by our guards' men the whites allege that they have bought them but they cannot say from whom, so that it is our duty to do justice and to restore to the freemen their freedom, but it cannot be done if your subjects feel offended, as they claim to be.

And to avoid such a great evil we passed a law so that any white man living in our kingdoms and wanting to purchase goods in any way should first inform three of our noblemen and officials of our court whom we rely upon in this matter…who should investigate if the mentioned goods are captives or free men, and if cleared by them there will be no further doubt nor embargo for them to be taken and embarked. But if the white men do not comply with it they will lose the aforementioned goods. And if we do them this favor and concession it is for the part Your Highness has in it, since we know that it is in your service too that these goods are taken from our kingdom, otherwise we should not consent to this. . . .

Sir, Your Highness has been kind enough to write to us saying that we should ask in our letters for anything we need, and that we shall be provided with everything, and as the peace and the health of your kingdom depend on us, and as there are among us old folks and people who have lived for many days, it happens we have continuously many and different diseases which put us very often in such a weakness that we reach almost the last extreme; and the same happens to Our children, relatives and natives owing to the lack in this country of physicians and surgeons who might know how to cure properly such diseases. And us we have got neither dispensaries nor drugs which might help us in this forlornness, many of those who had been already confirmed and instructed in the holy faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ perish and die; and the rest of the people in their majority cure themselves with herbs and breads and other ancient methods, so that they put all their faith in the mentioned herbs and ceremonies if they live, and believe that they are saved if they die; and this is not much in the service of God. And to avoid such a great error and inconvenience, since it is from God in the first place and then from your kingdoms and from Your Highness that all the good and drugs and medicines have come to save us, we beg of you to be agreeable and kind enough to send us two physicians and two apothecaries and one surgeon, so that they may come with all the necessary things to stay in our kingdoms, because we are in extreme need of them. We shall do them all good and shall benefit them by all means, since they are sent by Your Highness, whom

we thank for your work in their coming. We beg of Your Highness as a great favor to do this for us, because besides being good in itself it is in the service of God as we have said above.

(dated October 18, 1526)

**Primary Source Supplement #2: Excerpts from Luther's *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,* 1520.**

The Romanists have, with great adroitness, drawn three walls round themselves, with which they have hitherto protected themselves, so that no one could reform them, whereby all Christendom has suffered terribly.

First, if pressed by the temporal power, they have affirmed and maintained that the temporal power has no jurisdiction over them, but, on the contrary, that the spiritual power is above the temporal.

Secondly, if it were proposed to admonish them with the Scriptures, they objected that no one may interpret the Scriptures but the Pope.

Thirdly, if they are threatened with a council, they invented the notion that no one may call a council but the Pope.

Thus they have privily stolen from us our three sticks, so that they may not be beaten. And they have dug themselves in securely behind their three walls, so that they can carry on all the knavish tricks which we now observe. . .

Now may God help us, and give us one of those trumpets that overthrew the walls of Jericho, so that we may blow down these walls of straw and paper, and that we may have a chance to use Christian rods for the chastisement of sin, and expose the craft and deceit of the devil; thus we may amend ourselves by punishment and again obtain God's favor.

Let us, in the first place, attack the first wall.

There has been a fiction by which the Pope, bishops, priests, and monks are called the 'spiritual estate'; princes, lords, artisans, and peasants are the 'temporal estate.' This is an artful lie and hypocritical invention, but let no one be made afraid by it, and that for this reason: that all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them, save of office. As St Paul says (I Cor. xii), we are all one body, though each member does its own work so as to serve the others. This is because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, Gospel, and faith, these alone make spiritual and Christian people.

As for the unction by a pope or a bishop, tonsure, ordination, consecration, and clothes differing from those of laymen–all this may make a hypocrite or an anointed puppet, but never a Christian or a spiritual man. Thus we are all consecrated as priests by baptism, as St Peter says: 'Ye are a royal priesthood, a holy nation' (I Pet. ii. 9); and in the Book of Revelation: 'and hast made us unto our God (by Thy blood) kings and priests' (Rev. v. 10). For, if we had not a higher consecration in us than pope or bishop can give, no priest could ever be made by the consecration of pope or bishop, nor could he say the mass or preach or absolve. Therefore the bishop's consecration is just as if in the name of the whole congregation he took one person out of the community, each member of which has equal power, and commanded him to exercise this power for the rest; just as if ten brothers, co-heirs as king's sons, were to choose one from among them to rule over their inheritance, they would all of them still remain kings and have equal power, although one is appointed to govern.

And to put the matter more plainly, if a little company of pious Christian laymen were taken prisoners and carried away to a desert, and had not among them a priest consecrated by a bishop, and were there to agree to elect one of them … and were to order him to baptize, to celebrate the mass, to absolve and to preach, this man would as truly be a priest, as if all the bishops and all the popes had consecrated him. That is why, in cases of necessity, every man can baptize and absolve, which would not be possible if we were not all priests. This great grace and virtue of baptism and of the Christian estate they have annulled and made us forget by their ecclesiastical law . . .

Since then the 'temporal power' is as much baptized as we, and has the same faith and Gospel, we must allow it to be a priest and bishop, and account its office an office that is proper and useful to the Christian community. For whatever has undergone baptism may boast that it has been consecrated priest, bishop, and pope, although it does not beseem every one to exercise these offices. For, since we are all priests alike, no man may put himself forward, or take upon himself without our consent and election, to do that which we have all alike power to do. For if a thing is common to all, no man may take it to himself without the wish and command of the community. And if it should happen that a man were appointed to one of these offices and deposed for abuses, he would be just what he was before. Therefore a priest should be nothing in Christendom but a functionary; as long as he holds his

office, he has precedence; if he is deprived of it, he is a peasant or a citizen like the rest. Therefore a priest is verily no longer a priest after deposition. But now they have invented characteres indelibiles, and pretend that a priest after deprivation still differs from a mere layman. They even imagine that a priest can never be anything but a priest–that is, he can never become a layman. All this is nothing but mere talk and a figment of human invention.

It follows, then, that between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, or, as they call it, between 'spiritual' and 'temporal' persons, the only real difference is one of office and function, and not of estate . . .

But what kind of Christian doctrine is this, that the 'temporal power' is not above the 'spiritual,' and therefore cannot punish it! As if the hand should not help the eye, however much the eye be suffering . . . Nay, the nobler the member the more bound the others are to help it . . .

Therefore I say, forasmuch as the temporal power has been ordained by God for the punishment of the bad and the protection of the good, we must let it do its duty throughout the whole Christian body, without respect of persons, whether it strike popes, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or whoever it may be . . .

Whatever the ecclesiastical law has said in opposition to this is merely the invention of Romanist arrogance . . .

Now, I imagine the first paper wall is overthrown, inasmuch as the 'temporal' power has become a member of the Christian body; although its work relates to the body, yet does it belong to the 'spiritual estate' . . .

It must indeed have been the archfiend himself who said, as we read in the canon law, 'Were the pope so perniciously wicked as to be dragging hosts of souls to the devil, yet he could not be deposed. This is the accursed, devilish foundation on which they build at Rome, and think the whole world may go to the devil rather than that they should be opposed in their knavery. If a man were to escape punishment simply because he was above his fellows, then no Christian might punish another, since Christ has commanded that each of us esteem himself the lowest and humblest of all (Matt. xviii. 4; Luke ix. 48).

The second wall is even more tottering and weak: namely their claim to be considered masters of the Scriptures . . . If the article of our faith is right, 'I believe in the holy Christian Church,' the Pope cannot alone be right; else we must say, 'I believe in the Pope of Rome,' and reduce the Christian Church to one man, which is a devilish and damnable heresy. Besides that, we are all priests, as I have said, and have all one faith, one Gospel, one Sacrament; how then should we not have the power of discerning and judging what is right or wrong in matters of faith? . . .

The third wall falls of itself, as soon as the first two have fallen; for if the Pope acts contrary to the Scriptures, we are bound to stand by the Scriptures to punish and to constrain him, according to Christ's commandment . . . 'tell it unto the Church' (Matt. xviii, 15-17) . . . If then I am to accuse him before the Church, I must collect the Church together . . . Therefore when need requires, and the Pope is a cause of offense to Christendom, in these cases whoever can best do so, as a faithful member of the whole body, must do what he can to procure a true free council. This no one can do so well as the temporal authorities, especially since they are fellow-Christians, fellow- priests . . .

. . . Poor Germans that we are–we have been deceived! We were born to be masters, and we have been compelled to bow the head beneath the yoke of our tyrants, and to become slaves. Name, title, outward signs of royalty, we possess all these; force, power, right, liberty, all these have gone over to the popes, who have robbed us of them. They get the kernel, we get the husk . . . It is time the glorious Teutonic people should cease to be the puppet of the Roman pontiff. Because the pope crowns the emperor, it does not follow that the pope is superior to the emperor. Samuel, who crowned Saul and David, was not above these kings, nor Nathan above Solomon, whom he consecrated . . . Let the emperor then be a veritable emperor and no longer allow himself to be stripped of his sword or of his scepter!

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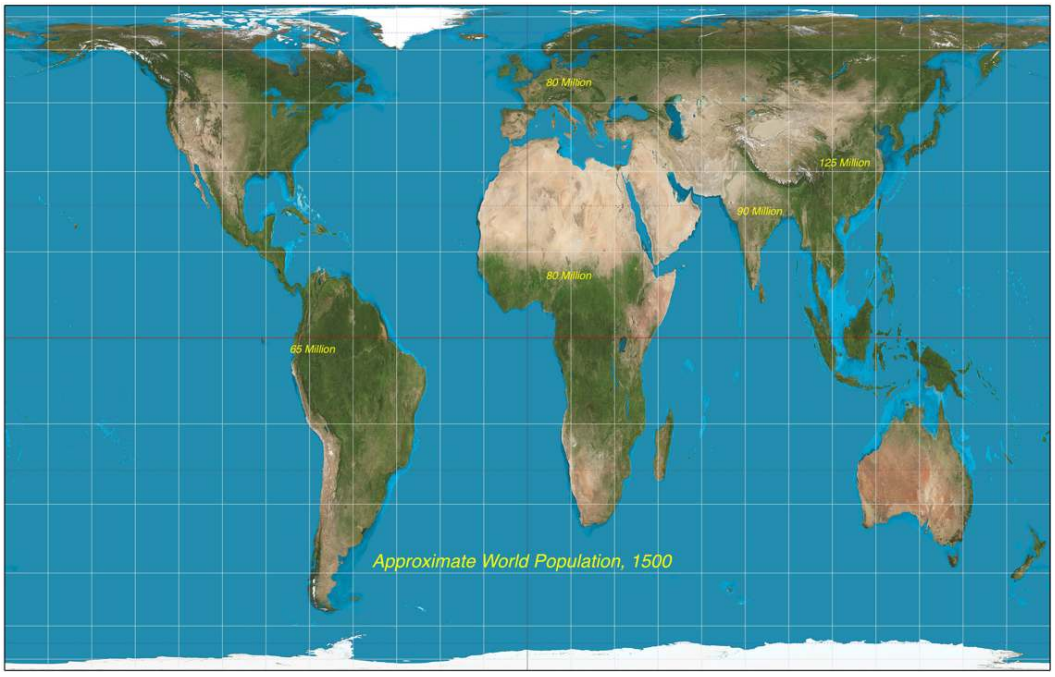
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# 1.4: The Americas and Columbus



Figure: Christopher Columbus is depicted in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol building, landing in the West Indies, on an island that the natives called Guanahani on October 12, 1492.

When your parents were in school, Modern World History and U.S. History usually began in 1492, with the Italian Cristoforo Colon's "discovery" of America. Even today, typical histories of America tend to consider the moment of Columbus' landing on October 12, 1492, to be a significant turning point. Some continue to consider Columbus a heroic explorer while others regard him as a monster and accuse him of deliberate genocide. European contact with the Americas was a momentous event, but the story is a bit more complicated than it is usually depicted. This chapter will add detail to the traditional stories of the conquest and colonization of the "New World."




One of the most important things to know is that in 1500, the populations of Europe, Africa, and the Americas were quite similar. European and Asian populations had substantially recovered from the plagues of the previous two centuries and were on the rise. Continental Asia dominated. China led the world with 125 million people, followed by India with about 90 million. Europe and Africa had about 80 million each, and the Americas probably had a total population of around 65 million. It's important to

understand that on the eve of Europe's encounter with the Americas, their populations were very similar. This demographic parity changed very quickly, as we will soon see.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why do you think stories of Columbus remain controversial?
- Why is it important that Europe, Africa, and the Americas had populations of similar size just before contact?

As described in the Introduction, the people living in the Americas had been separated from Eurasia for nearly 12,000 years, since the end of the Ice Age. During this period, Native Americans experienced their own agricultural revolution around the same time as Africans and Eurasians, but instead of domesticating cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs, and chickens–which were not native to the Americas–they developed certain plants, creating three of the world's current top five staple crops: corn, potatoes, and cassava, as well as additional plants such as hot peppers, tomatoes, beans, cocoa, and tobacco.



Figure: The pyramid of Kukulcán in Chichén Itzá

Reliable, storable, staple food supplies are a necessary precondition for long-term settlement and population growth – in other words the creation of cities. Like the Europeans, Africans, and Asians, once they had created a reliable food supply, American natives built remarkable cities, especially in Central and South America. From present-day Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula south through Guatemala, the Maya developed a complex society which reached its most intense flourishing during their "Classic Period" (250 CE-900 CE). However, by the time the Spanish arrived, the Maya were living in more separated independent city-states, seemingly having abandoned some of their more impressive temples and structures such as Chichén Itzá in Yucatan. This led to an interpretation that the original society suffered a partial collapse sometime around 900 CE due to feuding among these separate cities.

However, more extensive surveying using recently developed laser technology has revealed that the city-states were never that separate during the Classic Period—there are new structures and buildings that are revealed through this new research, showing that the Mayan area was probably more populated than previously calculated. To support such a population, the Maya used raised irrigated fields, creating canals—and again, more recent research has revealed that they bred a certain kind of fish to use as fertilizer, in addition to water plants and algae. In mountainous areas, the Maya terraced the hillsides to provide flat areas for planting.

Religion and governance intertwined in Maya society, and stories of gods and goddesses were fundamental in the building of temples and determining the best times for planting and harvest. The Maya origin story, *Popul Vuh*, is surprisingly similar to that found in the Judeo-Christian Book of Genesis. Corn and the god related to corn were the principal concern for Maya religion and society. To record their beliefs and run their complex society, the Maya developed a written language based on 800 hieroglyphs that represented different syllables. They also developed a base-20 number system that included "zero" centuries before the concept was introduced into Western Europe. The preciseness of Maya mathematics, along with the importance of the stars and planets to

their religious beliefs, allowed the Maya to be more advanced than the Europeans in astronomy and to develop a more exact calendar.

Mayan religious beliefs included scraping down and redecorating their temples every sixty years. One famous carved calendar used to calculate the precise time for this renovation and other key ceremonies ended on December 21, 2012, leading many to believe that the Maya had predicted the end of the world. In reality, it seems that the astronomers had simply run out of room on that particular calendar.

### Questions for Discussion

- Is it significant that several pre-Columbian cultures were not at their peaks when the Europeans arrived?
- How does the existence of a written language alter how we think of people's level of civilization?

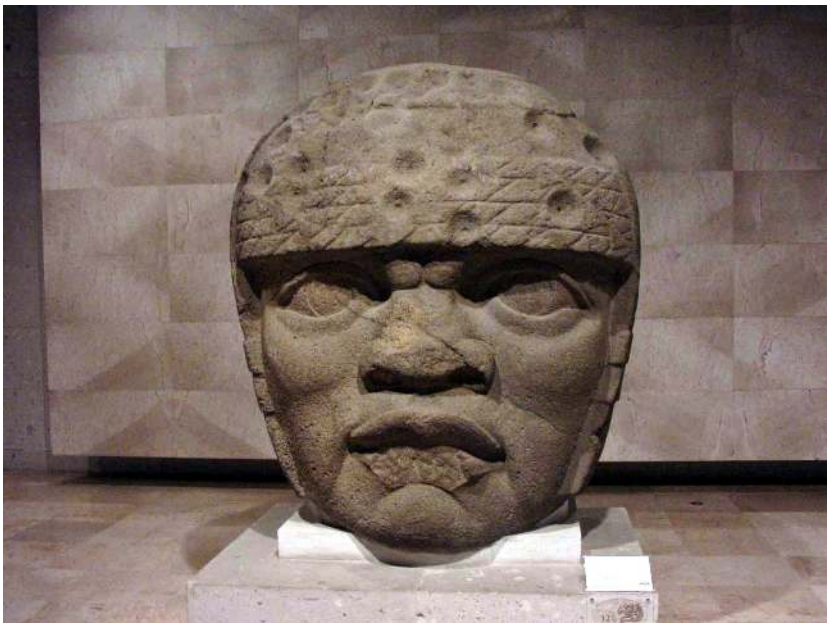


Figure: An 1.8 meter high Olmec Head from San Lorenzo, carved of basalt, 1200–900 BCE.

Farther north in today's Mexico, the Olmecs were among the first to form a complex society–they carved impressive statues including large stone heads some 3,000 years ago. Another society built the structures of Teotihuacan between 100 BCE and 750 CE. The nearby twin Mexica Triple Alliance capitals of Tenochtitlán and Texcoco, built in the 1320s in the Valley of Mexico, each had more than 200,000 inhabitants when they were first encountered by the Spanish, making them as large as Paris and Milan, Europe's most populous cities at the time. Tenochtitlán was built on an island in Lake Texcoco and was connected to the lakeshore by a series of causeways.

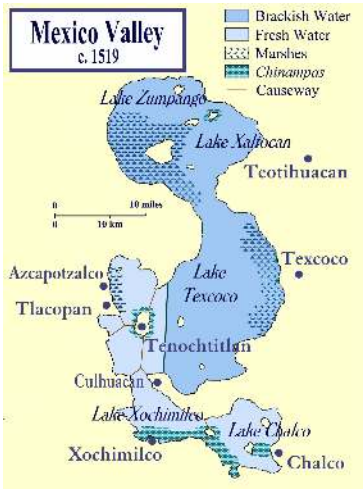



Figure: Map of the Valley of Mexico when the Spanish arrived, showing the chinampas surrounding Tenochtitlán and in Xochimilco, where some persisted until the present

The urban Aztecs had a lot of people to feed. They surrounded their island capital of Tenochtitlán with raised planting-beds called chinampas on floating platforms in Lake Texcoco. This technique allowed Aztec farmers to carefully control soil fertility and watering. The Aztecs were so concerned about the quality of the water, they created a dike across the lake that separated the fresh water around their city from the brackish water of the main lake to the east; and they drank water brought into the city via an aqueduct from springs in the hills overlooking the lake. The Aztecs supported six people per acre using chinampas in the fifteenth century. By comparison, Chinese intensive rice farming, the most successful agricultural technique known in Europe and Asia, supported only about one person per acre at the same time.



Figure: Ancient terraces surrounding Lake Titicaca

Tiwanaku, located near the shores of Lake Titicaca in what are now the Bolivian highlands, was built about 3,500 years ago. Its 30,000 inhabitants developed a farming technique called flooded-raised field agriculture and covered the hills around the lake with walled terraces. Centuries later, the Incas maintained and expanded by thousands of square miles these terraced farms throughout the Andes to achieve a level of agricultural production similar to the Aztecs. For example, surrounding Lake Titicaca in Bolivia there were terraces rising from the lakeside elevation of 12,500 feet (nearly 3,700 meters). Dotting the eastern slopes of the Andes were cities like the Inca capital at Cusco and its nearby towns and villages, which were also surrounded by terraced farms, many of which are still in use today. These terraces were not only built and irrigated by hand at extremely high altitudes, but guano from coastal islands hundreds of miles away was carried in via well-built Inca roads to fertilize the Andean farms. Many of these native cities have been hidden and their buildings and terraces torn apart by rainforest trees over the last five centuries. Machu Picchu, a smaller settlement located on a mountain peak about sixty miles from Cusco, was only encountered by Westerners in 1911. The fact that it had been undiscovered by the Spanish provided a clearer picture of how the Inca had organized their settlements, with terraces for agriculture and buildings made of seamless stonework using large blocks of carved rock—far superior to most European masonry at the time.



Figure: View of the residential section of Machu Picchu

Complex societies in the Americas were not restricted to just the Aztec, Maya, and Inca. In Colombia there is evidence of large ceremonial cities built in the northern highlands near the Caribbean Coast before the arrival of the Spanish, while other indigenous groups built complex irrigation systems in the lowlands just off the Caribbean Coast. The Muisca in the eastern highlands of present-day Colombia, settled at a high altitude, around 8000 feet (2600 meters) above sea level. They cultivated corn and quinoa on the extensive flatland valleys between the mountains, controlled extensive salt deposits, and traded salt for gold, emeralds, fruits and other lowland products with neighboring indigenous groups. Their architecture was impressive, but built with massive tree trunks rather than stone, so that no examples survived the Spanish conquest.

The Muisca did not develop a writing system like the Maya and Aztecs, but maintained religious rituals and beliefs focused on ancestor worship and the sacredness of their kings. Each year, at a round ceremonial lake outside of present-day Bogotá, the Muisca king powdered himself in gold dust and dove into the waters as a purification rite for the gods. This practice is the origin of the myth of El Dorado, the "Golden Man," sought by the Spanish in their early explorations. Over time, Spaniards such as Coronado came to believe they were searching for a city of gold, which they never found.

**Question for Discussion**

Why are native agricultural systems so impressive?

The natives of North America also settled in complex societies in various regions, based mainly on the cultivation of corn, wild rice, squash, and pumpkins and on managing the environment to promote the success of game animals. The traditional U.S. and Canadian Thanksgiving dinner celebrates the native foods of North America, including the turkey. Along the Mississippi River and its tributaries, indigenous people lived mostly in villages but occasionally gathered into cities and built mounds like those found at Cahokia. The Algonquian and Iroquois were semi-sedentary, living throughout what is now upstate New York and southern Quebec and Ontario. By the time of contact with Europeans, the Iroquois had formed a confederacy of five major tribes. The Ojibwe and Dakota were also semi-sedentary, living in settlements in the western Great Lakes region and on the edge of the northern Great Plains. By the time of contact with the Europeans, the Dakota dominated the Plains, where they took advantage of the large herds of buffalo as a source of protein, clothing, and housing, while gathering wild rice and cultivating corn and squash for carbohydrates. Many North American forest-dwellers also developed the sap of the maple tree as a key source of sugar.

Of course, all this agriculture and city-building and civilization was happening in the Americas without anyone in Europe, Asia, or Africa knowing about it. Although it is NOT true that everybody believed the world was flat until Columbus came along, some Europeans were unclear on the actual size of the Earth, the existence of American continents and the Pacific Ocean. But not all Europeans were unaware there was something valuable across the Atlantic. It's important to realize that European exploration did not BEGIN with Columbus. Around 1000 CE, five hundred years before the Italian explorer set out to discover a new trade route to

Asia for Spain, Norse explorers from Europe and Iceland had established a presence on Greenland. The Greenland colony lasted four hundred years and was a base for exploration and settlement even further west. Leif Erikson, son of the Greenland colony's leader Erik the Red, began a colony in what is now northern Newfoundland. For a long time, historians thought Scandinavian claims about a North American colony called Vinland were just patriotic folktales. But in 1978, archaeologists discovered a site called L'Anse aux Meadows that dates to about 1000 CE. The settlement was more than just a fishing camp: the eight buildings include a blacksmith shop and a spinning room including artifacts that suggest women lived there and wove cloth for their families.



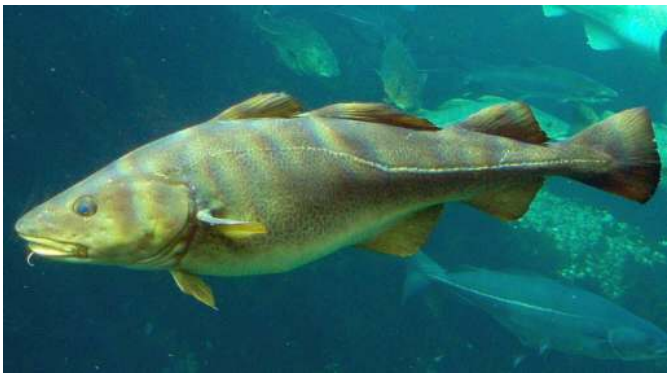

Figure: 1570 map from Skálholt, Iceland, showing Greenland and North American locations visited by Vikings.

The Little Ice Age was a period of global cooling that hit the North Atlantic particularly hard beginning around the 1430s. Sailing became increasingly dangerous and as the agricultural season was cut short by longer and more severe winters, the Greenland colony was abandoned in the early 1400s, and without a base in Greenland the Vikings were unable to sustain a North American colony. They also faced strenuous opposition from natives they called Skraelings, who according to the Viking sagas were fierce warriors. This map made in Iceland in 1570 identifies the area at the latitude of Newfoundland as Skralinge Land. North of that is Markland (land of forests) and Helleland (land of flat stones), then Greenland. And on a more recent map of Greenland, from 1747, you can see the names of old Viking settlements as well as a channel it was believed had once cut through the island. The text on the map reads, "It is said that these streights [sic] were formerly passable, but now they are shut up with ice." On both sides of Greenland, the map says "The Coast is for the most part inaccessible by reason of floating and fixed mountains of ice."




Textbooks tend to stress European desire for gold and silver, and finding precious metals was very important to explorers like the conquistadors. But we shouldn't underestimate Europeans' fear of famine, especially during the Little Ice Age. Even before Columbus's voyage, Basque and Portuguese fishermen were regularly visiting the Grand Banks off the coast of Newfoundland to catch cod. A 1497 account by Giovanni Caboto (another Italian explorer who anglicized his name to John Cabot) claimed cod were so plentiful on the coast of North America that European fishermen could almost walk from ship to ship on their backs. Salted cod

is still an important element of traditional Portuguese cuisine, although nowadays they get their fish from Norway. The fisheries were originally a closely-guarded trade secret, but by the time Columbus made his famous journey they were well-known – and since cod was usually dried on racks onshore before being carried back to Europe, Columbus and his crew were probably not the first Europeans to make landfall in the Americas after the Viking settlements had been abandoned.



**Questions for Discussion**

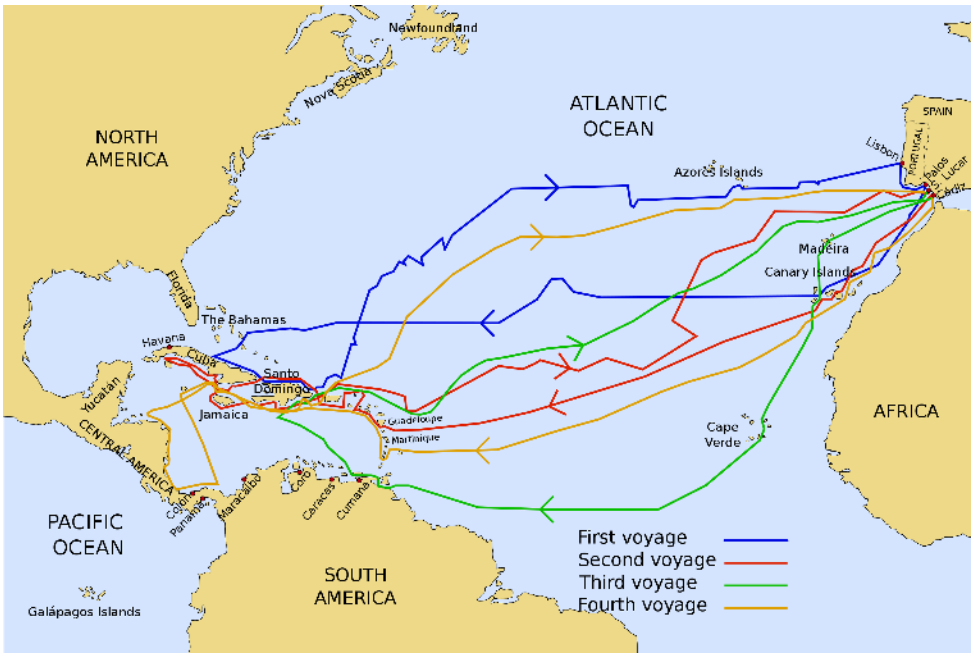
- Why did historians tend to disbelieve stories of Viking settlement in Vinland until recently?
- Why were Europeans so interested in sailing across the Atlantic to fish for cod?

Columbus's promise to find a sea-route to Asia interested European monarchs like Ferdinand and Isabella because land-based trade routes to Asia were becoming more difficult and expensive. The collapse of the Mongol Empire at the end of the thirteenth century and the plagues of the fourteenth century increased the perceived danger of overland travel. Columbus had failed to interest Portugal in his proposal, because Bartolomeu Dias had already discovered a route to Asia around the bottom of Africa. On the other hand, Spain had recently unified with the marriage of King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castille, and the monarchs had just completed the *Reconquista* and ejected Muslims from Granada, their last kingdom on the Iberian peninsula.

It is worth considering that as they turned their interests outward, the Spanish had been at war for nearly 800 years. Their war on behalf of religion and glory would continue in the New World. It's also worth noting that the inventions that sparked this new era of exploration and empire building, like the sternpost rudder, the compass, gunpowder, and the printing press, were all Chinese inventions that found their way to Europe over an already-existing international trade network dominated by Arab merchants, which was about to become truly global with the European encounter of the Americas.

Columbus arrived in the Caribbean on October 12, 1492, and explored until late December. His flagship, the Santa Maria, ran aground on Hispaniola on December 25 and had to be abandoned. With permission of the local chief, Columbus left 39 sailors behind in a settlement he named La Navidad. He returned to Europe with two ships, a few captive Taino natives, some gold, and specimens of New World species including turkeys, pineapple, and tobacco. Arriving in Barcelona in mid-March, Columbus was celebrated as a hero.

It is often mentioned that Columbus believed he had reached Asia, and he did make that claim in his extravagant "Letter on the First Voyage." But this document was the explorer's report to his royal sponsors, and Columbus wanted very badly to be sent back again. Columbus wrote "Hispaniola is a miracle…both fertile and beautiful…the harbors are unbelievably good and there are many wide rivers the majority of which contain gold." Whether or not Columbus understood he was reporting on lands previously unknown to Europeans, he definitely got his readers excited about the places he had visited.




When other European explorers reached America they were equally amazed. People throughout Europe read exciting traveler's accounts like Amerigo Vespucci's 1504 best-seller, Mundus Novus, which actually coined the term New World and made it clear for anyone who might still be confused, that these lands were not Asia but a previously unknown continent. Like Columbus, the explorers carried back to Europe not only eyewitness accounts of wealthy civilizations, but samples of native plants, animals, and captive people.

Columbus returned to the Caribbean in 1493 with 17 ships, 1,200 men, and according to his diaries, "seeds and cuttings for the planting of wheat, chickpeas, melons, onions, radishes, salad greens, grape vines, sugar cane, and fruit stones for the founding of orchards." Other old-world crops that thrived in the Americas included coffee and bananas, originally cultivated in Africa and Asia, which were brought from the Canary Islands in 1516. The Spanish had introduced sugar cultivation to the Canary Islands in the early fifteenth century, and transplanted canes to the tropical paradise their explorers had discovered across the Atlantic.

Cattle were delivered to Spanish conquistadors in Mexico in 1521. Most of the significant Eurasian species brought to the Americas by European explorers and colonists were introduced by the Spanish by the early 1500s, long before North American settlement began. Even species like the wild horses of the American West that would transform Plains Indian culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the descendants of escapees from the herds of the conquistadors. The Americas had very few large mammal species, and most could not be domesticated. Nearly all the species humans have successfully domesticated, the familiar residents of the modern farmyard, originated in Europe and Asia. These include goats, sheep, cows, horses, pigs and chickens.

The Spanish and Portuguese dominated the first century of exploration, conquest and colonization in the Americas for many reasons. Spain and Portugal had an eight-century long tradition of warfare from fighting the Reconquista against the Moors, and were prepared for further battle for glory and religion. The Portuguese also had a maritime tradition, which was how Columbus learned his trade. But the two Catholic nations also had a papal charter. The Spanish and Portuguese were granted a license by the Pope under the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, which awarded all the territory east of the 47th meridian to Portugal and everything west of it to Spain. The Pope (Alexander VI) who made this deal was a Spaniard named Rodrigo Borja – his reign was known for nepotism and corruption, and, despite a pledge of clerical celibacy, he was the father of the famous Italian political family known for poisoning their enemies, the Borgias. The Portuguese received the east, because they were already establishing colonies on the east and west coasts of Africa. The Spanish were assigned the unknown west, which turned out to be bigger than anyone had expected. The Pope granted nothing to any other European kingdom. This type of corruption at the Vatican helped motivate reformers like Martin Luther toward what became the Protestant Reformation.

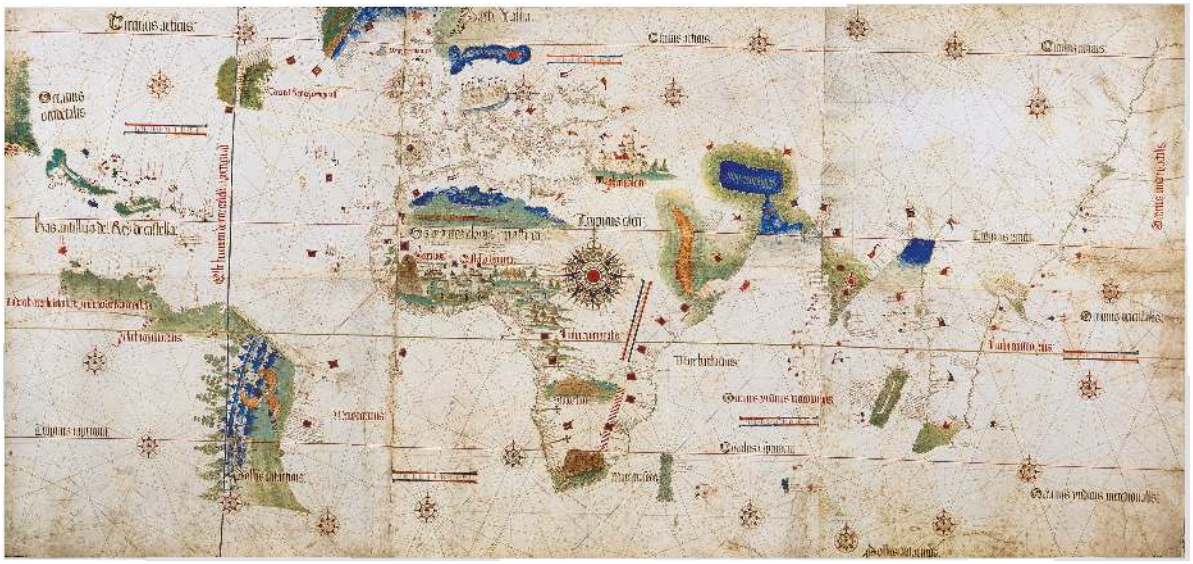


Figure: 1502 map showing the line drawn by the Treaty of Tordesillas cutting through South America.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why were the Spanish monarchs interested in financing Columbus' voyage but the Portuguese not?
- What caused Europeans to get so excited about the newly-discovered lands?
- Why did the Spanish and Portuguese dominate early colonization?

## The Columbian Exchange

Historians call the transfer of plants and animals that began with the encounter between Europe and the Americas after 1492 the Columbian Exchange. The directions of these biological transfers and their effects on the environments and people of Europe and the Americas shaped the modern world we live in. American maize, potatoes, and cassava fed growing European, African, and Asian populations, allowing the building of new cities and industries. European animals such as pigs, sheep, chickens, and cattle thrived in the Americas, enabling both Native Americans and Europeans there to add and maintain animal protein to their diets and eventually expand their populations. But before most of the indigenous had a chance to benefit from the new food sources introduced by Europeans, they were struck down by the largely accidental transfer of viruses and bacteria from Europe to America, which caused the deaths of at least 90% of the native American population.

When prehistoric Eurasians began living in close contact with the species they domesticated, the people were affected almost as much as the animals they kept. Most of humanity's major diseases originated in animals and crossed from domesticated species to their human keepers. Whooping cough and influenza came from pigs; measles and smallpox from cattle; malaria and avian flu from chickens. The people who domesticated these species and lived with the animals for generations co-evolved with them. Animal diseases became survivable when people developed antibodies and immunity. Without the inherited protection enjoyed by most Eurasians and Africans, even a routine childhood disease such as chickenpox was initially devastating for Native Americans, who did not have domesticated animals and thus little acquired immunity to these diseases.

The introduction of a disease into an area without inherited immunity is called a virgin soil epidemic. Such epidemics had happened in Eurasia, when the Romans spread smallpox into the populations they conquered, and in Europe when the expanding Mongols introduced bubonic plague, the Black Death that killed probably half the population of Europe in the fourteenth century, reducing world population by about a hundred million. Virgin soil epidemics spread across the Americas when explorers and colonists introduced Eurasian diseases to the Native Americans. The Eurasian diseases that attacked native populations included smallpox, measles, chickenpox, influenza, typhus, cholera, typhoid, diphtheria, bubonic plague, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and malaria.

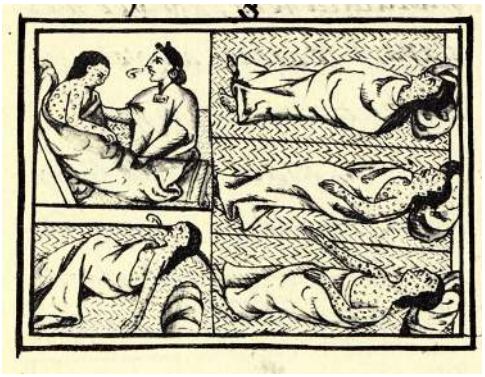


Figure: 1540 European depiction of Aztecs suffering from smallpox.

The impact of these Eurasian diseases on Native Americans was one of human history's most abrupt and severe population disasters. Even the Black Death did not kill as large a percentage of Europeans, and when diseases recurred in Europe, they generally killed their victims over a much longer time-span due to the inherited immunity of European populations. American native populations had no such safeguards, and disease spread virulently. For example, there were over a million people living on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola in 1492 when Columbus left his 39 sailors in La Navidad. By 1548, there were only 500 natives left alive. 999,500 people had disappeared in a little over 50 years.

The populations of other Caribbean islands like Cuba were similarly wiped out. Whole societies disappeared, and this was not only a tragedy for the cultures that vanished. The reduction of native populations began a cycle of violence that became central to the history of the Americas. Once there were no natives left to work on European sugar plantations, enslaved Africans—who had a similar acquired immunity as Europeans—were considered crucial to the survival of the West Indies sugar economy.

The greater population densities of Central and South America enabled contagious diseases to spread more quickly there. Heavily-traveled roads in central Mexico actually helped spread disease beyond areas that had been reached by Spanish explorers. Cities were wiped out that had never seen a white man. The population of the Aztec heartland dropped from about 25 million on the eve of the Spanish conquest in 1519 to just under 17 million a decade later. One out of every three native people died in just ten years. After another decade the Aztec population was reduced to about 6 million. Three out of four people in the Aztec world disappeared in 20 years. Imagine writing a list of your 10 closest friends and family, and then randomly crossing off seven names. By 1580, the Aztec empire had been hollowed out to less than 2 million people, from a starting point of 25 million. Cross off two more — you're down to one friend.



Figure: 1524 Spanish map of Mexico City, built on top of Tenoctitlán.

The depopulation of the Americas is one of the Earth's most significant population disasters, both in its human toll and in the changes it brought about. Over the years, as you might expect, there has been a lot of controversy about what happened. Critics of Spanish colonialism (many of them Spanish, like the priest Bartolomé de las Casas) have accused Spaniards of atrocities in what has become known as "the Black Legend". To defend themselves, colonialists accused the Aztec and Inca Empires with atrocities of their own and have emphasized the support conquistadors received from indigenous rivals of these empires. Textbooks often

reflect some of these biases, one, for example, mentions that “Allegedly, between 20,000 and 80,000 men, women, and children were slaughtered in a single ceremony in 1487” as a sacrifice at a temple in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán. This claim may or may not be true, but even if it is, compare it to the deaths of over 20 *million* men, women, and children that followed the Spanish invasion of the Aztec lands of Central Mexico.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why were native populations so susceptible to European diseases?
- How did disease affect native societies’ ability to resist European invaders?



Figure: 1550 illustration shows Cortés meeting Moctezuma for the first time with Malintzin at his side to translate.

Traditional European or Eurocentric American histories of exploration often present the victory of the Spanish over the Aztec as an example of the superiority of Europeans over the savage Indians. The reality is far more complex. When Cortés explored central Mexico, he encountered a region simmering with native conflict. Far from being unified and content under Aztec rule, many peoples in Mexico resented the overlords of Tenochtitlán and were ready to rebel. Cortés was also aided by an enslaved Nahua woman, Malintzin (also known as La Malinche or Doña Marina, her Spanish name), whom the natives of Tabasco gave him as a tribute slave. In addition to speaking Nahua and Maya, Malintzin quickly learned Spanish and translated for Cortés in his dealings with Aztec emperor Moctezuma.

Malintzin also (willingly or under pressure) entered into a physical relationship with Cortés. Their son, Martín, was one of the first “mestizos” (persons of mixed indigenous American and European descent) in Spanish America. Malintzin remains a controversial figure in the history of the Atlantic World. Some view her as a traitor because she helped Cortés conquer the Aztecs, while others see her as a victim of European imperialism whose choices were very limited. In either case, she demonstrates one way in which native peoples responded to the arrival of the Spanish. Without her, Cortés would not have been able to communicate, and without the language bridge, he surely would have been less successful in destabilizing the Aztec Empire. By this and other means, native people helped shape the conquest of the Americas.




Figure: Inca roads, the extent of the empire, and Inca cities taken over by the Spanish

The Inca Empire in the Andes suffered the same fate. 90% of the South Americans died, and they started dying BEFORE the white invaders arrived in 1532, which caused confusion and dismay. When Pizarro crossed the Andes with eighty conquistadors, he found social chaos. Huayna Capac, the Inca leader who had triumphantly extended the empire into Chile and Ecuador, had died of smallpox in 1527. His two sons fought a brutal civil war for control of the empire, the younger son Atahualpa finally defeating and assassinating his older brother Huáscar. The civil war exacerbated the effects of epidemics, and the weakness of the reduced Inca population gave Pizarro the opportunity he needed to capture and kill Atahualpa in 1533, beginning the end of the Inca empire.

Although the conquistadors focused much of their energy on Central and South America, they brought disease to North America as well. After helping Pizarro conquer the Inca, Hernando De Soto landed an expedition in Florida in 1539 and explored territory now in the states of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Oklahoma. Everywhere he went, the conquistador reported the land was “thickly settled with large towns.”

De Soto didn’t stay long. He died of fever in Louisiana in 1542, and although the region was visited by a few missionaries, it was not seriously considered again by Europeans until the French aristocrat, La Salle, traveled down the Mississippi River in 1670. Where De Soto had seen fortified towns, La Salle saw none. The entire region had been emptied by the diseases which accompanied De Soto and his men, and had returned to wilderness. The French explorer reported traveling hundreds of miles without passing a single village. Historians were actually unaware until recently that the American South had once been heavily populated before the arrival of contagious Spanish explorers and missionaries.

Spanish invaders had not deliberately infected the natives with all these diseases (Europeans still had no idea at this time how viruses or bacteria worked), but they were quick to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the social chaos and military weakness of native societies in crisis. In both Mexico and Peru, the conquistadors found allies among different indigenous groups who often thought of themselves as the victors, with Spanish help, rather than the other way around. Still, within a few years, the Spaniards took over the capital cities of the Inca and Aztec empires, inserting themselves into the top positions in the pre-existing governments. Patterns of tribute were maintained, as well as the labor draft of the Inca *mita*—although now labor would be devoted to the silver mines and not just road, irrigation, and building projects.

As they had been in Spain during the Reconquista, conquistadors were rewarded for military service with *encomiendas*. From a root word meaning “entrusting,” *encomiendas* were grants of captured territory and the people that lived on it, who the encomendero was theoretically responsible for bringing into the Christian community. This technique had been used in Spain to

keep track of conquered Muslims and make sure they did not backslide after their forced conversions. In Spanish America, there was a much greater emphasis on taxing and working the new peasants, rather than leading them to religion.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Was Malintzin a heroine or a villain in her collaboration with Cortés?
- How were regions far from the main points of European contact affected? What do you imagine it was like for natives?
- What tools did the colonizers use to organize native labor?

## Europe

As previously mentioned, American staple crops were successfully adopted by farmers in Europe, providing better and more reliable nutrition which sparked a population boom. New foods like potatoes were so important in preventing the cyclical famines that regularly hit Europe, that they became a key topic in Adam Smith's classic, *On the Wealth of Nations*. Many plant species developed by native Americans are still crucial to the world economy, including not only maize, potatoes, and cassava, but also tomatoes, sweet potatoes, cacao, chili peppers, natural rubber, tobacco, and vanilla. Quinine, a medicine made from the bark of the Peruvian cinchona tree, was effective treating malaria and helped open the African and Asian tropics to European colonization. Eurasian plants like sugar, soybeans, oranges, bananas, and rice (which probably reached America from Africa along with enslaved women who were experts growing it) were also extensively cultivated in the Americas for profitable shipment back to European markets. Exports of native and transplanted crops helped feed growing cities and, by the mid-18th century, freed agricultural workers to enter Europe's new industries. Without inexpensive and abundant Native American foods, there might have been no Industrial Revolution.

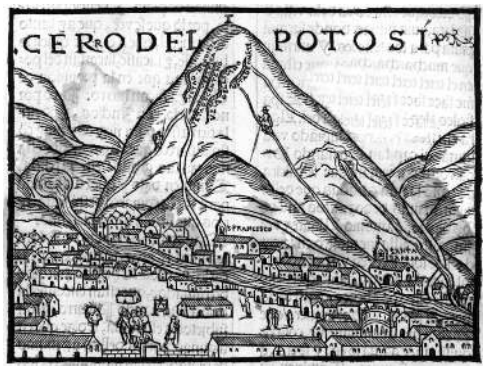



Figure: The first image of Potosí published in Europe in 1553.

Like the Portuguese in their exploration of Africa, the Spanish were also interested in finding sources of gold and silver for the European commerce. Although they never found El Dorado, the "golden man" that expanded in legends to a city of gold, Europeans did find a fair amount of gold. And they found even more silver. For example, the Bolivian city of Potosí, located in the Andes at an elevation of 13,420 feet (over 4,000 meters), still has the largest population of any city at that altitude. Potosí was established by the Spanish in 1542 on the site of a long-standing native mining village at the foot of the Cerro Rico, which is a literal mountain of silver. Potosí has a current population of about 165,000, almost identical to the city's population in 1660, when the high-altitude mining center was larger than Seville, Madrid, or Rome, and when the combined population of ALL European colonies in North America was only about 75,000.



Figure: Potosí today

Spanish silver coins called “pieces of eight” from the Cerro Rico and from similar mines in Zacatecas, Mexico, were so plentiful that they became the international currency of Europe and much of Asia. Every year between 1566 and 1815, a treasure fleet sailed from Acapulco to Manila laden with silver for the trade in China and India. Another fleet carried not only precious metals but spices and expensive Chinese ceramics acquired in Asia from Veracruz to Spain.

Once again, products originating in the Americas were a spur to the Industrial Revolution. Without the money minted from Latin America’s silver and gold, there might have been no global commercial boom to finance European industrialization. And Potosí’s story is not over yet. Although most of the easily-extractible silver was taken out of the mountain centuries ago, the Cerro Rico is still being worked by Bolivian children whose story is told in the award-winning documentary, *The Devil’s Miner*, which you can view on the web if you’re interested in learning more.

**Question for Discussion**

What were the main economic effects of Spanish colonialism in Europe?

## Mestizos

Because most of the Spanish in the New World were male soldiers in the first decades of the conquest, women were taken, often forcibly, from native communities to be wives and mistresses. One high-ranking Inca native named Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala wrote to the King of Spain around 1600, complaining that Spaniards are taking all the Indian women of childbearing age, so the place was being flooded with mestizos who were not required to work as the Indians were. Worse, the fathers were not supporting their illegitimate children, and “if a Spaniard steals away four Indian women to make little mestizos, he will bribe the judges and refuse to recognize his paternity,” leaving their support up to the state. “Spaniards ought to live like Christians,” Guaman argued, “marrying ladies of equal status and leaving the poor Indian women alone so they can have Indian children.”

Most of the countries of Latin America are built on mixed or mestizo populations; so much so that in the 1700s, the colonists tried to make distinctions between all the various types of people they believed made up their societies, to “prove” to the Spanish Crown that a logical caste system existed in the colonies. Although these distinctions were somewhat arbitrary and were often used to uphold the power of the group at the top, in the long run many of these mixed Euro-American populations have developed strong ethnic identities. A similar process happened in New France–today’s Quebec in Canada. There were only about twenty-five hundred French people in the province by 1663. Most of them were voyageurs, fur traders who went into the northern forests to make their fortunes. Voyageurs frequently married local Indian women, and their Canadian descendants are now recognized as a distinct ethno-cultural group called Métis.




Figure: A “Casta” painting from colonial Spanish America, showing the variety of supposed social divisions created by ethnic mixing.

The social caste system developed in Latin America was based on both blood and origin. At the top were *peninsulares*, Spaniards born in Spain (on the Iberian Peninsula), who were appointed to nearly all of the important administrative positions in the government and to the highest clerical offices (archbishops and bishops). Next were *criollos* (creoles), Spaniards born in the colonies. They made up the landed elite, often descendants of the original *encomenderos*, and were the vast majority of the merchant class and some of the higher clergy. Beneath them were mestizos, people of mixed race, who worked as artisans and in the lower clergy, or farmed their own small holdings or the estates of *criollo* landowners. Indians were below mestizos, and although they often managed their own communities (under supervision of missionary priests), tribute and labor obligations required them to work in the wage economy managed by the Spanish. Later, when the colonists started importing African slaves, new designations like mulatto and zambo were developed to describe children of black-white and black-Indian unions. These new “mixed” populations often played the same role in the economy and society as *mestizos*, although they were located closer to the sugar-growing regions to which enslaved Africans were initially brought.

The Portuguese were initially more interested in dominating trade routes in the Indian Ocean, so they mostly ignored their new possession in Brazil until French Huguenots—protestant Christians fleeing Catholic France—tried to establish a colony near present-day Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1500s. By that time, the Portuguese had watched the Spanish become successful cultivating sugar cane in the Caribbean. Sugar, which the Spanish and Portuguese had learned how to grow and process in the Middle East during the Crusades, was already grown with enslaved African labor on profitable plantations in Portugal's island colonies off the African coast. Portuguese entrepreneurs brought cane and slaves to Brazil and set up plantations along the northern coast. By this time, the Catholic Church had prohibited the enslavement of Indians, but not of Africans. Native Brazilians did not establish the complex societies found in Mexico, Central America, and Andean South America, so it was actually harder to "conquer" them, as they escaped deeper into the interior jungles and forests. However, the Portuguese already had established colonies and trade ties in Africa, which soon supplied enslaved labor to the sugar plantations.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why were the Spanish so interested in "pure blood" and the various degrees of ethnicity in their colonies?
- What were the four major caste status levels in colonial society?



Figure: 1563 Portuguese illustration of Africa, featuring their castle at Elmina.

As described in the previous chapter, slavery was a traditional element in all world societies, including those of Africa, but Europeans quickly grasped the usefulness of having enslaved Africans in European communities because it would be harder for them to blend in with the local population. The sugar trade spurred the slave trade, as well as European notions of racial superiority to justify the enslavement of people with darker skins.

By the mid-1500s in Europe, Spanish wealth began to cause problems. Wealthy Spanish nobles married into aristocratic families like the Austrian Hapsburgs. In 1519 (the same year Cortés attacked Tenochtitlán and Magellan set out to circle the Earth) the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles V, became Holy Roman Emperor. Charles was also King of Spain and (by marriage) Portugal, which gave him legal control of all the American colonies. When his wife Isabella died in 1555, Charles was inconsolable. He abdicated in 1556 and retired to a monastery, leaving his younger brother Ferdinand in charge of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe and his son Philip II in control of Spain, Portugal, and their possessions (including the "Spanish Netherlands" on the European coast).



Figure: British montage of the events of 1588 including sea battle with the Spanish Armada and Queen Elizabeth (on shore, at the left) rallying the troops,

Although Philip II was called “The Prudent,” and was also briefly King of England while married to Queen (Bloody) Mary, after she died in 1558, he lost control of the rebellious Protestant Dutch Republic and Spain declared bankruptcy five times. Spain’s financial troubles were partly due to debts Philip’s father Charles V had accumulated as Holy Roman Emperor. After Queen Mary’s death, Philip proposed to her successor, Elizabeth I, who turned him down. Elizabeth’s father, King Henry VIII, had separated the Church of England from Rome in the 1530s, after a dispute with the Pope over the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella and aunt to Charles V. Philip supported the claim of Mary Queen of Scots to the British throne, but when she was executed in 1587, Philip decided to invade and return England to Catholicism.

In 1588, the Spanish Armada organized by Philip was hampered by bad weather on the English Channel and then defeated by the British Royal Navy, which lost no ships while Spain lost five before withdrawing. During the retreat, most of the Spanish navy was destroyed by storms, leaving the British in control of the Atlantic. Later that year an English fleet sailed into the harbor at Cadiz, burned 200 Spanish ships and made off with the annual silver shipment. It was the beginning of the end of the Spanish Empire as a major European power.



Figure: Women of nineteenth-century Mexico, wearing the “China Poblana” dress that was originally contraband from China.

Another reason Spain did not permanently dominate the European economy was that for centuries most of the silver they shipped from Peru and Mexico ended up in China, where silver was the basis of the earth’s largest economy. Buoyed by China’s economic dominance, the Asian population increased from 60% of the world’s people to 67% between 1500 and 1800. In addition to the Mings in China, the Mughals in India ruled an empire of 150 million people, and they were very interested in expanding trade with the West. India was also highly productive; between the two empires, Asia produced 80% of all the world’s goods. Even though we are concentrating in this chapter on the intricacies of the Atlantic World and the intersection of Africa, Europe, and the Americas, until the mid-1700s, it is important to remember that China and India dominated world commerce and industry.

Chinese silks and Indian cotton were the world’s best quality and lowest-cost textiles, and clothes made from them were worn throughout the world – even in Spain’s colonies where the law required people to trade only with the home country. The national costume of Mexico is called the China Poblana; it was originally a contraband silk dress worn by women of the towns. The British were so intimidated by Asian textiles that they imposed tariffs to try to protect their own weavers from being driven out of the

business. Mercantilism, in which colonies served the home country as both a market and a source of raw materials in a closed economy, was actually not a primitive economic system that evolved into free market capitalism – it was an attempt to shield British and European merchants from an already-existing international free market in which they were too often the losers to the dominant Asian powers.

**Questions for Discussion**

- How did dynastic politics in Europe affect the American colonies?
- Why was Asia so important to colonial America?

## Primary Source Supplement #1: Leif Ericsson's Discovery of America, from the Saga of Eric the Red, 1387.

Biarni Heriulfsson came out from Greenland on a visit to Earl Eric, by whom he was well received. Biarni gave an account of his travels [while lost at sea in a fog for several days, he apparently landed in America] when he saw the lands, and the people though that he had been lacking in enterprise, since he had no report to give concerning these countries; and the fact brought him reproach. Biarni was appointed one of the Earl's men, and went out to Greenland the following summer. There was now much talk about voyages of discovery. Leif, the son of Eric the Red, of Brattahlid, visited Biarni Heriulfsson and bought a ship of him, and collected a crew, until they formed altogether a company of thirty-five men. Leif invited his father, Eric, to become the leader of the expedition, but Eric declined, saying that he was then stricken in years, and adding that he was less able to endure the exposure of sea life than he had been. Leif replied that he would nevertheless be the one who would be most apt to bring good luck and Eric yielded to Leif's solicitation, and rode from home when they were ready to sail.

When he was but a short distance from the ship, the horse which Eric was riding stumbled, and he was thrown from his back and wounded his foot, whereupon he exclaimed, "It is not designed for me to discover more lands than the one in which we are now living, nor can we now continue longer together." Eric returned home to Brattahlid, and Leif pursued his way to the ship with his companions, thirty-five men. One of the company was a German, named Tyrker. They put the ship in order; and, when they were ready, they sailed out to sea, and found first that land which Biarni and his shipmates found last. They sailed up to the land, and cast anchor, and launched a boat, and went ashore, and saw no grass there. Great ice mountains lay inland back from the sea, and it was as a [tableland of] flat rock all the way from the sea to the ice mountains; and the country seemed to them to be entirely devoid of good qualities. Then said, Leif "It has not come to pass with us in regard to this land as with Biarni, that we have not gone upon it. To this country I will now give a name and call it Helluland [the land of flat rocks]."

They returned to the ship, put out to sea, and found a second land. They sailed again to the land, and came to anchor, and launched the boat, and went ashore. This was a level wooded land; and there were broad stretches of white sand where they went, and the land was level by the sea. Then said Leif, "This land shall have a name after its nature; and we will call it Markland [land of forests]." They returned to the ship forthwith, and sailed away upon the main with north-east winds, and were out a full day before they sighted land. They sailed toward this land and came to an island which lay to the northward off the land. There they went ashore and looked about them, the weather being fine, and they observed that there was dew upon the grass, and it so happened that they touched the dew with their hands, and touched their hands to their mouths, and it seemed to them that they had never before tasted anything so sweet as this. They went aboard their ship again and sailed into a certain sound, which lay between the island and a cape, which jutted out from the land on the north, and they stood in westering past the cape. At ebb-tide, there were broad reaches of shallow water there, and they ran their ship aground there, and it was a long distance from the ship to the ocean; yet were they so anxious to go ashore that they could not wait until the tide should rise under their ship, but hastened to the land, where a certain river flows out from a lake. As soon as the tide rose beneath their ship, however, they took the boat and rowed to the ship, which they conveyed up the river, and so into the lake, where they cast anchor and carried their hammocks ashore from the ship and built themselves cabins there.

They afterward determined to establish themselves there for the winter, and they accordingly built a large house. There was no lack of salmon there either in the river or in the lake, and larger salmon than they had ever seen before. The country thereabouts seemed to be possessed of such good qualities that cattle would need no fodder there during the winters. There was no frost there in the winters, and the grass withered but little. The days and nights there were of more nearly equal length than in Greenland or Iceland. On the shortest day of winter, the sun was up between 7:30 and 3:30 [suggesting a latitude of about 50°]. When they had completed

their house, Leif said to his companions, “I propose now to divide our company into two groups, and to set about an exploration of the country. One-half of our party shall remain at home at the house, while the other half shall investigate the land; and they must not go beyond a point from which they can return home the same evening, and are not to separate [from each other]. Thus they did for a time. Leif, himself, by turns joined the exploring party, or remained behind at the house. Leif was a large a powerful man, and of a most imposing bearing; a man of sagacity, and a very just man in all things.

….

Eric the Red also died that winter. There was now much talk about Leif’s Vinland journey; and his brother, Thorvald, held that the country had not been sufficiently explored. Thereupon Leif said to Thorvald, “If it be thy will, brother, thou mayest go to Vinland with my ship.” And so it was done.

….

They were soon provided with an abundant and goodly supply of food; for a whale of good size and quality was driven ashore there, and they secured it, and flensed it, and had then no lack of provisions. The cattle were turned out upon the land, and the males soon became very restless and vicious: they had brought a bull with them. Karlsefni caused trees to be felled and to be hewed into timbers wherewith to load his ship, and the wood was placed upon a cliff to dry. They gathered somewhat of all of the valuable products of the land: grapes, and all kinds of game and fish, and other good things. In the summer succeeding the first winter Skrellings were discovered. A great troop of men came forth from out the woods. The cattle were hard by, and the bull began to bellow and roar with a great noise, whereat the Skrellings were frightened, and ran away with their packs, wherein were gray furs, sables, and all kinds of pelts. They fled towards Karlsefni’s dwelling and sought to effect an entrance into the house; but Karlsefni caused the doors to be defended [against them].

Source: American historical documents, 1000-1904: with introductions and notes. New York: P.F. Collier, c1910. The Harvard classics v. 43.

https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1000Vinland.asp

**Primary Source Supplement #2: An Aztec account of the Spanish attack**

*This source aggregates a number of early written reports by Aztec authors describing the destruction of Tenochtitlan at the hands of a coalition of Spanish and Indian armies. This collection of sources was assembled by Miguel Leon Portilla, a Mexican anthropologist.*

When Montezuma had given necklaces to each one, Cortés asked him: “Are you Montezuma? Are you the king? Is it true that you are the king Montezuma?”

And the king said: “Yes, I am Montezuma.” Then he stood up to welcome Cortés; he came forward, bowed his head low and addressed him in these words: “Our lord, you are weary. The journey has tired you, but now you have arrived on the earth. You have come to your city, Mexico. You have come here to sit on your throne, to sit under its canopy.

“The kings who have gone before, your representatives, guarded it and preserved it for your coming. The kings Itzcoatl, Montezuma the Elder, Axayacatl, Tizoc and Ahuitzol ruled for you in the City of Mexico. The people were protected by their swords and sheltered by their shields.

“Do the kings know the destiny of those they left behind, their posterity? If only they are watching! If only they can see what I see!

No, it is not a dream. I am not walking in my sleep. I am not seeing you in my dreams…. I have seen you at last! I have met you face to face! I was in agony for five days, for ten days, with my eyes fixed on the Region of the Mystery. And now you have come out of the clouds and mists to sit on your throne again.

This was foretold by the kings who governed your city, and now it has taken place. You have come back to us; you have come down from the sky. Rest now, and take possession of your royal houses. Welcome to your land, my lords!”

When Montezuma had finished, La Malinche translated his address into Spanish so that the Captain could understand it. Cortés replied in his strange and savage tongue, speaking first to La Malinche: “Tell Montezuma that we are his friends. There is nothing to fear. We have wanted to see him for a long time, and now we have seen his face and heard his words. Tell him that we love him well and that our hearts are contented.”

Then he said to Montezuma: “We have come to your house in Mexico as friends. There is nothing to fear.”

La Malinche translated this speech and the Spaniards grasped Montezuma’s hands and patted his back to show their affection for him….

During this time, the people asked Montezuma how they should celebrate their god’s fiesta. He said: “Dress him in all his finery, in all his sacred ornaments.”

During this same time, The Sun commanded that Montezuma and Itzcohuatzin, the military chief of Tlatelolco, be made prisoners. The Spaniards hanged a chief from Acolhuacan named Nezahualquentzin. They also murdered the king of Nauhtla, Cohualpopocatzin, by wounding him with arrows and then burning him alive.

For this reason, our warriors were on guard at the Eagle Gate. The sentries from Tenochtitlan stood at one side of the gate, and the sentries from Tlatelolco at the other. But messengers came to tell them to dress the figure of Huitzilopochtli. They left their posts and went to dress him in his sacred finery: his ornaments and his paper clothing.

When this had been done, the celebrants began to sing their songs. That is how they celebrated the first day of the fiesta. On the second day they began to sing again, but without warning they were all put to death. The dancers and singers were completely unarmed. They brought only their embroidered cloaks, their turquoises, their lip plugs, their necklaces, their clusters of heron feathers, their trinkets made of deer hooves. Those who played the drums, the old men, had brought their gourds of snuff and their timbrels.

The Spaniards attacked the musicians first, slashing at their hands and faces until they had killed all of them. The singers-and even the spectators- were also killed. This slaughter in the Sacred Patio went on for three hours. Then the Spaniards burst into the rooms of the temple to kill the others: those who were carrying water, or bringing fodder for the horses, or grinding meal, or sweeping, or standing watch over this work.

The king Montezuma, who was accompanied by Itzcohuatzin and by those who had brought food for the Spaniards, protested: “Our lords, that is enough! What are you doing? These people are not carrying shields or macanas. Our lords, they are completely unarmed!”

The Sun had treacherously murdered our people on the twentieth day after the captain left for the coast. We allowed the Captain to return to the city in peace. But on the following day we attacked him with all our might, and that was the beginning of the war.

Miguel LeonPortilla, ed., *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), pp. 64-66, 129131.

Available through the Internet History Sourcebooks Project. and *The American YAWP Reader*

**Primary Source Supplement #3: Bartolomé de Las Casas Describes the Exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, 1542**

*Bartolomé de Las Casas, a Spanish Dominican priest, wrote directly to the King of Spain hoping for new laws to prevent the brutal exploitation of Native Americans. Las Casas’s writings quickly spread around Europe and were used as humanitarian justification for other European nations to challenge Spain’s colonial empire with their own schemes of conquest and colonization.*

Now this infinite multitude of Men are by the Creation of God innocently simple, altogether void of and averse to all manner of Craft, Subtlety and Malice, and most Obedient and Loyal Subjects to their Native Sovereigns; and behave themselves very patiently, submissively and quietly towards the Spaniards, to whom they are subservient and subject; so that finally they live without the least thirst after revenge, laying aside all litigiousness, Commotion and hatred…

The natives are capable of Morality or Goodness and very apt to receive the principles of Catholic Religion; nor are they averse to Civility and good Manners…, I myself have heard the Spaniards themselves (who dare not assume the Confidence to deny the good Nature in them) declare, that there was nothing wanting in them for the acquisition of eternal grace, but the sole Knowledge and Understanding of the Deity….

The Spaniards first assaulted the innocent Sheep, so qualified by the Almighty, like most cruel tigers, wolves, and lions, hunger-starved, studying nothing, for the space of Forty Years, after their first landing, but the Massacre of these Wretches, whom they have so inhumanely and barbarously butchered and harassed with several kinds of Torments, never before known, or heard (of which you shall have some account in the following Discourse) that of Three Millions of Persons, which lived in Hispaniola itself,

there is at present but the inconsiderable remnant of scarce Three Hundred. Nay the Isle of Cuba, which extends as far, as Valladolid in Spain is distant from Rome, lies now uncultivated, like a Desert, and entombed in its own Ruins. You may also find the Isles of St. John, and Jamaica, both large and fruitful places, unpeopled and desolate. The Lucayan Islands on the North Side, adjacent to Hispaniola and Cuba, which are Sixty in number, or thereabout, together with those, vulgarly known by the name of the Gigantic Isles, and others, the most infertile whereof, exceeds the Royal Garden of Seville in fruitfulness, a most Healthful and pleasant Climate, is now laid waste and uninhabited; and whereas, when the Spaniards first arrived here, about Five Hundred Thousand Men dwelt in it, they are now cut off, some by slaughter, and others ravished away by Force and Violence, to work in the Mines of Hispaniola, which was destitute of Native Inhabitants: For a certain Vessel, sailing to this Isle, to the end, that the Harvest being over (some good Christian, moved with Piety and Pity, undertook this dangerous Voyage, to convert Souls to Christianity) the remaining gleanings might be gathered up, there were only found Eleven Persons, which I saw with my own Eyes. There are other Islands Thirty in number, and upward bordering upon the Isle of St. John, totally unpeopled; all which are above Two Thousand miles in length, and yet remain without Inhabitants, Native, or People.

As to the firm land, we are certainly satisfied, and assured, that the Spaniards by their barbarous and execrable Actions have absolutely depopulated Ten Kingdoms, of greater extent than all Spain, together with the Kingdoms of Aragon and Portugal, that is to say, above One Thousand Miles, which now lye waste and desolate, and are absolutely ruined, when as formerly no other Country whatsoever was more populous. Nay we dare boldly affirm, that during the Forty Years space, wherein they exercised their sanguinary and detestable Tyranny in these Regions, above Twelve Millions (computing Men, Women, and Children) have undeservedly perished; nor do I conceive that I should deviate from the Truth by saying that above Fifty Millions in all paid their last Debt to Nature.

Those that arrived at these Islands from the remotest parts of Spain, and who pride themselves in the Name of Christians, steered Two courses principally, in order to the Extirpation, and Exterminating of this People from the face of the Earth. The first whereof was raising an unjust, bloody, cruel War. The other, by putting them to death, who hitherto, thirsted after their Liberty, or designed (which the most Potent, Strenuous and Magnanimous Spirits intended) to recover their pristine Freedom, and shake off the Shackles of so injurious a Captivity: For they being taken off in War, none but Women and Children were permitted to enjoy the benefit of that Country-Air…

Now the ultimate end and scope that incited the Spaniards to endeavor the Extirpation and Desolation of this People, was Gold only…

Finally, in one word, their Ambition and Avarice, than which the heart of Man never entertained greater, and the vast Wealth of those Regions; the Humility and Patience of the Inhabitants (which made their approach to these Lands more easy) did much promote the business: Whom they so despicably contemned, that they treated them (I speak of things which I was an Eye Witness of, without the least fallacy) not as Beasts, which I cordially wished they would, but as the most abject dung and filth of the Earth; and so solicitous they were of their Life and Soul, that the above-mentioned number of People died without understanding the true Faith or Sacraments. And this also is as really true that the _Spaniards_ never received any injury from the Indians, but that they rather reverenced them as Persons descended from Heaven, until that they were compelled to take up Arms, provoked thereunto by repeated Injuries, violent Torments, and unjust Butcheries.

Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies…* (Project Gutenberg EBook: 2007), 9-16.

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# 1.5: Early Globalization and Revolutions




Figure: 1811 Map of Europe

## The Development of Nation-States in Europe

As mentioned previously, by 1500, Western Europeans were unable to pull themselves together into the type of extensive land empire seen in Asia at the time – or to reconstruct the unity that had been achieved in the Roman Empire. The Hapsburg family continued to try to maintain an entity they called the "Holy Roman Empire" but it was really an alliance of German principalities, and had ceased to include Rome in the 12th century. During the 1600s, religion, language, and local culture began inspiring feelings of regional solidarity that grew into the idea of separate nationalities. Some of these nations organized themselves as absolute monarchies, while in others, power was shared among different national groups.

The consolidation of nationalities happened over several centuries. By 1500, Europe's 80 million people were divided into about 500 states and principalities. Three hundred years later, Europe's population had nearly doubled and 150 million Europeans lived in just 30 nations. In many of these countries, the ideas of divine monarchy and hereditary nobility had given way to a sharing of constitutional power between rulers and their subjects. Merchants gained influence and slowly acquired legislative powers in bodies like Britain's House of Commons.

The French Revolution, inspired in part by the revolt of Britain's North American colonies and the establishment of the United States, would extend the experiment with democracy to include the lower classes for the first time in European history. France's revolution, which will be presented in this chapter, would end one of the most deeply-entrenched absolute monarchies of Europe, while Napoleon's armies ended feudalism in most of continental Europe by 1815.




Figure: Louis XIV, the “Sun King”

France developed into an absolute monarchy under the Bourbon dynasty. Louis XIII (r. 1610-43) and his chief minister, Cardinal Richelieu, concentrated power in the hands of the King. The King stopped convening the Estates General, an advisory body made up of representatives of the clergy, the aristocracy, and the working people, and ruled absolutely.

The French monarchy was able to hold back many of the democratic advances of neighboring nations, like the Netherlands and Britain, because of the centralized power and personal authority of the longest-reigning king in European history, Louis XIV. Known as “the Sun King,” Louis XIV occupied the French throne for 72 years, from 1643 when he became emperor at age 4 after his father’s passing, to his death in 1715. By the 1680s, Louis had greatly improved France’s influence in the world and had increased the power of the monarchy. In 1682, Louis moved the royal court to Versailles, a country palace about thirteen miles from Paris, requiring nobility to live in the palace where he could keep them under his thumb. But he also modernized Paris, under the direction of his finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert.

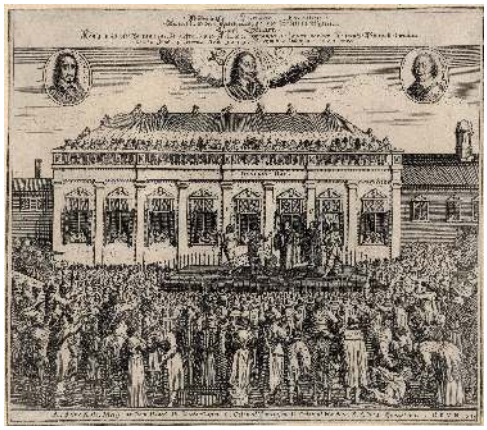


Figure: German illustration of the execution of King Charles I of England, January 30, 1649.

Constitutional states like Britain shared power between hereditary monarchs and legislative bodies that represented (some of) the people. In Britain’s case, the legislature, called Parliament, also controlled the government’s purse-strings. Britain fought a Civil War between 1642 and 1649 when a Protestant religious sect known as the Puritans and their allies in Parliament led a revolt against absolute monarchy championed by King Charles I. The Puritans had a much stricter interpretation of the Christian Bible and wanted to “purify” the Church of England, ridding it of remaining Catholic and liturgical practices not described in scripture. A Puritan-dominated Parliamentary army led by Oliver Cromwell beat the Royalists on the battlefield and then executed Charles I in 1649. Unfortunately, Cromwell’s ten-year experiment with a republic, which he called the Commonwealth, degenerated into a dictatorship. After Cromwell’s death in 1659 and the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Parliament held onto enough power to depose Catholic-leaning James II in 1689 and invite his daughter Mary (and her Protestant Dutch husband Prince William of Orange) to take the throne in a peaceful transfer of power that became known as the Glorious Revolution.

Questions for Discussion

- How did the French and British styles of government differ?
- Why did England have a Civil War in the 1640s?

## European Colonization of North America

The Spanish established the first permanent European settlement on the North American coast in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565. The French followed two decades later, building a fort in 1604 at Port Royal in what is now Nova Scotia and establishing Quebec on the St. Lawrence River in 1608. The English had tried settling people on Roanoke Island, in North Carolina, in 1588, but the colony had mysteriously disappeared by the time resupply ships returned to the area a few years later. The settlement may have been overrun by local Indians, but it is also possible that the abandoned colonists went to live with the natives when their food ran out and when help failed to arrive from England. Throughout the early history of English settlement in North America, colonial authorities regularly tried to hush up reports of poor English colonists choosing to live with the Indians. The English published frightening tales of captivity and redemption, although in reality poor people, especially women, were often better-treated in Indian society than in the English colonies.

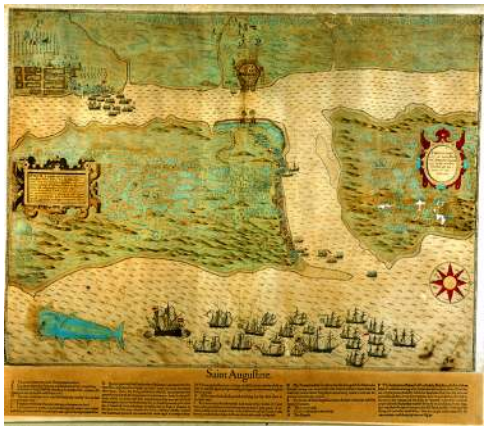



Figure: 1589 map of St. Augustine, showing the privateer Sir Francis Drake's 1586 attack.

After losing both their people and their entire capital investment at Roanoke, the English waited nearly 20 years before they tried settling the Chesapeake Bay region again in 1607. The Virginia Company, a joint stock venture chartered by King James I in 1606, sent expeditions to the explore the coast of North America between the Spanish and French settlements, one of which established Jamestown forty miles inland on the James River as the first permanent English town in North America. In 1620 a shipload of persecuted Puritans we know as the "Pilgrims" fled England and its Anglican church and landed on Cape Cod. Ten years later another group of Puritans received a royal charter to establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony at Boston.



Figure: 1837 painting called The Trapper's Bride, depicting a marriage between a voyageur and a native woman.

British colonists in North America focused on establishing family farms for raising crops and pasturing animals like cattle and sheep, and growing cash crops like tobacco in the warmer climate of the South. By contrast, French efforts on the continent centered on trade with Indians for beaver pelts, since the growing season was much shorter in the region between the St. Lawrence River and Hudson Bay. Many French *voyageurs* married native women, creating the mixed-ethnic community known as *métis* today. However, alliance with the Indians did not change the outcome of the Seven Years War for France in 1763, as we will see in a bit. The French still lost all their North American territory to the British and Spanish (Napoleon later got the Louisiana Territory back, then almost immediately sold it to Thomas Jefferson).

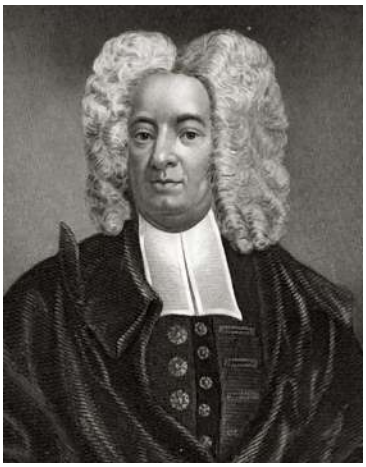


Figure: Puritan clergyman Cotton Mather (1663-1728)

The diseases of the Columbian Exchange spread more slowly in places where Indian population density was comparatively lower, such as along the Atlantic Coast of North America. But once again, it worked to the advantage of Europeans. Native populations in the coastal northeast were devastated by an epidemic that raged from 1617 to 1619 and killed 95 percent of the Abenaki people and over 90 percent of the Massachusetts tribe. This emptying of the land was often seen by English settlers like the Pilgrims and the Puritans as a gift of divine providence. Puritan leader John Winthrop wrote about the favor God had shown to the colonists by killing the natives and minister Cotton Mather wrote that "The Indians of these parts had newly…been visited with such a prodigious Pestilence; as carried away not a Tenth, but Nine Parts of Ten (yea, 'tis said Nineteen of Twenty) among them…So that the Woods were almost cleared of those pernicious Creatures, to make Room for better Growth" (*Magnalia Christi Americana*, 1702). English colonists were quick to take advantage of the empty village sites, open farmland, and social chaos among the natives caused throughout the region by the ongoing Columbian Exchange.




Figure: Illustration of Metacomet, son of Massasoit, by Paul Revere, 1771

Although many individual settlers probably tried to deal fairly with their Indian neighbors, the differences between European and native ideas of ownership and the rapid growth of the colonies made conflict virtually inevitable. Natives regularly moved to new locations as the seasons changed. They gardened in shifting fields. Colonists built houses and permanent villages, and fenced their fields. But although they claimed complete ownership of the parcels they occupied, the colonists let their cattle and pigs run loose over the countryside. Since the natives were not protecting their lands in ways the colonists recognized, with fences, the Euro-Americans believed (or at least argued) Indians had no idea of land ownership. The colonists were unaware that native practices had been created for a world without domestic livestock. When Indians treated European livestock like wildlife and shot a wandering cow, or when they killed pigs eating their un-fenced crops, the colonists demanded compensation for the destruction of their property. And of course, more colonists arrived every year. The Powhatan wars in Virginia (1610-46), the Pequot War in Connecticut (1637), the Dutch-Indian War in the Hudson Valley (1643), and the Beaver Wars (1650) all ended badly for the natives. Even King Philip's War (1675), which is remembered as a disastrous, nearly-successful uprising by Massasoit's son Metacomet, who had finally decided enough was enough, resulted in five times as many native deaths as English. By the conclusion of the worldwide Seven Years War between the French and British empires (known as the French and Indian War in North America) in 1763, northeastern natives were no longer considered a threat to European colonies.

**Questions for Discussion**

- How did English settlement differ from Spanish or French colonialism?
- How did the Columbian Exchange affect English settlement in North America?
- Why did English settlers believe God had intervened on their behalf?
- How did differences in land use lead to conflict between natives and colonists?

## Comparative Colonization: The Spanish, the British, the Land, the Natives

The contrasts between Spanish and British colonization in the Americas are stark, and help explain subsequent social and economic development in the Hemisphere. The differences are especially visible in four areas: who the settlers were, how they were governed, how they worked the land, and the nature of their relationship with the indigenous peoples.



Figure: Hernán Cortés, conqueror of the Aztecs and premier encomendero of New Spain.

As described in the previous chapter, the Spanish had just completed an 800-year "Reconquest" of Iberia from Muslim rule in 1492, when Columbus first sailed west. Spain applied the same model of Iberian conquest and colonization to the Americas, granting conquered land with all of its inhabitants to the *encomenderos*, who were selected for their proven loyalty to King and empire, and to the Catholic Church. Soldiers and clergy were also pledged to Crown and Church, as well as the administrators, artisans and other settlers who arrived in Spanish America with their families. The Portuguese in Brazil followed the same rule.

The British, however, used their colonies in North America as havens for religious dissenters, as a safety-valve to reduce the numbers of the poor in England, and as dumping grounds for other troublemakers. As mentioned above, Massachusetts was settled by Puritans who had rejected the Church of England. Ironically, these seekers of religious freedom were so strict and dogmatic that anyone who disagreed even slightly was unwelcome in their new "city upon a hill". Advocates of further reform soon left and settled Connecticut and Rhode Island, which were open to settlers of all religions—except Catholics who instead settled in Maryland. Another dissenting religious group from England, the Quakers, colonized Pennsylvania, while Georgia was partly settled by petty criminals "transported" from Great Britain (Australia would serve this role in the late 18th and early 19th century). As a result, settlers of the Thirteen Colonies were less loyal to the British Crown than the Spanish settlers of Central and South America were to their monarch. Indeed, if the Spanish had followed the British policy of shipping their undesirables to the New World, "Latin" America might have become "Judeo-Islamic" America, a place where Jews and Muslims who had refused to convert to Catholicism were sent.



Figure: The extent of Spanish territory in the Americas in the 18th century.

The Spanish and British also governed their colonies in very different ways. The Spanish Crown wanted to directly rule their American empire, appointing trusted men—the *peninsulares*—to serve as viceroys, judges, governors, and mayors, applying laws and regulations made by the Council of the Indies in Spain. British colonists had already had already a sense of self-government through their parliament, which checked the power of the King and controlled the treasury. Subsequently, in contrast to Spanish settlers, the British colonists set up legislatures, held town-hall meetings, often appointed their own governors, and made many of their own laws rather than waiting for instructions from London.

This difference in representative government, however, does not mean that the Spanish colonists were completely deferential. They often applied the concept of "*obedezco, pero no cumplo*" ("I obey, but I do not comply") to regulations made by the Council of Indies that they believed did not consider local realities in the Americas. Also, especially in the 1700s, artisans and laborers initiated local riots and uprisings against unjust taxes or changes in religious governance, where the crowds shouted "Long live the king, and death to bad government!" until the wrongs were righted. Similar protests in the Thirteen Colonies would not occur until the 1770s.

Land arrangements were also very different between the British and the Spanish. Both empires had sugar and other plantations which depended on enslaved African labor (which we will examine below). However, for other crops (especially those for local consumption), the Spanish followed the tradition of the *encomendero* (and, later, *hacendero*), in which a large landowner employed indigenous and mestizo workers, while the British settlers preferred the individual family farm. In the long run, this economic difference affected attitudes about entrepreneurship and ideas of personal liberty. The large landowners in Spanish America did not

want to disrupt a social system which brought them wealth, while in the Thirteen Colonies, even the lowliest indentured servant who had worked without pay for seven years, looked forward to gaining their own plot for themselves “out West.”

The fourth major difference between Spanish and British America involves relationships with the indigenous peoples. Basically, the Spanish had arrived and said, “This is our land, obey us” while the British said, “This is our land, go somewhere else.” The Spanish Empire included the indigenous in their colonial project, partly because of the blood ties that connected many of the Spanish with their mestizo descendants. Mestizos and Indians were often protected or at least tolerated by Spanish authorities in their own settlements as long as they paid tribute and at least pretended to be Catholic. Just like their counterparts in North America, the Indians in Latin America also faced the problem of the Spanish allowing their pigs and cattle to destroy native plantings—but as Spanish colonial records reveal, the indigenous brought this injustice to local Spanish judges, who often determined in favor of the Indians. Many natives felt part of colonial society, and confidently challenged Spanish landowners in court.




Figure: A panel from one of the many “Casta paintings” produced in Spanish America, 1770.

Still, the Spanish colonies were far from a utopia for the natives. They did not have complete control over their lives and the “protection” offered by Catholic clergy required abandoning their own religion and many of their customs and practices. The Spanish did not want to physically eliminate the indigenous, but they did advocate a cultural genocide of sorts, which was never complete due to native resistance. But this was, in the long run, less successful than the destruction of native culture in North America because despite the Columbian Exchange there were more natives left. Native languages thrive in many parts of Central and South America where they are preserved and spoken by millions, while the tribal tongues of North America struggle to stay relevant.

The social and economic differences between British and Spanish America clearly have consequences even today, some positive and others negative. The entrepreneurial spirit common in the United States has resulted in a less rigid class system than in Latin America, while the idea that the U.S. is a “white man’s country” (in which African-Americans were also excluded) has led to systemic racism which is still an enormous problem, especially when compared to attitudes about race in most of Latin America, where *mestizos* and *mulattos* abound.

Question for Discussion

How did racial mixing make Spanish-American society different from Anglo-American?

## Caribbean Islands and Sugar Cane

In spite of the beginning of British settlement in North America, Britain's main focus in the 17th century was the Caribbean. We tend to forget this, because this region did not join the North American revolution in 1776 and become part of the United States. But in the 1600s, Sugar Islands like Barbados and Jamaica were the most profitable British colonies. Like the Spanish, North American colonists in the New World expected and hoped to find not only a place to build a new society, but also a place where they could get rich. Even religious idealists such as the Pilgrims looked forward to opportunities for wealth and social mobility that had not been available to them in England. And right from the start, European colonies in North America were commercial. In addition to fishing, growing tobacco, and trapping beaver, the North American colonies benefited from the booming sugar economy of the Caribbean.




Figure: Map of Barbados from Richard Ligon's True and Exact History, 1657. Note runaway slaves being chased into the hills at the top of map.

Islands such as Barbados that had once been self-sufficient had begun by the mid-1600s to specialize in the profitable commodity at the expense of all other crops, so sugar planters looked to their neighbor colonies for food supplies and feed for draft animals. John Winthrop, the Puritan leader who helped establish Boston and who was Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony four times before 1650, sent his second son Henry to help establish Barbados in 1626. When Oliver Cromwell's Civil War halted the flow of commercial shipping between England and the ten-year-old Bay Colony in 1640, trade with the West Indies saved Boston's economy. Governor Winthrop's younger son Samuel joined the growing community of New England merchants in the Caribbean sugar islands in 1647.

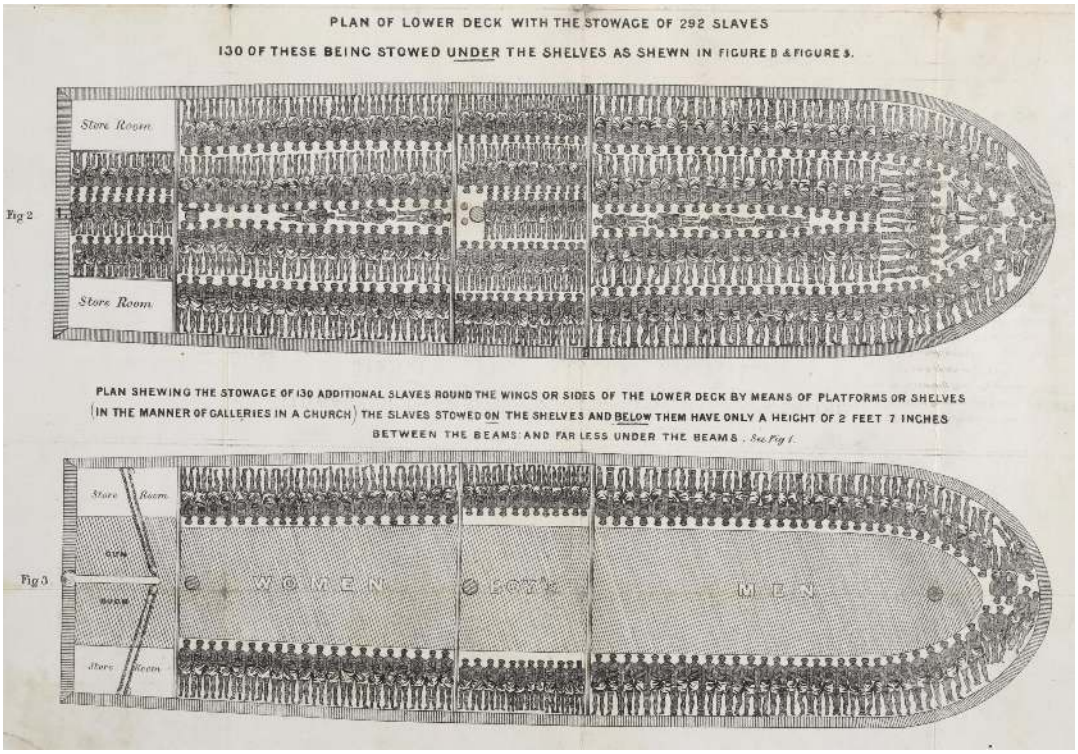
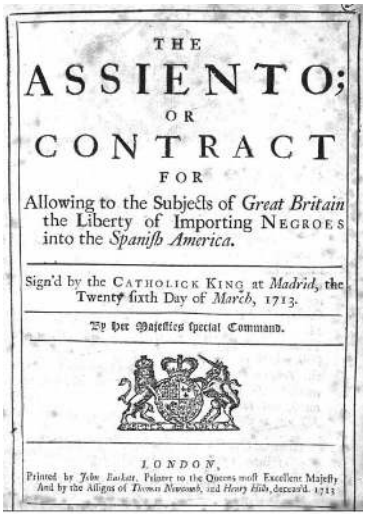



Figure: Diagram of a slave ship, printed in 1788 for an abolitionist society brochure.

About 16 million Africans were captured and transported to European slaveholding colonies during the entire period of Atlantic slavery. Only 12 million arrived alive. A quarter of all slaves taken died on the voyage across the Atlantic. Although slavery reduced African population by over 26 million (10 million to the Islamic world and 16 million to the Atlantic), American staples including corn and manioc created a population boom that exceeded the losses to the slave trade. However, if these 26 million people had been available to contribute to African society, what social and cultural progress might have been possible? Additionally, since African nations–like other societies–tended to enslave captives in war, conflicts among tribes and kingdoms created an unstable social and political climate, which made sub-Saharan Africa ripe for European imperialists in the late nineteenth century, well after the slave trade with the Americas had ended.


THE
ASSIENTO;
OR
CONTRACT
FOR
Allowing to the Subjects of *Great Britain* the Liberty of Importing NEGROES into the *Spanish America*.

Sign'd by the CATHOLICK KING at *Madrid*, the Twenty sixth Day of *March*, 1713.

By her Majesties special Command.

LONDON,
Printed by *John Baskett*, Printer to the Queens most Excellent Majesty, And by the Assigns of *Thomas Newcomb*, and *Henry Hills*, deceas'd. 1713

Figure: The Asiento, 1713

Under the Treaty of Tordesillas, Spain was not allowed to purchase slaves in Africa because it was part of the territory granted to Portugal. So Spain had set up a monopoly contract for slave trading to Spanish America called the Asiento, which was initially granted to France. In 1714, Spain shifted the Asiento to Britain and gave the South Sea Company a 30-year monopoly on selling slaves to Spain. The Company set up slave distribution "factories" at Cartagena (Colombia), Veracruz (Mexico), Portobello

(Panama), La Guaira (Venezuela), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Havana, and Santiago de Cuba, as well as its own colonies of Barbados and Jamaica. In 1720, a speculative investment “bubble” burst, throwing the British economy into crisis. The South Sea Company survived the burst of its bubble, mostly due to revenues from selling slaves, and its slave sales peaked in 1725, five years after the financial crisis.



Figure: Painting of a sugar plantation on British Antigua, 1823.

Conditions were so harsh on sugar plantations that slaves generally died after about three years after their arrival. Plantation owners could have changed their practices, but the reduced profits would have exceeded the replacement costs of the slaves, so planters chose to work slaves to death quickly and buy more. The economic value of local “increase” produced by enslaved women was recognized in the 18th century in the North American colonies where people like Thomas Jefferson wrote about the money that could be made on these natural replacements. Additionally, raising tobacco and other crops was less harsh than cultivating sugar cane, creating better conditions for survival. Britain and the U.S. ended the slave trade in 1807 and 1808 but slavery continued in the U.S., where enslaved people in Mid-Atlantic states where tobacco was being replaced with mechanized wheat-farming were “sold down the river” to the increasingly important cotton plantations in the Deep South, creating a major profit opportunity for white Virginians.



Figure: The Battle of Palm Tree Hill, during the Haitian Revolution.

Slaves often resisted their captors. Sometimes they ran away and formed independent communities in remote hinterlands called Maroon colonies. Many of these Maroon colonies became stable societies, populated by escaped slaves and the descendants of Indians who had run away from the colonists’ earlier attempts to enslave them and some even lasted into the twentieth century in Central and South America.

Other times, the slaves rebelled – usually unsuccessfully, but not always. Traditional histories sometimes seem to not give enough attention to slave resistance, but here’s a partial list of some notable revolts (there were a dozen more in the 19th century):

- 1526 San Miguel de Gualdape (Spanish Florida, Victorious)
- 1570 Gaspar Yanga‘s Revolt (Veracruz, New Spain, Victorious)
- 1712 New York Slave Revolt (British Province of New York, Suppressed)
- 1730 First Maroon War (British Jamaica, Victorious)
- 1733 St. John Slave Revolt (Danish Saint John, Suppressed)
- 1739 Stono Rebellion (British Province of South Carolina, Suppressed)
- 1741 New York Conspiracy (Province of New York, Suppressed)

- 1760 Tacky's War (British Jamaica, Suppressed)
- 1787 Abaco Slave Revolt (British Bahamas, Suppressed)
- 1791 Mina Conspiracy (Louisiana (New Spain), Suppressed)
- 1795 Pointe Coupée Conspiracy (Louisiana (New Spain), Suppressed)
- 1791–1804 Haitian Revolution (French Saint-Domingue, Victorious)

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why would plantation owners choose to work slaves to death rather than treat them better?
- Why don't we read more about slave revolts in most history books?

## The New World and the Enlightenment: Independence of the United States



Figure: Portrait of Thomas Paine painted in 1792, shortly before his imprisonment during the French Reign of Terror.

The Enlightenment encouraged a gradual shift from an understanding of political sovereignty as a gift of God (the Divine Right of Kings as expressed by absolute monarchs like Louis XIV) to ideas of popular sovereignty and government by consent of the governed or through a "social contract" between rulers and people. The Enlightenment blossomed when people discovered new knowledge through both exploration and science and began throwing off what they considered the superstitions of an earlier age, including the "divine right" of kings. Philosophers like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau began reimagining the relationship between individuals and society, while popular writers like Thomas Paine began translating these ideas into pamphlets like *Common Sense* and into books like *The Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason* that were read not only by other philosophers but also by hundreds of thousands of regular literate people.



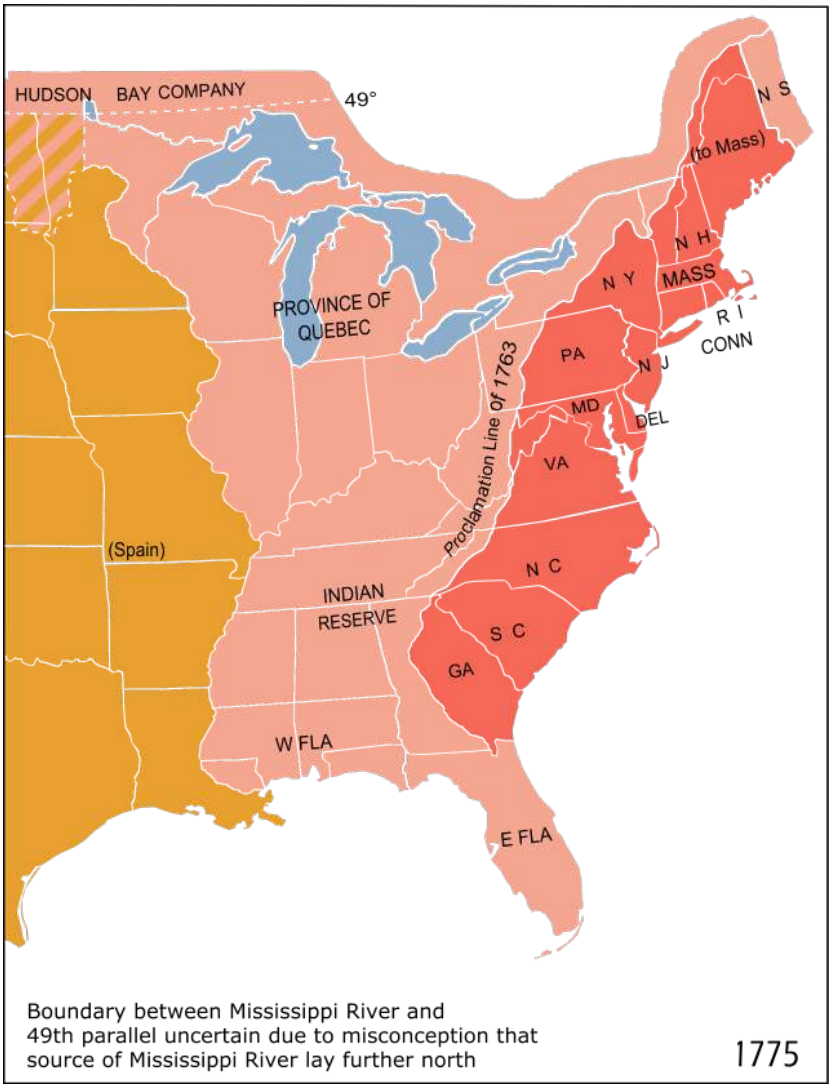
Figure: The Boston Tea Party, as depicted by Nathaniel Currier in 1846.

Some of the first places these Enlightenment political ideas were tested were Britain's thirteen North American colonies. The Seven Years War (1756-63) had been an expensive drain on Britain's treasury and Parliament believed the American colonists ought to pay their fair share of the cost of their defense. Britain instituted a number of taxes including the Sugar Act (1764), the Stamp Act (1765), the Townshend Act (1767), and the Tea Act (1773). Boycotts and protests by the colonists soon began, including the famous

Boston Tea Party in 1773, during which enraged patriots boarded a British cargo ship and dumped tea from India into Boston harbor, rather than pay the hated new tax.

Although the colonists found these taxes oppressive and obnoxious, to a great extent they were luxury taxes or excises on trade rather than direct taxes on personal income. Still, imposing new taxes on the colonists was a miscalculation by Parliament, because the merchants and the wealthy most affected by the taxes had the means and the motivation to organize a resistance movement.

American colonists also objected to the Quartering Act (1765) that forced them to provide housing and food for British troops. Again, this may have seemed fair to the legislators back in London who had sent an army to defend the colonies against the French and Indians in the recently-concluded war. But it was a big expense for the Americans, and was an issue that cut across class boundaries more than the luxury taxes and unified opposition. Imagine being a poor farmer in New England and having a red-coat from some random region of England living with you and eating your food.




Another major cause of American resentment against the British after the Seven Years War was the Royal Proclamation of 1763 that established a western boundary to the colonies roughly along the ridge-line of the Appalachian Mountains. The support of Native Americans from the trans-Appalachian region had been critically important to the British war effort in North America. Tribes such as the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) were powerful allies, and their leaders complained about the increasing numbers of settlers leaving the coastal colonies to make farms in places like upstate New York, western Pennsylvania, and the Ohio River Valley. The British created an Indian Reserve beyond the Appalachians, including western Virginia and Pennsylvania west of Pittsburgh, which had been a French fort captured in the war. This angered both colonists who looked west for new lands to settle and land speculators who had planned on getting rich buying and selling the western territory.

In addition to the famous “all men are created equal” and “consent of the governed” parts of the colonists’ Declaration of Independence, the 1776 document included a laundry list of complaints against the British Crown including the charge that the king had “endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.” The founders understood that independence would mean taking land from “Savages”. Although the Declaration echoed the Enlightenment ideals of contractual government and representation, at the time these ideals only applied to white male landowners.

Many Indians sided with Britain in the American Revolution, because they saw a British victory as their only chance to prevent the colonists from overrunning them. Many slaves also ran away to join British forces, especially after they were offered immediate emancipation by Lord Dunmore. Many fought their former owners in Dunmore’s “Ethiopian Regiment” or secretly sided with the British against colonial slaveholders.



Figure: Loyalists being chased out of town by their former neighbors.

Nor did the Declaration speak for all the white colonists. New York City was occupied by the British until 1783, well after the end of the fighting, and the city was a haven for supporters of the British side. Historians have estimated the number of loyalists at 15-20% of the total colonial population, or about 400,000 people. Most of these loyalists stayed and became U.S. citizens after the war, but about 70,000 left for other parts of the British empire. Many of those in the north went to Canada and settled New Brunswick while southerners went to Florida, which had remained loyal under British rule, or to the British islands in the Caribbean.

After the Revolution, poor Americans were often left wondering what they had fought for. Taxes were high and farmers couldn’t pay them because the “Continental” currency printed by the rebel government to pay the troops was worthless. Western Massachusetts farmers who felt the new government in Boston did not represent them revolted in 1786 in Shays’s Rebellion, which was put down by government troops. This fight and others forced leaders of the Confederated states to reconsider how a federal government should be organized, and they called a Constitutional Convention to meet in Philadelphia, with the Thirteen States sending representatives.

The United States Constitution that formed the new government began with the words “We the People.” It acknowledged the Enlightenment concept that political power comes from the consent of the governed. The final document was influenced by the framers’ studies of earlier republics and by negotiations over various state constitutions that had favored the idea of three branches of government, the legislative, executive and judicial, along with a system of checks and balances that made no one branch superior to the others. For instance, the President could veto laws passed by Congress, while Congress could, with a 2/3 majority, override the veto. And the Supreme Court could interpret a law as being unconstitutional, checking both the President and Congress.

In spite of these checks and balances, when the Constitutional Convention sent the newly-drafted US Constitution to all the states for ratification, many New England towns either rejected the document outright or provisionally approved it with modifications they sent back to the authorities. In most cases, their provisional approvals were marked as simple YES votes and the carefully worked-out modifications were “filed”. But dissatisfaction with the original Constitution was so strong, in spite of the series of promotional articles published about it that have become known as the Federalist Papers, that the convention was forced to write

the first 10 Amendments (the Bill of Rights) and issue them at the same time. Without the Bill of Rights, the Constitution would be a much different document.

Questions for Discussion

- Why did the British government consider the taxes they imposed on the colonists reasonable?
- Why did Indians and blacks side with the British during the Revolution?
- What prompted the writing of the Bill of Rights?

**The French Revolution**

Debt problems stemming from the Seven Years War and French support for the independence of the United States forced King Louis XVI to call the Estates-General in 1789, in order to raise revenue. The Estates-General had not been called since 1614, and its meeting was immediately seen as an opportunity to create a new parliamentary monarchy.

The three “estates”, commoners, nobility, and clergy, traditionally all had the same power; but it was not much compared to the absolute monarch. In 1789, the commoners were dominated by educated merchants and large landowners who advocated for establishing a British-style parliament as a check on the King’s power. The commoners had enough support from sectors of the clergy and nobility to declare themselves as the National Assembly, which set about forming a new government.

Dissatisfaction with the current government and excitement over establishing a new one inspired the people of Paris to form militia groups to defend the National Assembly from royalist attacks. On July 14th, these militias dramatically took over the Bastille, a royal prison which held political dissidents. In August the National Assembly agreed to a Declaration of the Rights of Man which claimed “Natural Law” as the basis for equal rights for all and called for liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression. Like the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution, the Assembly declared the the “nation” was sovereign, rather than the king, and asserted the rights of freedom of speech, the press, religion, and assembly.

However, the French Revolution differed from the American in that it was not a colonial independence movement, but a rejection of an existing monarchy by the people of France. There was a much greater degree of participation by poor people in France in this process, and the social changes attempted by the new government were much more significant than simply replacing a British ruling class with an American one as the revolution had done in the new United States. Unfortunately, the power vacuum created by the complete elimination of the prior government structure resulted in the rise of a radical Jacobin Party led by Maximillian Robespierre. By 1793, a Reign of Terror imprisoned 300,000 people and executed 40,000, including King Louis XVI and his Queen, Marie Antoinette.

One of the prisoners who just barely escaped with his life was Thomas Paine, the author of *Common Sense*, who had been welcomed as an honorary citizen of the new French Republic and had even been given a seat in their new legislative assembly. Although he had defended the French Revolution against British criticism in his book *The Rights of Man*, Paine was imprisoned for objecting to the execution of the French King and Queen. Paine was scheduled for execution, but was passed over in a lucky oversight. Other reformers like French feminist Olympe de Gouges were not so fortunate, and were killed by the revolution they had supported.

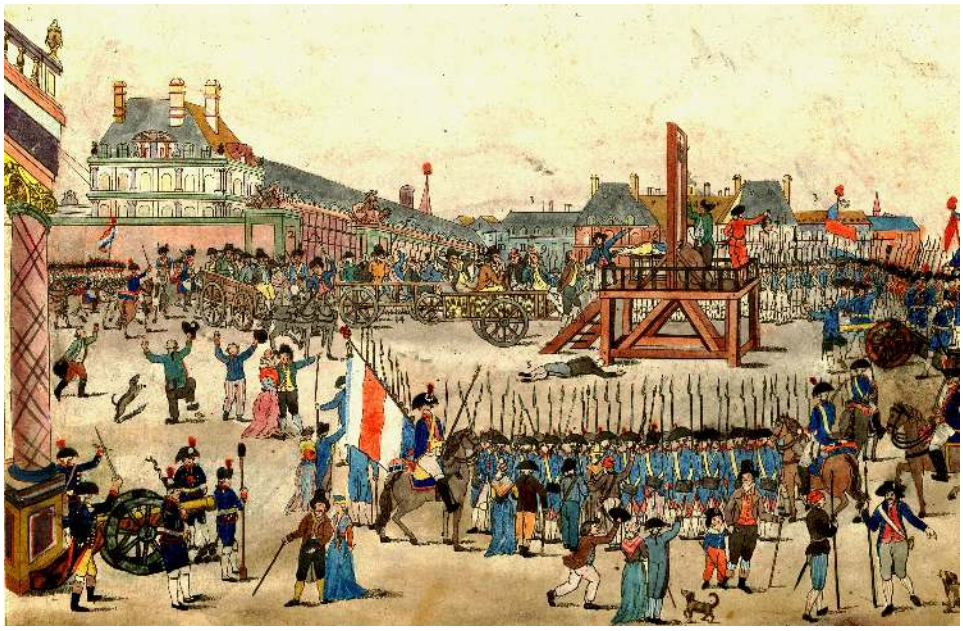


Figure: The Execution of Maximillian Robespierre in July 1794 effectively ended the Reign of Terror.

The Reign of Terror led to a rejection of the Jacobin party and the trial and execution of Robespierre in 1794. A more conservative government, the Directory, was installed but it failed to manage an orderly transition from the old regime to a new style of republican government. The Directory's failure created an opening for an ambitious opportunist named Napoleon Bonaparte, who as a general of the French Army had defended the Directory and the new French Republic against the neighboring monarchies, which had sent in troops to put down the Revolution. Returning from an Egyptian campaign in 1799, Napoleon overthrew the Directory and like Julius Caesar established a 3-man Consul style government—but unlike Caesar he quickly became the sole leader. Napoleon crowned himself Emperor in 1802.

**Question for Discussion**

How was the French Revolution different from the American?



Figure: 1803 portrait of Napoleon

One advantage Napoleon had establishing his empire, in addition to his effective use of the French army, was that he was able to reinstate many members of the old nobility who had been discredited or even imprisoned by the Revolution. He even allowed aristocrats to reclaim some of the property the revolutionaries had taken from them. Napoleon also introduced a new Civil Code in

1804 that completely revamped the French legal system and is still in use today. The Code, designed by a panel of four eminent judges, replaced France's old feudal legal system and has been tremendously influential in Europe and elsewhere in the world as nations developed modern legal systems.

In a series of wars between 1804 and 1807, Napoleon extended French control to much of Germany, Italy, Spain, and the duchy of Warsaw, and built strong alliances with Austria and Prussia. At its height, the French Empire ruled over 70 million subjects, and to secure its most profitable colony Napoleon sent 40,000 troops across the Atlantic to Hispaniola to try to retake San Dominique from an army of rebellious former slaves led by Toussaint l'Ouverture, one of the most important leaders of the revolutionary age.

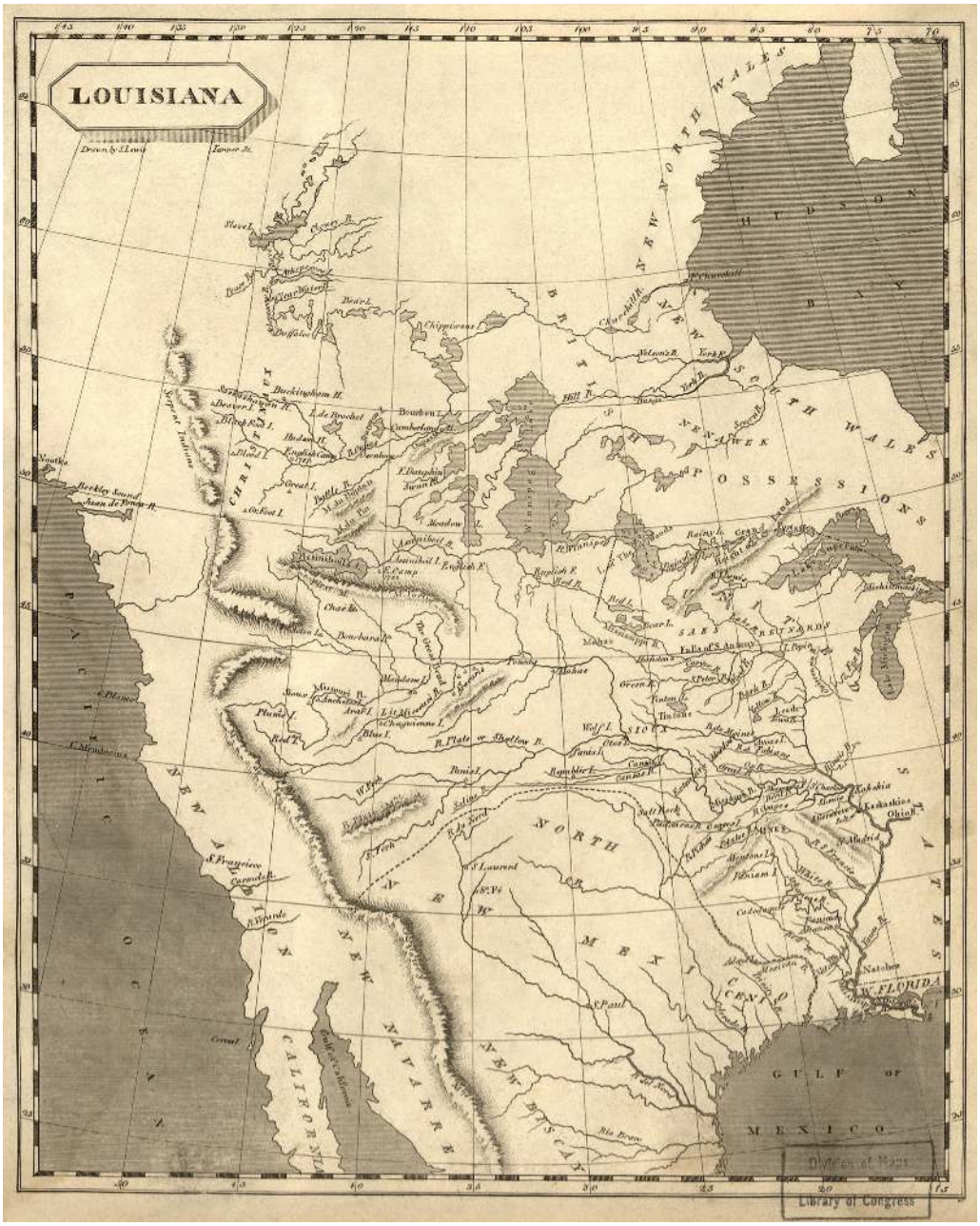
Encouraged by the French Revolution, slaves on sugar plantations on Hispaniola, which the French had renamed San Dominique, rebelled in 1791 and overthrew the white government of the island. Slavery in French colonies was then abolished by the Jacobins in 1793 (one of the few things Robespierre got right) and the army of former slaves fought a British invasion to a standstill in a 5-year war ending in 1798. But after declaring himself Emperor of the French, Napoleon reinstituted slavery and sent troops to retake the island for France.



Figure: Toussaint L'Ouverture, possibly reading the Haitian Declaration of Independence, ca. 1801

Napoleon's army, which outnumbered Haitian forces two to one, captured l'Ouverture in 1803 and transported him to a French prison where he died, but the revolution continued under l'Overture's lieutenant Jean-Jacques Dessalines. The former slaves defeated the French and established the Republic of Haiti in 1804. Although the Declaration of Independence's author Thomas Jefferson was President when Haiti became the first ever nation created by former slaves who gained their freedom in armed rebellion and only the second American republic to free itself from European colonialism, the author of the Declaration refused to recognize Haiti's independence. The slavery-supporting South actually blocked recognition of Haiti by the U.S. government until the Civil War, when a North-only Congress and President Lincoln finally established diplomatic relations in 1862.

Another momentous act of Napoleon's was his sale of 828,000 square miles of North America to the US in 1804. The expense of the failed war to prevent Haitian independence and the prospect of a new war with Britain convinced Napoleon to take fifty million francs (about $11 million today) for the territory it had just regained from Spain. President Thomas Jefferson had originally been interested in buying only the city of New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi River, which was an important port where produce from the interior arrived via the Mississippi. But the territory he acquired actually doubled the size of the U.S. As you can see from this 1804 map, people living on the east coast were aware how big North America was between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, if they were a bit hazy about what lay between the Rockies and the Pacific.




Revolution and Nationalism are related, but the relationship is complicated. In the case of the United States and Haiti, revolution led to the creation of new nations. In France, revolution led to chaos and Napoleon's attempt at empire-building. Napoleon's empire might have lasted a bit longer, if he had not been so interested in expanding it to include not only Europe and Haiti, but Russia. In a final example of bad judgment, Napoleon invaded Russia and occupied Moscow in September 1812. Russia's fast-moving Cossack cavalry executed a scorched-earth retreat before the advancing French army, so Napoleon's forces arrived in Moscow hungry, only to find that the city's quarter-million people had abandoned their homes and taken everything they could carry. The French burned the city (possibly by accident) and began a long retreat in early October at the beginning of what turned out to be a brutal winter. To make matters worse, Russian cavalry repeatedly cut the French supply lines, and of an original force of over 600,000 men, only about 100,000 made it back to France alive. Napoleon was able to build the army back up again, although replacing the horses the troops had eaten during the retreat was harder. But this crushing debacle proved to the world he wasn't the military genius many had believed him to be.

Napoleon's enemies invaded France in 1814, forced him to abdicate, and exiled him to Elba, a small island near his boyhood home of Corsica. Napoleon escaped the Mediterranean island and regained power briefly in 1815 before being defeated at Waterloo and

exiled to St. Helena in the South Atlantic, where he died six years later at the age of 51.



**Questions for Discussion**

- Why was Napoleon willing to sell Louisiana to Thomas Jefferson?
- What prevented the U.S. government from recognizing Haiti?

**Independence of Latin America**

Napoleon's conquest of Europe inadvertently created the conditions for additional revolutions and the creation of new nations in the Americas. As described in the last chapter, Spanish American society was based on a small aristocracy of ethnic Spanish *peninsulares* (people born on the Iberian peninsula) and creoles (people of Spanish descent born in the colonies) ruling large populations of mestizo (mixed) populations, Indians, and slaves. Like the leaders of the American Revolution, many of these colonial aristocrats felt the priorities of their rulers in Spain did not match their own. Napoleon's removal of the hereditary king and installation of his brother Joseph Bonaparte on the Spanish throne in 1807 removed the last shred of doubt. Soon after Joseph Bonaparte took the throne, representative juntas were established in Caracas, Santiago, Buenos Aires, and Bogota to rule in the name of the deposed Spanish king.

In 1810 a creole priest named Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla began Mexico's revolutionary movement, by giving a speech known as the "Grito de Dolores" or simply El Grito, the Cry. Hidalgo raised an army of 100,000 men, largely of landless peasants anxious for social reform, but they were defeated in January 1811 by a professional army of about 6,000 Spanish troops. Hidalgo was convicted of treason against Spain and executed. Another (this time mestizo) priest named José Maria Morelos took over the insurrection and convened a Congress in 1813 that wrote a constitution for Mexico called the *Decreto Constitucional para la Libertad de la America Mexica* which declared Mexico's independence. Unlike later independence movements in South America, Mexico's demanded not just political but also social change.

In 1815 Morelos was also captured and executed. His lieutenant Vicente Guerrero continued the war for independence. Guerrero would be elected president of Mexico in 1829 and would be Mexico's first black president. But it was a long way to 1829.



Figure: King Ferdinand VII of Spain, “El Rey Felon”

King Ferdinand VII was the Spanish monarch who had been forced to abdicate in 1808 in favor of Joseph Bonaparte. He regained the throne in 1813, but quickly became known as *el Rey Felón*, the criminal king. Ferdinand rejected the liberal 1812 Constitution that had been adopted by Spain’s rebel government during his absence. Historians have described him as “the basest king in Spanish history. Cowardly, selfish, grasping, suspicious, and vengeful, [he] seemed almost incapable of any perception of the commonwealth. He thought only in terms of his power and security and was unmoved by the enormous sacrifices of Spanish people to retain their independence and preserve his throne.” Latin American juntas and the Mexican rebels decided he did not deserve their allegiance and began fighting for their independence from Spain.

The royal government sent a general named Agustín de Iturbide against Guerrero’s forces in Mexico, but Guerrero beat Iturbide on the battlefield and then convinced him to join the revolution. In 1821 the two allied under the Plan de Iguala, or the “Plan of the Three Guarantees,” which proclaimed Mexico’s independence and declared that “All inhabitants . . . without distinction of their European, African or Indian origins are citizens . . . with full freedom to pursue their livelihoods according to their merits and virtues.” When Iturbide declared himself emperor of Mexico, Guerrero and his supporters rebelled and although Iturbide defeated them in the field he resigned when Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna also rebelled, and went into exile. Mexican history is very complicated and turbulent: suffice it to say that both Iturbide and Guerrero ended up being executed in their turns.



Figure: The Abrazo, when Guerrero convinced Iturbide to join revolution.

In 1811 Venezuela and Paraguay both declared their independence from Spain. In 1816 Argentina declared its independence, followed quickly by Chile and Gran Colombia. King Pedro of Portugal, whose father had fled to Brazil in 1807 to avoid being deposed by Napoleon, declared Brazil a constitutional empire under his rule in 1822. In 1824, the Venezuelan Simón Bolívar, who had led the liberation of Gran Colombia, conclusively defeated the Spanish armies at Junín and Sucre, and Peru gained its independence. A year later the eastern portion of the old viceroyalty of Peru became a separate country named after the liberator Bolívar: Bolivia.



Figure: Posthumous portrait of Simón Bolívar. ca. 1860.

Gran Colombia was a republic that includes territory now part of Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, northern Peru, western Guyana, and northwest Brazil. Bolívar was elected President of Gran Colombia from 1819 to 1830. He hoped Latin America would follow the example of the United States and create a federal union of all the newly-independent nations—or at least a common economic market. He convened a Congress of the Americas in the summer of 1826, inviting all the nations of Latin America and also the United States. The U.S. President, John Quincy Adams, didn't have a very high opinion of Latin Americans but he was an opponent of slavery and all of the new Spanish America republics had immediately outlawed the slave trade and had either

abolished slavery or had initiated its gradual disappearance through manumission. (The independent Brazilian Empire, on the other hand, did not formally end enslavement of people of color until 1888, the last nation in the Americas to do so). Adams had been instrumental in promulgating the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, establishing the Western Hemisphere as a region under the protection of the US and warning European nations, especially Great Britain, to limit their activities in the Americas.

Britain, however, did attend the Congress of the Americas as an observer and managed to gain several important trade deals as a result. But blocked once again by the slaveholding South, the U.S. government dragged its feet. Although the U.S. ultimately decided to send a delegation, it arrived only after the Congress had ended. Bolívar was unable to establish the Pan-American commonwealth he had dreamed of or even hold Gran Colombia together. He resigned the presidency in the spring of 1830 and the republic dissolved into political chaos and the three separate nations of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador. Bolívar died of tuberculosis at age 47 later that year.

### Questions for Discussion

- What was the significance of Mexico's 1821 *Plan de Iguala*?
- How do you think history would have been different if Bolívar had been successful in his plans for a United States of South America?

**Primary Source #1: U.S. Declaration of Independence**

**In Congress, July 4, 1776**

**The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,** When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.–That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, –That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.–Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies,

solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

## Primary Source Supplement #2: The Haitian Declaration of Independence, 1804

The Commander in Chief to the People of Haiti

Citizens:

It is not enough to have expelled the barbarians who have bloodied our land for two centuries; it is not enough to have restrained those ever-evolving factions that one after another mocked the specter of liberty that France dangled before you. We must, with one last act of national authority, forever assure the empire of liberty in the country of our birth; we must take any hope of re-enslaving us away from the inhuman government that for so long kept us in the most humiliating torpor. In the end we must live independent or die.

Independence or death… let these sacred words unite us and be the signal of battle and of our reunion.

Citizens, my countrymen, on this solemn day I have brought together those courageous soldiers who, as liberty lay dying, spilled their blood to save it; these generals who have guided your efforts against tyranny have not yet done enough for your happiness; the French name still haunts our land.

Everything revives the memories of the cruelties of this barbarous people: our laws, our habits, our towns, everything still carries the stamp of the French. Indeed! There are still French in our island, and you believe yourself free and independent of that Republic which, it is true, has fought all the nations, but which has never defeated those who wanted to be free.

What! Victims of our [own] credulity and indulgence for 14 years; defeated not by French armies, but by the pathetic eloquence of their agents' proclamations; when will we tire of breathing the air that they breathe? What do we have in common with this nation of executioners? The difference between its cruelty and our patient moderation, its color and ours the great seas that separate us, our avenging climate, all tell us plainly that they are not our brothers, that they never will be, and that if they find refuge among us, they will plot again to trouble and divide us.

Native citizens, men, women, girls, and children, let your gaze extend on all parts of this island: look there for your spouses, your husbands, your brothers, your sisters. Indeed! Look there for your children, your suckling infants, what have they become?… I shudder to say it … the prey of these vultures.

Instead of these dear victims, your alarmed gaze will see only their assassins, these tigers still dripping with their blood, whose terrible presence indicts your lack of feeling and your guilty slowness in avenging them. What are you waiting for before appeasing their spirits? Remember that you had wanted your remains to rest next to those of your fathers, after you defeated tyranny; will you descend into their tombs without having avenged them? No! Their bones would reject yours.

And you, precious men, intrepid generals, who, without concern for your own pain, have revived liberty by shedding all your blood, know that you have done nothing if you do not give the nations a terrible, but just example of the vengeance that must be wrought by a people proud to have recovered its liberty and jealous to maintain it let us frighten all those who would dare try to take it from us again; let us begin with the French. Let them tremble when they approach our coast, if not from the memory of those cruelties they perpetrated here, then from the terrible resolution that we will have made to put to death anyone born French whose profane foot soils the land of liberty.

We have dared to be free, let us be thus by ourselves and for ourselves. Let us imitate the grown child: his own weight breaks the boundary that has become an obstacle to him. What people fought for us? What people wanted to gather the fruits of our labor? And what dishonorable absurdity to conquer in order to be enslaved. Enslaved?… Let us leave this description for the French; they have conquered but are no longer free.

Let us walk down another path; let us imitate those people who, extending their concern into the future, and dreading to leave an example of cowardice for posterity, preferred to be exterminated rather than lose their place as one of the world's free peoples.

Let us ensure, however, that a missionary spirit does not destroy our work; let us allow our neighbors to breathe in peace; may they live quietly under the laws that they have made for themselves, and let us not, as revolutionary firebrands, declare ourselves the lawgivers of the Caribbean, nor let our glory consist in troubling the peace of the neighboring islands. Unlike that which we inhabit, theirs has not been drenched in the innocent blood of its inhabitants; they have no vengeance to claim from the authority that protects them.

Fortunate to have never known the ideals that have destroyed us, they can only have good wishes for our prosperity.

Peace to our neighbors; but let this be our cry: "Anathama to the French name! Eternal hatred of France!"

Natives of Haiti! My happy fate was to be one day the sentinel who would watch over the idol to which you sacrifice; I have watched, sometimes fighting alone, and if I have been so fortunate as to return to your hands the sacred trust you confided to me, know that it is now your task to preserve it. In fighting for your liberty, I was working for my own happiness. Before consolidating it with laws that will guarantee your free individuality, your leaders, who I have assembled here, and I, owe you the final proof of our devotion.

Generals and you, leaders, collected here close to me for the good of our land, the day has come, the day which must make our glory, our independence, eternal.

If there could exist among us a lukewarm heart, let him distance himself and tremble to take the oath which must unite us. Let us vow to ourselves, to posterity, to the entire universe, to forever renounce France, and to die rather than live under its domination; to fight until our last breath for the independence of our country.

And you, a people so long without good fortune, witness to the oath we take, remember that I counted on your constancy and courage when I threw myself into the career of liberty to fight the despotism and tyranny you had struggled against for 14 years. Remember that I sacrificed everything to rally to your defense; family, children, fortune, and now I am rich only with your liberty; my name has become a horror to all those who want slavery. Despots and tyrants curse the day that I was born. If ever you refused or grumbled while receiving those laws that the spirit guarding your fate dictates to me for your own good, you would deserve the fate of an ungrateful people. But I reject that awful idea; you will sustain the liberty that you cherish and support the leader who commands you. Therefore vow before me to live free and independent, and to prefer death to anything that will try to place you back in chains. Swear, finally, to pursue forever the traitors and enemies of your independence.

Done at the headquarters of Gonaives, the first day of January 1804, the first year of independence.

*A translation of the document by Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus as published in "**Slave Revolution in the Caribbean 1789 – 1804: A Brief History with Documents**."*

**Primary Source Supplement #2: MAXIMILIAN ROBESPIERRE, THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF TERROR, FEBRUARY 5, 1794**

Citizen-representatives of the people.

Some time ago we set forth the principles of our foreign policy; today we come to expound the principles of our internal policy.

After having proceeded haphazardly for a long time, swept along by the movement of opposing factions, the representatives of the French people have finally demonstrated a character and a government. A sudden change in the nation's fortune announced to Europe the regeneration that had been effected in the national representation. But up to the very moment when I am speaking, it must be agreed that we have been guided, amid such stormy circumstances, by the love of good and by the awareness of our country's needs rather than by an exact theory and by precise rules of conduct, which we did not have even leisure enough to lay out.

It is time to mark clearly the goal of the revolution, and the end we want to reach; it is time for us to take account both of the obstacles that still keep us from it, and of the means we ought to adopt to attain it: a simple and important idea which seems never to have been noticed. . . .

For ourselves, we come today to make the world privy to your political secrets, so that all our country's friends can rally to the voice of reason and the public interest; so that the French nation and its representatives will be respected in all the countries of the world where the knowledge of their real principles can penetrate; so that the intriguers who seek always to replace other intriguers will be judged by sure and easy rules.

We must take far-sighted precautions to return the destiny of liberty into the hands of the truth, which is eternal, rather than into those of men, who are transitory, so that if the government forgets the interests of the people, or if it lapses into the hands of the corrupt individuals, according to the natural course of things, the light of recognized principles will illuminate their treachery, and so that every new faction will discover death in the mere thought of crime. . .

What is the goal toward which we are heading? The peaceful enjoyment of liberty and equality; the reign of that eternal justice whose laws have been inscribed, not in marble and stone, but in the hearts of all men, even in that of the slave who forgets them and in that of the tyrant who denies them.

We seek an order of things in which all the base and cruel passions are enchained, all the beneficent and generous passions are awakened by the laws; where ambition becomes the desire to merit glory and to serve our country; where distinctions are born only of equality itself; where the citizen is subject to the magistrate, the magistrate to the people, and the people to justice; where our country assures the well-being of each individual, and where each individual proudly enjoys our country's prosperity and glory; where every soul grows greater through the continual flow of republican sentiments, and by the need of deserving the esteem of a great people; where the arts are the adornments of the liberty which ennobles them and commerce the source of public wealth rather than solely the monstrous opulence of a few families.

In our land we want to substitute morality for egotism, integrity for formal codes of honor, principles for customs, a sense of duty for one of mere propriety, the rule of reason for the tyranny of fashion, scorn of vice of scorn of the unlucky, self-respect for insolence, grandeur of soul over vanity, love of glory for the love of money, good people in place of good society. We wish to substitute merit for intrigue, genius for wit, truth for glamour, the charm of happiness for sensuous boredom, the greatness of man for the pettiness of the great, a people who are magnanimous, powerful, and happy, in place of a kindly, frivolous, and miserable people – which is to say all the virtues and all the miracles of the republic in place of all the vices and all the absurdities of the monarchy.

We want, in a word, to fulfill natures's desires, accomplish the destiny of humanity, keep the promises of philosophy, absolve providence from the long reign of crime and tyranny. Let France, formerly illustrious among the enslaved lands, eclipsing the glory of all the free peoples who have existed, become the model for the nations, the terror of oppressors, the consolation of the oppressed the ornament of the world – and let us, in sealing our work with our blood, see at least the early dawn of the universal bliss -that is our ambition, that is our goal.

What kind of government can realize these wonders? Only a democratic or republican government – these two words are synonyms, despite the abuses in common speech, because an aristocracy is no closer than a monarchy to being a republic. . .

Democracy is a state in which the sovereign people, guided by laws which are of their own making, do for themselves all that they can do well, and by their delegates do all that they cannot do for themselves. . . .

Now, what is the fundamental principle of popular or democratic government, that is to say, the essential mainspring which sustains it and makes it move? It is virtue. I speak of the public virtue which worked so many wonders in Greece and Rome and which ought to produce even more astonishing things in republican France – that virtue which is nothing other than the love of the nation and its law.

But as the essence of the republic or of democracy is equality, it follows that love of country necessarily embraces the love of equality. . .

But the French are the first people of the world who have established real democracy, by calling all men to equality and full rights of citizenship; and there, in my judgment, is the true reason why all the tyrants in league against the Republic will be vanquished.

There are important consequences to be drawn immediately from the principles we have just explained.

Since the soul of the Republic is virtue, equality, and since your goal is to found, to consolidate the Republic, it follows that the first rule of your political conduct ought to be to relate all your efforts to maintaining equality and developing virtue; because the first care of the legislator ought to be to fortify the principle of the government. This everything that tends to excite love of country, to purify morals, to elevate souls, to direct the passions of the human heart toward the public interest, ought to be adopted or established by you. Everything which tends to concentrate them in the abjection of selfishness, to awaken enjoyment for petty things and scorn for great ones, ought to be rejected or curbed by you. Within the scheme of the French revolution, that which is immoral is impolitic, that which is corrupting is counter-revolutionary. Weakness, vice, and prejudices are the road to royalty. . .

We deduce from all this a great truth – that the characteristic of popular government is to be trustful towards the people and severe towards itself.

Here the development of our theory would reach its limit, if you had only to steer the ship of the Republic through calm waters. But the tempest rages, and the state of the revolution in which you find yourselves imposes upon you another task. . . .

We must smother the internal and external enemies of the Republic or perish with them. Now, in this situation, the first maxim of your policy ought to be to lead the people by reason and the people's enemies by terror.

If the mainspring of popular government in peacetime is virtue, amid revolution it is at the same time [both] virtue and terror: virtue, without which terror is fatal; terror, without which virtue is impotent. Terror is nothing but prompt, severe, inflexible justice; it is therefore an emanation of virtue. It is less a special principle than a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our country's most pressing needs.

It has been said that terror was the mainspring of despotic government. Does your government, then, resemble a despotism? Yes, as the sword which glitters in the hands of liberty's heroes resembles the one with which tyranny's lackeys are armed. Let the despot govern his brutalized subjects by terror; he is right to do this, as a despot. Subdue liberty's enemies by terror, and you will be right, as founders of the Republic. The government of the revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny. Is force made only to protect crime? And is it not to strike the heads of the proud that lightning is destined? . . .

To punish the oppressors of humanity is clemency; to pardon them is barbarity. The rigor of tyrants has only rigor for a principle; the rigor of the republican government comes from charity.

Therefore, woe to those who would dare to turn against the people the terror which ought to be felt only by its enemies! Woe to those who, confusing the inevitable errors of civic conduct with the calculated errors of perfidy, or with conspirators' criminal attempts, leave the dangerous schemer to pursue the peaceful citizen! Perish the scoundrel who ventures to abuse the sacred name of liberty, or the redoubtable arms which liberty has entrusted to him, in order to bring mourning or death into patriots' hearts! This abuse has existed, one cannot doubt it. It has been exaggerated, no doubt, by the aristocracy. But if in all the Republic there existed only one virtuous man persecuted by the enemies of liberty, the government's duty would be to seek him out vigorously and give him a dazzling revenge. . .

How frivolous it would be to regard a few victories achieved by patriotism as the end of all our dangers. Glance over our true situation. You will become aware that vigilance and energy are more necessary for you than ever. An unresponding ill-will everywhere opposes the operations of the government. The inevitable influence of foreign courts is no less active for being more hidden, and no less baneful. One senses that crime, frightened, has only covered its tracks with greater skill. . .

You could never have imagined some of the excesses committed by hypocritical counter-revolutionaries in order to blight the cause of the revolution. Would you believe that in the regions where superstition has held the greatest sway, the counter-revolutionaries are not content with burdening religious observances under all the forms that could render them odious, but have spread terror among the people by sowing the rumor that all children under ten and all old men over seventy are going to be killed? This rumor was spread particularly through the former province of Brittany and in the departments of the Rhine and the Moselle. It is one of the crimes imputed to [Schneider] the former public prosecutor of the criminal court of Strasbourg. That man's tyrannical follies make everything that has been said of Caligula and Heliogabalus [cruel Roman emperors] credible; one can scarcely believe it, despite the evidence. He pushed his delirium to the point of commandeering women for his own use – we are told that he even employed that method in selecting a wife. Whence came this sudden swarm of foreigners, priests, noble, intriguer of all kinds, which at the same instant spread over the length and breadth of the Republic, seeking to execute, in the name of philosophy, a plan of counter-revolution which has only been stopped by the force of public reason? Execrable conception, worthy of the genius of foreign courts leagued against liberty, and of the corruption of all the internal enemies of the Republic! . . .

In deceitful hands all the remedies for our ills turn into poisons. Everything you can do, everything you can say, they will turn against you, even the truths which we come here to present this very day. . . .

Such an internal situation ought to seem to you worthy of all your attention, above all if you reflect that at the same time you have the tyrants of Europe to combat, a million and two hundred thousand men under arms to maintain, and that the government is obliged continually to repair, with energy and vigilance, all the injuries which the innumerable multitude of our enemies has prepared for us during the course of five years.

What is the remedy for all these evils? We know no other than the development of that general motive force of the Republic – virtue.

Democracy perishes by two kinds of excess: either the aristocracy of those who govern, or else the popular scorn for the authorities whom the people themselves have established, scorn which makes each clique, each individual take unto himself the public power and bring the people through excessive disorders, to annihilation or to the power of one man.

The double task of the moderates and the false revolutionaries is to toss us back and forth perpetually between these two perils.

But the people's representatives can avoid them both, because government is always the master at being just and wise; and, when it has that character, it is sure of the confidence of the people.

It is indeed true that the goal of all our enemies is to dissolve the Convention. It is true that the tyrant of Great Britain and his allies promise their parliament and subjects that they will deprive you of your energy and of the public confidence which you have merited; that is the fist instruction for all their agents. . . .

We are beginning a solemn debate upon all the objects of its [the Convention's] anxiety, and everything that can influence the progress of the revolution. We adjure it not to permit any particular hidden interest to usurp ascendancy here over the general will of the assembly and the indestructible power of reason.

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# 1.6: Troubled Nineteenth Century




Figure: The boundaries set in Europe by the Congress of Vienna, 1815.

## Liberalism and the Revolutions of 1848



After the defeat of Napoleon a second time at Waterloo in 1815, Europe breathed a sigh of relief. The British, who had led the defense against his final invasion, chose St. Helena in the South Atlantic as a permanent home for the exiled Emperor. Napoleon was transported to the island, which was administered by the East India Company, in 1815 and lived there for the rest of his life. He died in 1821, at 51.

At the Congress of Vienna, which ran from November 1814 through June 1815, the old ruling families of Europe got together to try to restore what they thought of as peace and order. To a large extent their priority was trying to restore the *status quo ante*: the borders that had existed before Napoleon's conquests and the types of social organization that had prevailed before the French Revolution. The brother of the executed King, Louis XVI, took the French throne as Louis XVIII (the XVIIth Louis had been the dead king's son, who had died in prison at the age of 10 in 1795); the restored king agreed to return the territories Napoleon had conquered to the nations that had held them previously. As much as possible, the Congress of Vienna tried to turn back the clock

and forget that the Revolution and Napoleon had ever happened, while setting up a balance of power to check the possibility of a French imperial resurgence A European-wide peace would hold until World War One began in 1914.




Figure: Beginning in 1838, "Chartists" in Great Britain demanded an extension of suffrage to all men over 21, along with other political reforms. Their protests were sometimes suppressed violently by the police. In addition to throwing rocks, apparently the Chartists also launched the occasional cat at the club-wielding bobbies.

But too much had changed to return to the past. Liberals tried to distance themselves from the social leveling and economic redistribution the Jacobins had attempted, identifying instead with ideas like free trade and a limited franchise. But radicals pushed for greater equality and more rights for regular people. For instance, British workers agitated for the right to vote and for a social contract called the People's Charter in the 1830s and 40s, but conservative Tories blocked the Chartists. Enlightenment-inspired ideas about democracy, popular sovereignty, and new ideas like socialism all came to a head in Europe by 1848, which was known as the Year of Revolutions.

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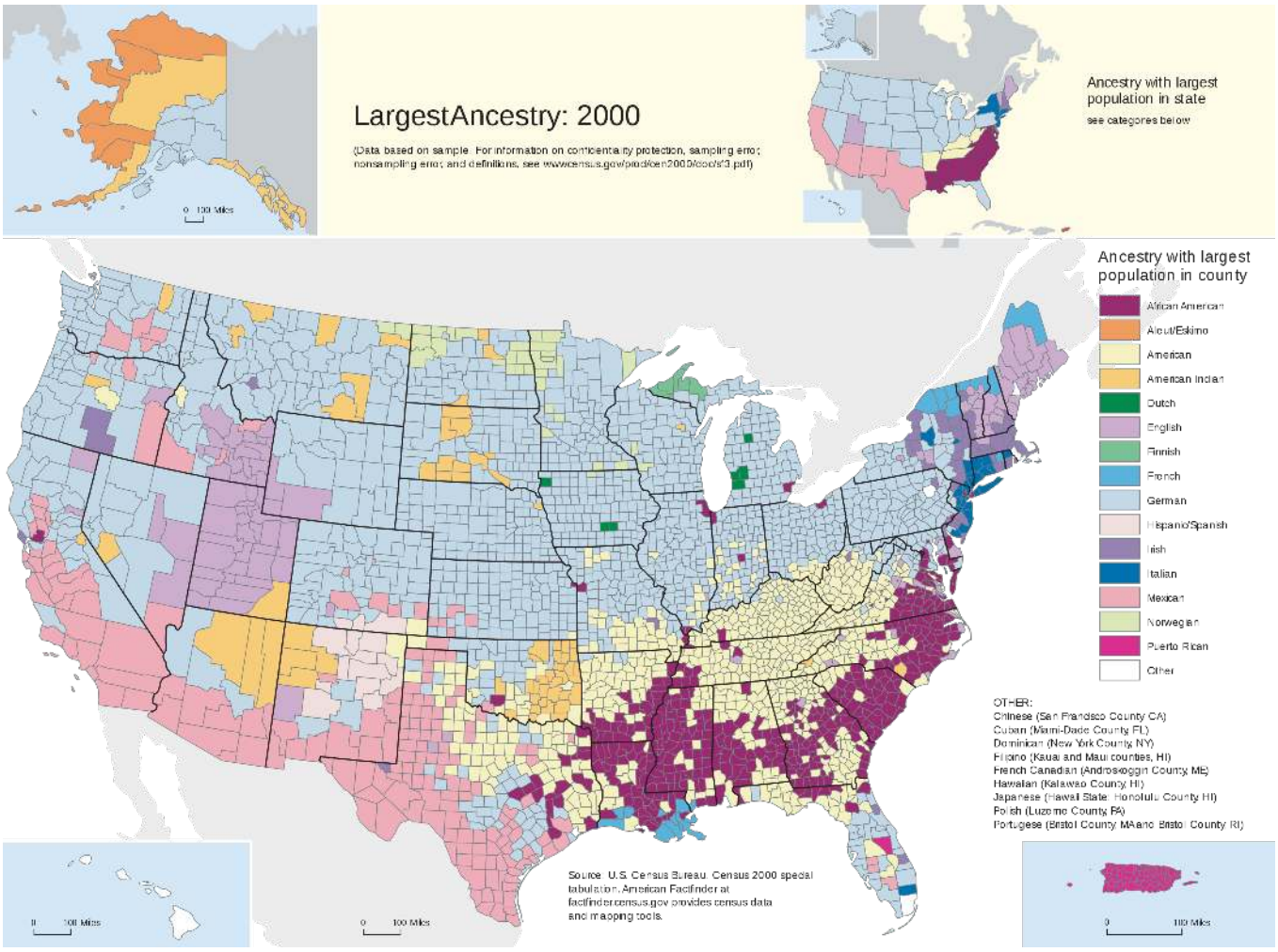
- Why were European rulers so eager to return to the conditions before the French Revolution?



Figure: An image of the Irish Famine published in 1849 in the Illustrated London News.

The Irish Famine, caused by a blight that rendered potatoes inedible, began in 1845. Potatoes had proved to be an ideal crop for Ireland, and it produced enough of the crop for itself and most of the rest of British Isles—losing this important food source was disastrous for the Irish peasants. British government aid proved incompetent and ineffective, revealing a scandalous level of prejudice against the Catholic Irish, the first colonized people of the British Crown Over a million people in Ireland died because of the Famine, and a million more to emigrated to avoid starvation—mostly to the U.S. The population of Ireland, which had been more than 8 million in 1841, never recovered (and is still only about 4.7 million today). Food shortages spread to Scotland and central Europe, where the Czech potato harvest was also reduced by half because of the blight.

In addition to rural famines, a lot of Britain and parts of Europe had begun to industrialize, and poor urban workers were dissatisfied with their wages and living conditions, which will be described below. In 1848, rebels temporarily took control of Vienna and forced the Austro-Hungarian Empire to end serfdom. Southern Italians revolted against the French still occupying their homeland. And a revolution in France ended the monarchy once again and created the Second French Republic. Although revolutionary movements in the German states were unsuccessful in changing their governments, they paved the way for change and resulted in massive German immigration to the US.




Migration to the US had been slow between the end of the American Revolution and the War of 1812, due to ongoing tensions with Britain and the Napoleonic conflicts in Europe. But beginning in the 1830s and 1840s, immigration from Europe exploded, and the United States became a “safety valve” for the underemployed, politically marginalized, and persecuted of Europe. The Irish in the 1840s were followed by Germans after 1848, who remain the largest single immigrant group. Scandinavians began arriving after the Civil War, and but by the 1890s, most new immigrants came from southern Europe (especially Italians) and from eastern Europe—including large numbers of persecuted Jews from the Russian Empire.

By the end of the 19th century, the majority of Americans were of German ethnicity. Even today, 46 million Americans are of German descent (light blue on the map). The rest of the top five ethnicities are Black or African American (38 million, magenta, Mexican (34 million, pink), Irish (33 million, dark purple), English (24 million, light purple). This population count is complicated by the region in the southeast, stretching from the Appalachian Mountains to northern Texas, where the largest group calls itself “American” and people do not attribute their origin to any foreign nation. These 22 million people are probably mostly of English or Scotch-Irish descent, based on the history of the region. Statewide, the German pluralities range from 11% in Florida to 43% in North Dakota, which explains why the capital is named after Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck.

here

- Why was the US considered a “safety valve” for excess European population?
- Could a large population of “hyphenated” Americans with some connection to their original country pose a problem?

## The Industrial Revolution

Social changes in Europe and America are a direct result of the Industrial Revolution – as are many of the changes in the less developed world we will discuss in a later chapter. So before we look at the rest of the world, let’s look more closely at

industrialization.

The last two hundred years of human history is also the story of the Industrial Revolution and its affects. The life of a peasant living in France, Mexico, China, India, or Ethiopia in 1100 CE was not that different from that of a similar peasant living in the same place 200 years earlier or later. But, because of technology, industrialization, and urbanization, today's world is considerably different today than it was 200 years ago. In fact, the change has accelerated: we live much differently than our parents did when they were our age. Consider how many of you may be reading this on a hand-held electronic device, which were not all that common even ten years ago. The acceleration of life in many aspects is just one of the results of the unprecedented worldwide technological innovations of the last two centuries.

Even today, there are five necessary inputs that are required for industrialization: capital, technology, an energy source, availability of labor, and consumers. By the late 1700s, Great Britain had all of these and became the birthplace of the industrial revolution. Continental Europe and the United States soon followed.

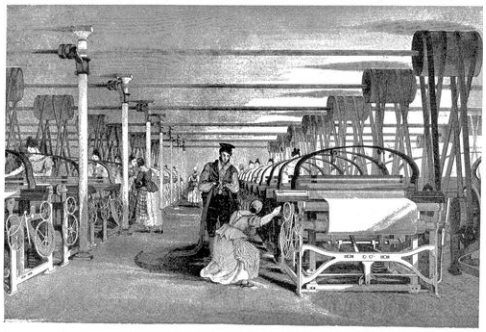


Figure: Textiles were the leading industry of the Industrial Revolution, and mechanized factories, powered by a central water wheel or steam engine, were the new workplace.

But, why Great Britain? Capital—wealth that is invested to create more wealth—was available to merchants and others who benefitted from world trade. The British dominated the slave trade and the corresponding cultivation of sugar during the 18th century, and those involved in the trade accumulated great wealth. Furthermore, the East India Company was also a source of capital through their trade with South Asia in tea and textiles. The Company also was the model for a successful joint-stock company, in which individual investors purchased shares, which spread ownership and limited financial liability, allowing for greater risk-taking. Soon, factories would be following the same joint-stock model in order to accumulate the necessary capital for investment.

New technology also made mass production possible, which first occurred in the British textile industry. The spinning jenny and power looms increased the efficiency of spinning wool and cotton, and then weaving the thread and yarn into cloth. From this beginning, inventors began seeing the possibilities of mechanical production in other areas such as processed foods, clothing, paper, and household items. Even today, countries usually begin on the path to industrialization through the textile and processed food industries.

Great Britain also had abundant energy sources to power the machines. Like flour mills, textile mills initially used the power of rivers to spin water wheels and turbines connected to spinning and weaving machines. Later, the development of an efficient coal-fired steam engine by Scottish the engineer James Watt made it possible to locate factories closer to cities, transportation hubs, workers, and consumers. Both water and coal are still important sources of energy throughout the world.

Agricultural improvements in the previous century and the introduction of new staple crops like the potato, imported from the Americas, produced more food using less labor. Improved nutrition allowed Britain's population to grow, increasing the number of people available for work in the factories. With a larger population involved in a wage economy, producing goods for others and not for themselves, Great Britain also created consumers for the textiles, foods, and other products manufactured in new factories. Soon, British merchants were selling industrial products to Continental Europe and to an increasingly important market of consumers in Britain's colonies. The ability to sell manufactured goods to a "captive" colonial market added to the rush for overseas empires by the European powers, the United States, and Japan in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Every nation wanted consumers for the products of the "home country" and wanted to lock up the valuable natural resources needed by the industries of the empire.

here

- What were Great Britain's main advantages that allowed it to dominate the early industrial revolution?



Figure: Hand-spinning yarn to make "homespun" clothing.

The Industrial Revolution saw a gradual transition from handicrafts made in the home or in small shops to manufactures produced in factories, which in itself caused social and economic disruption—and improvement—among ordinary workers and their families. In early America, for example, a regular part of women's work was spinning thread and yarn from wool, flax, or cotton at home, then weaving cloth and making "homespun" clothing for their families. This was hard, slow work, and took up a lot of women's time. As soon as they were able to buy cloth from textile mills, women took advantage of the opportunity to devote much more of their time to other tasks around the farmstead. Often, they began market gardening or keeping an extra cow and churning butter to earn "pin money." Pins were an example of a manufactured product farm families needed that could not be made on the farm. Pins and other such necessities were usually supplied by peddlers who walked across the countryside in the days before easy access to stores, and then later by general storekeepers.

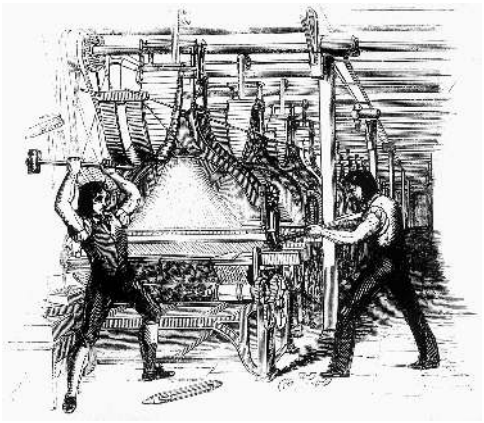


Figure: Luddites breaking a jacquard loom.

The other side of handicraft manufacture, though, was the type of work done by the Huguenot weavers—descendants of refugee French Protestants—in East London. This was a whole community of people who specialized in weaving using tools and techniques that were available before the advent of large-scale textile mills. They were put out of business by the more efficient manufacturing systems that went along with the new technology, but they did not give up without a fight. Many became "Luddites," part of a movement of handicraft workers that secretly entered factories and destroyed machinery, blaming the fictional "Ned Ludd" for the acts of sabotage (a word that refers to the wooden clogs workers wore in France, which they would throw into the machinery to break it). Governments were quick to crack down on Luddites – a couple of executions quickly took the wind out of their sails.

As mentioned above, industrialization was possible because farms were producing high yields in the early 19th century, creating both an available workforce and a consumer market for many of the products of early industry. In addition, nations like Britain with colonies had another lucrative market for manufactures. Even after the American Revolution and the War of 1812, the United States

remained a supplier of raw materials like grain, timber, cotton, and salted pork to the former “home country.” In return, Britain shipped its manufactured goods to ports like New York, where they were carried inland on the Erie Canal, and New Orleans, where they made their way up the Mississippi River to the interior. Britain also cultivated trade relationships with other new nations like those of Latin America. British representatives like the envoy sent to Simón Bolívar’s Congress of the Americas worked hard to convince these new nations not to go to the expense of trying to develop their own industries but instead to ship raw materials to Britain in exchange for cheap consumer goods from British factories.

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- Why might “Luddites” or others oppose industrialization?
- What were the advantages of industrial production?

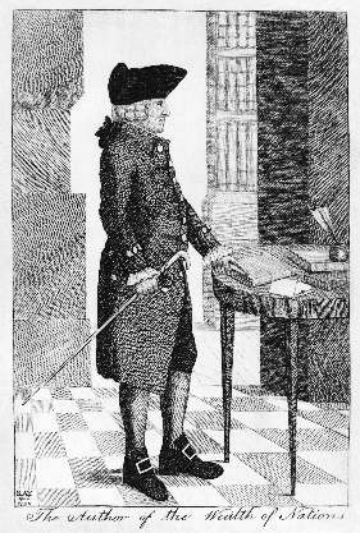


Figure: Portrait of Adam Smith, 1790

The role of governments in industrialization should not be overlooked. Official British trade missions argued the benefits of “free trade” now that Britain’s manufacturers had gained the advantage in producing low-cost goods. But the devotion to free markets championed by Adam Smith and his disciples was new-found. When inexpensive cotton calicoes from India in the 1720s had begun to be preferred for making English clothing, the domestic wool industry had pressured Parliament into passing the Calico Acts to prohibit their import. But later, when the British textile industry began using technology that gave Britain an advantage in cotton cloth production, the government did not consider the complaints of the East London weavers, and even took steps to protect trade secrets and prevent too rapid a technology transfer to help British industry profit on its innovations. Britain began producing cotton cloth even more inexpensively than India—and suddenly the British began preaching about “free trade” and pushing to erase any tariffs or regulations that might prevent British textiles from dominating world markets.

The governments of Continental Europe and the United States quickly tired of simply being a source of raw materials for British factories and a market for British goods. To support economic development, these governments began taxing imports with tariffs to protect emerging industries from a flood of British manufactured goods. Tariffs increased the price of imports to consumers, encouraging them to buy the now-competitive domestically-produced goods. Protection from foreign competition has helped many fledgling industries get off the ground in developing nations. However, if industries remain protected, they may have less incentive to become internationally competitive in price or quality. Governments that choose to constantly raise tariffs run the risk of subsidizing their industries’ inefficiencies and reducing the welfare of their consumers as industrial improvements in other countries lower the price of imported products.

## Transportation, Steam Power, and Interchangeable Parts

Most histories begin the Industrial Revolution with steam engines and many mention that by the 1820s steam-powered looms had displaced the hand weavers in the cotton industry. This description actually misses a whole generation of innovation and growth when textile mills were powered by water. The Scottish textile factories of New Lanark, for example, were begun in 1786 by David Dale using water-power technology developed by Richard Arkwright in the 1770s. New Lanark was built on the Clyde River in

Scotland, and all of its machines were powered by the river until the mills closed in 1968. The American textile mills in New England that dominated the world market in the second half of the 19th century also used water power. The men who started the Boston Manufacturing Company, that built the cities of Lowell and Lawrence in Massachusetts to take advantage of the water power of the Merrimack River, visited New Lanark in 1811 to learn the technology before they began their venture.



Figure: The Clyde River and New Lanark in 2009

Robert Owen and his partners had bought the mills in 1799 from David Dale, Owen's father-in-law. Sensitive to the negative social changes that industrial growth had brought to other parts of Britain, Owen built schools for the children of his workers and social organizations for the families. He put an end to the long-standing custom of forcing workers to buy only from the company store and tried to make New Lanark a real, living town. Owen's partners had objected to his philanthropy, claiming that healthy, happy, well-educated workers did not really boost the bottom line. Rather than fight with them, Owen simply bought his partners out.

here

- What are the pros and cons of tariffs?
- Why would an industrialist like Robert Owen be concerned about his workers' social welfare?




Figure: The present route of the Erie Canal, which is pretty close to its original route.

The initial expansion of transportation networks for mass-production industries was also water-based. In industrializing countries, canal-building became a craze from the 1820s through the 1840s. Many local canals connected newly-established towns and villages to markets all over the United States, Great Britain, and continental Europe. The Erie Canal in New York State, for instance, connected Buffalo, on Lake Erie, to Albany, where the canal met the Hudson River, navigable all the way to New York City. Over 350 miles (580 kilometers) long when completed in 1825, the Erie Canal included thirty-six locks to ease barges down a gradual decline of more than 550 feet (170 meters). As agricultural goods shipped down the Canal eventually made their way to markets in industrializing East Coast cities, pioneers established farms all along the Canal, and the Erie Canal was key to the western settlement and expansion of the United States, especially before 1865. Canal laborers were frequently Irish immigrants, who often settled nearby, once the canal was built.

Steam power soon became extremely important in transportation, as well. Until steam engines were put on riverboats, shipping had depended on either wind and river currents or on human and animal power on canal towpaths. Goods could easily be floated south from farms on America's rivers for example, but it was much more difficult and expensive to ship products against the currents to the frontier. Flatboats and rafts accumulated at downstream ports such as New Orleans and were often broken down and burned as firewood. Steam engines made it possible to sail upstream as easily and quickly as down, causing an explosion of travel and shipping that radically changed frontier life. Ocean-going steamships made travel and shipping quicker and safer and allowed travelers and merchants to keep to regular schedules.



Figure: "Consternation at the sight of Fulton's monster," from an 1870 story of the Clermont's first voyage up the Hudson River.

Steam engines were a product of early European industrialism. The first steam patent was granted to a Spanish inventor named Jerónimo Beaumont in 1606, whose engine drove a pump used to drain mines. The French scientist Papin built his steam piston in 1630 after visiting the Royal Society in London and Englishman James Watt's 1781 engine was the first to produce rotary power that could be adapted to drive mills, wheels, and propellers. Robert Fulton, an American inventor who had previously patented a canal-dredging machine, visited Paris and caught steam fever. Fulton sailed an experimental steamboat model on the Seine, and then returned home and launched the first commercial American steamboat on the Hudson River in 1807. The Clermont was able to

sail upriver 150 miles from New York City to Albany in 32 hours. In 1811, Fulton built the New Orleans in Pittsburgh and began regular steamboat service on the Mississippi.

The other transportation technology enabled by steam power, of course, was the railroad, which was even more revolutionary than the steamboat. In spite of their power and speed, steam-powered riverboats depended on rivers or occasionally on canals to run, but a railroad could be built almost anywhere. Suddenly, the expansion of commerce was no longer limited by the routes nature had provided into the frontier.

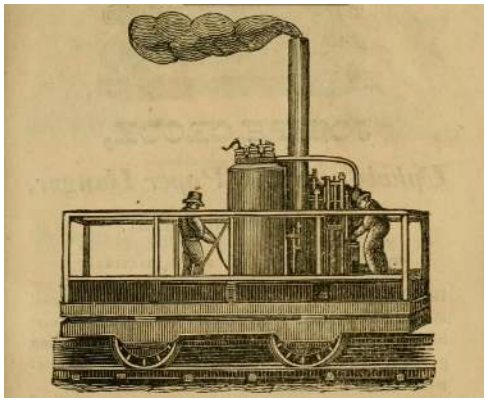


Figure: 1831 newspaper illustration of a locomotive (likely the Tom Thumb) in Baltimore.

Small railroads using horses were already common in mining operations in Great Britain and Europe before the advent of steam power. The first railroads in the United States had actually been built on the East Coast before a steam engine was available to power them. Trains of cars pulled by horses looked a lot like stage-coaches on rails. But after Englishman George Stephenson's locomotives began pulling passengers and freight in northwestern England in the mid-1820s, Americans quickly switched to steam. The first locomotive used to pull cars in the United States was the Tom Thumb, built in 1830 for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Although Tom Thumb lost its maiden race against a horse-drawn train, Baltimore and Ohio owners were convinced by the demonstration of steam technology and committed to developing steam locomotives. The B&O railroad, which had been established in 1827 to compete with the Erie Canal, already advertised itself as a faster way to move people and freight from the interior to the coast. Adding steam engines accelerated rail's advantage over canal and river shipping.

here

- Why were canals and steam power so transformative?
- What was the advantage of railroads over steamships?

Factories housed machinery that was too large or too expensive to be used in home production, or that used power sources like steam or water power that weren't available to small-scale producers. The machines themselves usually displaced workers, like when the water-powered looms of New Lanark destroyed the careers of hand-loom weavers by producing large quantities of cloth at a low cost the weavers couldn't match. However, the new industries also created new jobs. And often, although it took fewer people to weave a given amount of cloth using the new technology, the new industries were usually producing products for much larger (sometimes even global) markets. So much cloth was made in the new industrial textile centers like New Lanark in Scotland or Lowell in America that there were often a lot of new jobs – sometimes more than had previously been available in that region.

The new factory jobs required less skill than artisanal craftwork, especially when the worker was making a larger number of standardized products. Previously, a carpenter needed to be a skilled craftsman to design and assemble a custom-built chair, but with industrialization, a less-skilled lathe operator could turn large quantities of legs that could be assembled into any number of chairs of a standard pattern. Workers doing lower-skilled jobs became as standardized as the things they made, and could be employed at a much lower cost. While more people might be working in a new factory compared to an old-fashioned craft workshop, each worker's wages would almost always be lower.

And starting a factory was not the same as starting a craft workshop. It was no longer a slow organic process where an apprentice became a master craftsman, developed a clientele, opened his own business, then hired a few workers or apprentices of his own. The people who started factories were often not even experts at the process they were going to do – they were capitalists and

investors who had access to the large sums of money needed to erect a factory and fill it with technology and workers. A class of owners grew, who had little or no connection to the workers they employed.



Figure: “First cotton gin” from Harpers Weekly. 1869 illustration depicting the cotton gin’s first use 70 years earlier.

American inventor Eli Whitney (1765-1825) is remembered for the cotton gin, which removed the seeds from cotton fiber much more quickly than they could be picked out by hand. The cotton gin helped propel the American South into world leadership in raw cotton. By the 1850s, American plantations supplied 80 to 90% of the world cotton market. But Whitney’s most important contribution to industrialization was his technique for using machine tools to produce interchangeable parts for firearms. With Whitney’s standardized, machined parts, it no longer took a skilled gunsmith to build a weapon. Anybody with basic skills could assemble and also disassemble, repair, and maintain a rifle or handgun. Weapons became more reliable and the technique was quickly applied to other industries. Of course, since most of the intelligence in the job had been moved into the machine, the machine gradually became more valuable and the machine operator less. Whitney’s process made guns more reliable and less expensive, but he turned not only the gun parts into interchangeable parts, but also the factory employees themselves. The process continues today: in the Tesla car factory, robots running sophisticated software do most of the skilled tasks like welding, while a smaller number of human workers spend most of their time moving assemblies from place to place and programming the robots.

here

- How does technology affect workers and their jobs?

## Socialism: Addressing the Negative Effects of Industrialization

Although it produced quality products at low prices for a growing consumer market, industrialization disrupted the lives of workers. Since jobs were in factory towns and cities, people moved from rural areas to growing metropolitan areas. The change was often very abrupt for those who migrated: they lost the slower rhythms of agricultural life to the time clock and subway schedules of the accelerated industrialized world.

Additionally, people were cut off from communities in which they had lived for generations, and forced to find new social relations —or fall into lonely and desperate lives. Although jobs were the attraction for the new migrants, there was no guarantee of permanent positions in the new economy. Financial cycles of boom and bust affected urban workers the most. Families were disrupted by unemployment, while traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity could be challenged when the male breadwinner was replaced by a spouse or daughter as the main source of family income, leading to violence, alcoholism and abandonment of the family by men.

Cities were often unprepared to receive so many people so quickly. Inadequate housing, sanitation, and transportation contributed to environment degradation and psychological stress. In the following illustration of London in the 1840s, consider life for people who grew up on farms now living under these conditions, with no sign of plant life to be seen:

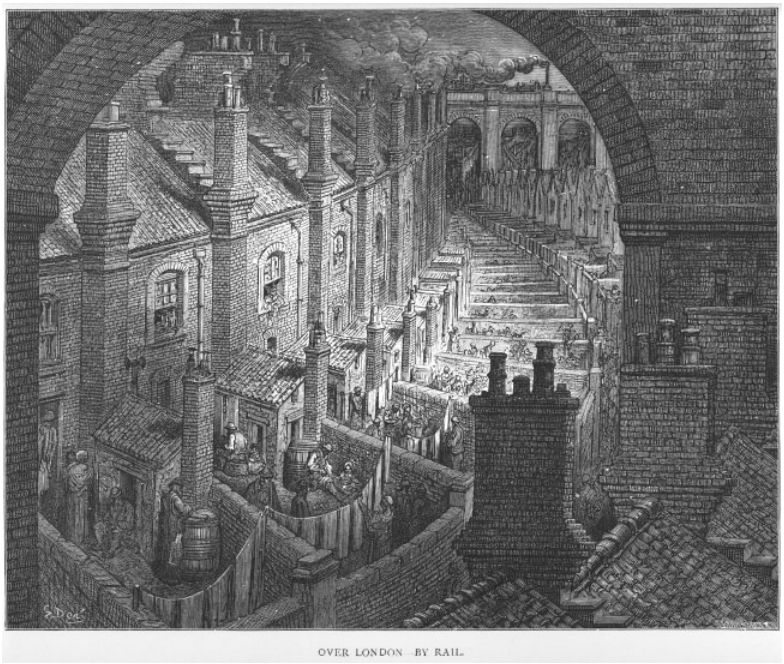



Figure: “Over London–by Rail”, from Gustave Doré’s 1872 book, London: A Pilgrimage.

Many intellectuals took up the challenge of rethinking how to make society more just for industrial workers. While the U.S. War of Independence had inspired discussion of governments formed by “we, the people,” and the French Revolution had spread the idea of legal equality of all citizens under law, a new understanding of capital and labor seemed to be needed. Workers in the new industries provided all of the labor at low wages and in dangerous conditions, while often absentee owners and investors reaped the profits. A number of industrialists such as Robert Owen tried to make their factories more humane, embracing the cooperative movement and even improving workers’ welfare with schools for their children and social gatherings. However, many business owners did not see their responsibility to workers extending beyond providing a wage for the work they performed.

Karl Marx, a German philosopher, criticized the growth of capitalism and industrialization, and brought a new analysis to economic thinking. Marx saw industrialization as the last stage of human development, a final struggle between two opposites that would create something new. According to Marx, this last battle was between the more numerous workers, whom he called the proletariat and the industrial capitalists, the bourgeoisie. Marx believed the proletariat would inevitably defeat the bourgeoisie, seize the factories, and create a socialist utopia.

After the final battle, Marx predicted a world where the workers or their government controlled the “means of production”, the factories and farms. Instead of religion, which Marx said was “the opiate of the people”, workers would develop a “class consciousness” that would help extend the worldwide proletarian revolution. Marx imagined a global working class that transcended nations, races, and ethnic groups—his vision was for an international dictatorship of the proletariat, where all workers would unite regardless of ethnicity, language, religion, or any of the identities that had prevented European nations from forming a lasting empire.

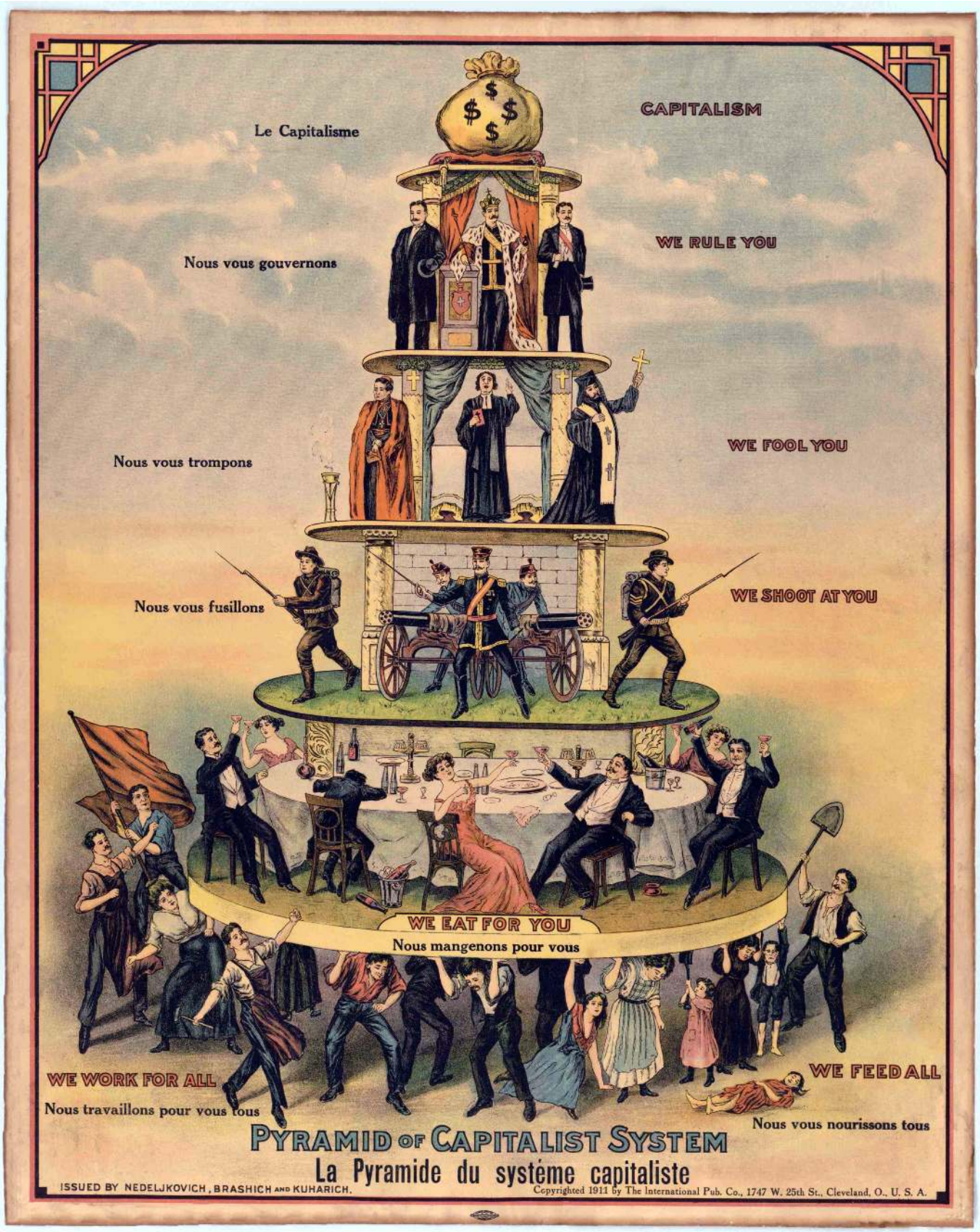



Figure: “Pyramid of Capitalist System”, published in 1911 by The International Publishing Company, Cleveland OH.

Karl Marx and his associate, Friedrich Engels, published their ideas in the *Communist Manifesto* in February, 1848, just as Europe entered a year of attempted revolutions. Since these upheavals did not bring the promised dictatorship of the proletariat, Marx (who went into exile in London) continued to publish his theories and predictions, and organized the first Marxist socialist parties. He died in 1883, by which time various socialist and social democratic parties had participated in elections, but he did not live to see an actual "socialist" revolution, which would finally occur in Russia in 1917.

Even so, by the time of Marx's death, his ideas and other forms of socialism were motivating labor organizers to form unions in which workers could negotiate for better wages and working conditions with owners, under threat of striking—stopping work at a factory and preventing others from replacing them at the machines. Socialism and communism, and their influence in governments and labor relations, will be examined more fully in later chapters.

here

- Why did many workers find industrial cities challenging to live in?
- Consider socialism's criticism of capitalism. Is it justified? Are Marx's expectations realistic?

## Fertilizer

As mentioned previously, industrialization depends on a stable foundation of agriculture to provide enough food for workers to increase the population and provide enough food for people to eat. As farming becomes more efficient, not everyone needs to focus on subsistence and workers are available to move to cities and take jobs in factories. The remaining farms become bigger and take on the responsibility of feeding the growing urban populations.

Earlier agricultural societies in Europe had depended on crop rotation to rebuild soils after periods of intensive planting. But as farmers saw an opportunity to earn money in the market, feeding urban industrial workers, some were unwilling to accept the idea that a significant portion of their farms would be fallow each year. They preferred to amend their soils rather than waiting for fertility to regenerate naturally. But few farmers had access to enough manure to supplement all their soil. Luckily, there was an alternative.

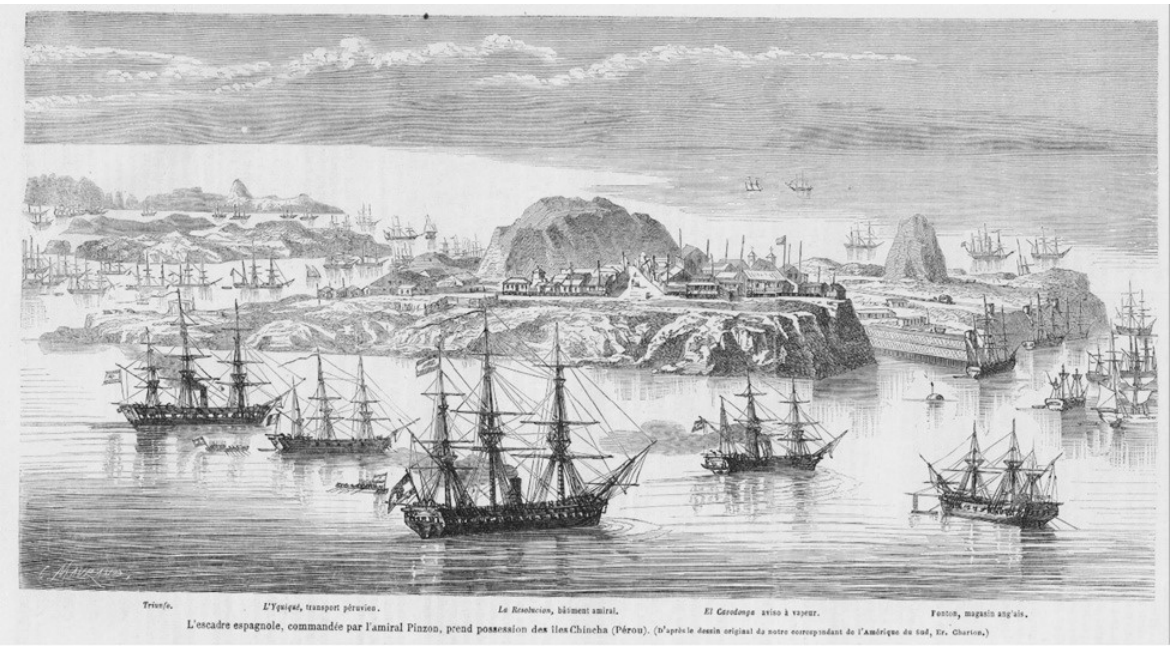
The first commercial fertilizers were made from guano, the droppings of seabirds living on islands off the western shores of South America. Guano comes from the Quechua Indian word *Wanu*, which means any excrement used as a soil additive. Guano was dry, light, and highly concentrated. Natives of the Andes have mined guano on the coast and islands for at least 1,500 years, and Spanish colonial records noted that Inca rulers had considered protecting the cormorants that were the main source of guano so important, that disturbing the birds' nesting areas a capital offense. Guano was carried from the coast up into the Andes on the backs of llamas, for use on the terraced farms surrounding highland cities like Machu Picchu.



Figure: Workers mining guano on a Peruvian island, 1860.

Although surrounded by ocean, the islands off the western coast of South America are arid. Like the deserts they face on the mainland, some experience no annual rainfall at all. Seabirds such as cormorants and pelicans have lived on these islands by the millions, for thousands of years. Over that time, they've left literal mountains of droppings, which due to the lack of rain have simply piled up. The guano contains the ideal percentages of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to make it an excellent fertilizer without any mixing. It simply needs to be chopped off the mountain, ground up, and spread on fields.

The Prussian explorer Alexander von Humboldt visited the islands around 1802, and publicized guano's value as a fertilizer throughout Europe. Seeing a lucrative business opportunity, Europeans and Americans fell on the area in a guano rush, and by the middle of the century several nations had enlisted the work of Chinese peasants in a Pacific labor system that has been compared with the slavery of the Atlantic world. Although the Chinese workers were technically free, many were debtors who had been tricked into labor contracts promising work in California. Once they reached the guano islands and realized they had been duped, there was no way off. Over a hundred thousand Chinese workers were imported to the islands in the second half of the nineteenth century.



L'escadre espagnole, commandée par l'amiral Pinzon, prend possession des îles Chincha (Pérou). (D'après le dessin original de notre correspondant de l'Amérique du sud, Er. Charton.)

Guano was so profitable that the U.S. Congress passed a Guano Islands Act in 1856. The law provided an incentive for American sailors to find and claim undefended islands for America by giving the discoverer exclusive rights to the guano recovered. Islands claimed under the Guano Islands Act include parts of the Hawaiian chain, Midway Atoll, part of American Samoa, and several islands still disputed with Colombia. The guano islands off the western coast of South America were so valuable that two wars were fought over them. Chile and Peru fought Spain in the Chincha Islands War, 1864-66, and defeated the Spanish Empire. Then, once Spain's claim had been successfully set aside, Chile took many of the guano islands from Peru, along with the nitrate fields of the Atacama Desert, in the War of the Pacific, 1879-83.



Figure: The Atacama Desert, now controlled by Chile, is the driest place on Earth.

After about 1870, guano was overtaken as a source of nitrogen by nitrate-rich desert soils called Caliche. These soils were discovered in the Atacama desert, a region regarded as the driest place on earth that lay partly in Chile, partly in Peru, and partly in Bolivia. When all three nations rushed to extract and process the Caliche, Chile challenged its northern rivals for the nitrate fields. Chile's victory in the War of the Pacific extended its border northwards to encompass the Atacama desert, including all the coastal territory that had belonged to Bolivia. Many ethnic Bolivians living around the port city of Arica still dream of throwing off the Chilean yoke and winning their country access to the Pacific again.

Defeating its northern neighbors in the War of the Pacific made Chile the undisputed power on the west coast of the Americas and generated an economic boom. The nitrate Chile monopolized was valuable both as a fertilizer and as a key ingredient in explosives and munitions. But mining and processing nitrate from Chile's desert soil required much more capital than digging guano. Chile attracted British investors, and soon joint ventures began shipping a million tons of nitrate per year out of the South American desert. Production grew steadily until 1914, when World War I created new incentives for Britain's enemies to find an alternative to Caliche nitrate. We will discuss this shift to an economic form of imperialism, by European nations, Britain, and even the United States, in the next chapter.

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- Why did fertilizer become important enough to fight wars over?

## 19th Century China and Japan

As described in Chapter Two, the origins of the modern world begin in China and by 1500, under the Ming dynasty, population, culture and technology was flourishing, and Confucian-trained government officials administered the empire. However, after tremendous successes including the voyages of Zheng He, a degree of corruption and misrule crept into Ming imperial rule by the next century, allowing the armies of the Manchu, from north of the Great Wall, to instal a new dynasty, the Qing ("Pure").

The new Qing emperors reinvigorated the Confucian ruling class, and China once again enjoyed a high degree of social stability, economic prosperity, and international trade. However, Qing society rested on the laurels of previous accomplishments, regarded foreigners as ignorant barbarians, and was not receptive to expanding European influence in the region, led by the British.

By the mid-1700s, the British East India Company dominated trade and the administration of India. British ships carried Indian cloth and other products to the rest of the world; the tea dumped in Boston Harbor in 1773 came from India. The East India Company was very interested in opening up Chinese markets to trade, but China was self-sufficient and uninterested in anything the British had to offer. Chinese teas, jade, silks and porcelain were in high demand in the West, but the only payment China would

accept was silver. For centuries the silver of the New World had been making its way into the Chinese economy, where it became the money supply of the world's largest economy. The East India Company's supply of silver was limited.



Figure: 19th-century western illustration of Chinese opium smokers.

Luckily, India provided the Company with an alternative: opium from poppies, harvested in India and Burma. Although the Qing had outlawed opium imports in 1729, the East India Company controlled a virtually unlimited supply. At the beginning of the 19th century an annual average of 4,500 trunks of opium were reaching smugglers on the South China coast. The Company focused on importing opium into China, where addicts were willing to pay in silver. By 1839, over 40,000 133-pound chests of opium were bought by Chinese drug dealers. More than 1% of China's 400 million people became addicted – many of them rich bureaucrats. China rapidly shifted from being a magnet for silver with a huge trade surplus to a net importer whose treasuries were rapidly dwindling.



Figure: Commissioner Lin Zexu, dubbed “Lin of Clear Skies” for his moral integrity.

Some Chinese officials wanted to legalize opium so the empire could tax it, but Confucian moralists won the policy debate. In 1839, the emperor sent one of China’s most distinguished officials, Lin Zexu, to the trading settlement of Canton to stamp out the opium trade. Lin blockaded the European trading district, raided and searched the foreigners’ warehouses, confiscated 20,000 chests containing 1200 tons of opium, and dumped it all into the ocean. The East India Company complained about its losses in London, and Queen Victoria sent a fleet including four steam-powered battleships. Lightly-armored Chinese war junks, designed to fight river pirates, were severely outgunned. The limited range of Qing cannon compared to British artillery allowed the invaders to pummel Chinese defenses from a safe distance.

The Treaty of Nanking (called the “Unequal Treaty” by the Chinese) opened five Chinese ports to European traders, gave the British the island of Hong Kong, and required China to establish diplomatic relations with Great Britain as an equal power rather than continuing to treat all foreigners as barbarians unworthy of official notice. The Chinese were also compelled to pay Britain for the opium Lin had destroyed. China’s embarrassing defeat by the British was followed by another defeat in the Second Opium War (1856-60) that resulted in another unequal treaty giving access to French and Russian merchants. By the 1890s, 90 ports of call were available to more than 300,000 European and American traders, diplomats, and missionaries.



Figure: Armored, steam-powered British warships were able to easily destroy Chinese junks built for coastal defense.

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- Were the British justified in their response to China's demand for silver in payment of their manufactures?
- What was the social impact of opium addiction on China?

The weakness of the Qing empire against foreign aggression was exacerbated by the ongoing opium crisis and by crumbling infrastructure and famine in the countryside. Magistrates and officials addicted to opium were ineffective and often diverted money that should have been spent maintaining dams and irrigation canals to their own uses. A series of peasant revolts swept through south China in the 1850s and 1860s, most notably the Taiping Rebellion which killed 30 million people over a fifteen-year period. The leader of the rebellion was Hong Xiuquan, a young man who had become unhinged after failing the grueling civil service exam four times. Hong had a vision and declared he was the little brother of Christ who had been sent to China to rid the land of the Manchu foreigners and their Confucianist culture. When Hong captured Nanjing and in 1853 made it the capital of the Taiping, he first killed all the Manchu men and then marched the women outside the city and burned them to death.

Hong's brutality and his strange interpretation of Christianity may have alienated some Europeans, but his ban on opium use antagonized more. Europe and Britain threw their support behind the Qing dynasty they had just defeated in the Opium Wars. Hong and his allies were unable to avoid the temptation to quarrel and plot against each other, which weakened their leadership. Two Taiping attempts to take Shanghai in 1860 and 1862 were repelled with British and French assistance. In 1864, the Qing and their European allies retook Nanjing and ended the regime, but the resistance continued until 1871, when the last Taiping army was completely wiped out by government forces.



Figure: A scene of the Taiping Rebellion, 1850-1864

Elsewhere in Asia, Japan's insular self-confidence was also challenged by forced contact with foreigners in the 19th century. The Japanese home islands have been united under the same imperial dynasty since the 5th century CE; the current emperor comes from the longest line of any monarch in the world. As an independent island nation, the Japanese were able to selectively accept or reject ideas and innovations from China, the powerful empire to the west. Often they would modify and incorporate aspects of Chinese culture, like writing and Buddhism, to their own circumstances, Native Japanese Shinto religion, for instance, embraces the teachings of Buddha.

Beginning in the late 1100s, the emperor ruled indirectly, ceding power to Shoguns, who commanded an army of lesser nobles known as samurai. The Shoguns held back invasions by Mongol armies in the 1200s and maintained a large degree of separation for the empire from outside religions and cultures. This self-isolation ended in the mid-19th century, when the United States, which had been largely shut out of European-dominated China, decided to try and open trade with Japan.



Figure: Commodore Matthew C. Perry's visit of Kanagawa, near the site of present-day Yokohama on March 8, 1854.

American Commodore Matthew Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay in July 1853 with a squadron of four warships and threatened to open fire on the capital if the Japanese refused to negotiate. To demonstrate, Perry destroyed several buildings around the harbor. The American fleet withdrew to allow the Japanese to consider their options and when they returned a year later, the Japanese agreed to a "Treaty of Peace and Amity." Three years later a "Treaty of Amity and Commerce" was signed, offered to the Japanese by American diplomats as a less-invasive alternative to the aggressive colonialism of Britain and France in China following the Opium War.

The Japanese decided, "if we take the initiative, we can dominate; if we do not, we will be dominated." Modernization and the embrace of new technology went hand in hand with reorganization of the national government in what became known as the Meiji Restoration. The 15th Tokugawa shogun resigned in November 1867 and direct control of government was restored to the Emperor Meiji. The samurai class (which numbered nearly 2 million) was slowly disbanded and a nationwide universal military draft was instituted in 1873. Disgruntled samurai rebelled in 1876, the Satsuma Rebellion grew into a short civil war in which the newly-formed Imperial Japanese Army won a decisive victory. The industrialization of Japan accelerated, building the strong nation we will see taking its place on the world stage in the next chapter.

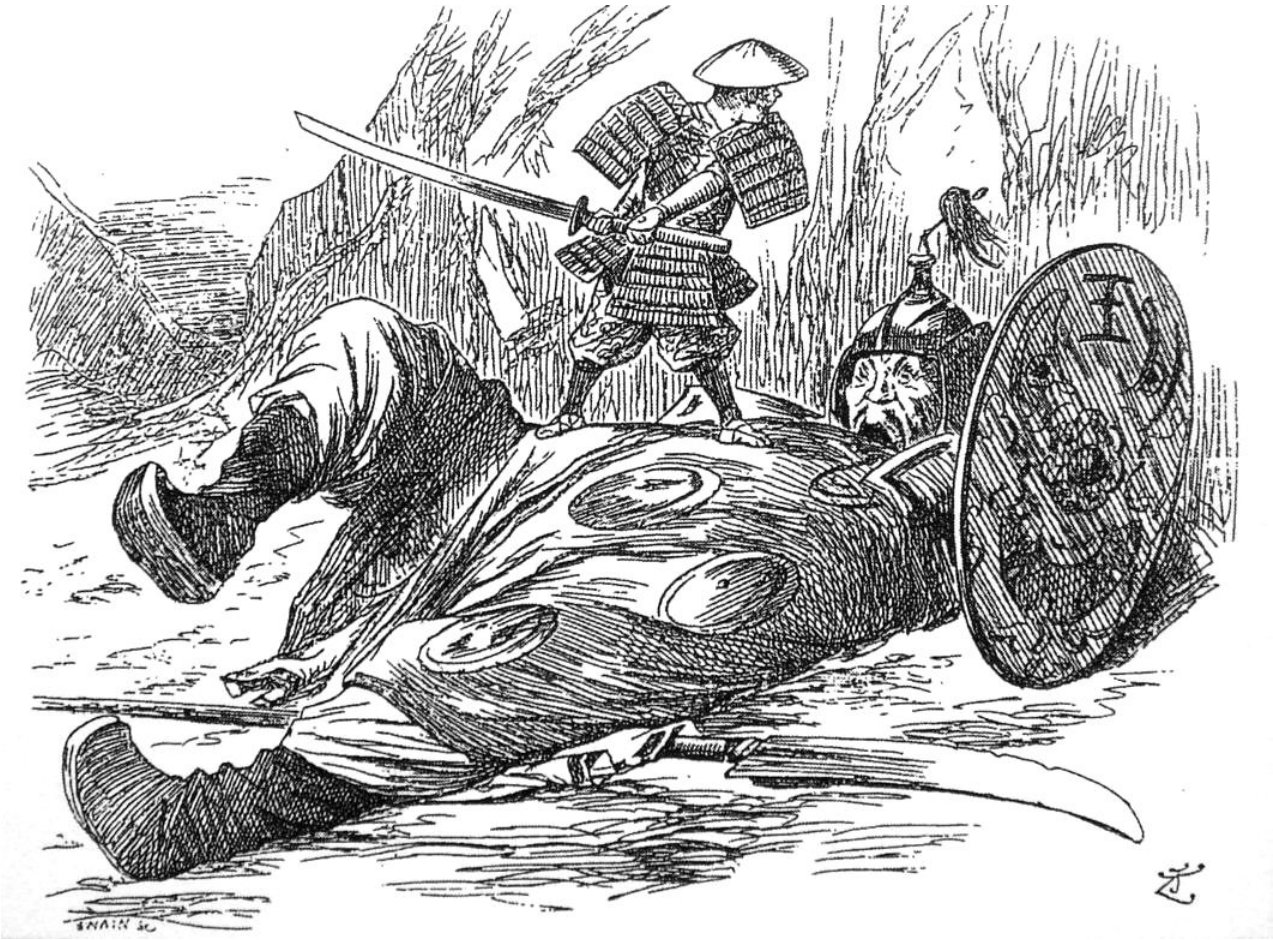


Figure: Satirical drawing in the magazine Punch ( September 1894), showing the victory of “small” Japan over “large” China.

Meanwhile, in China, other rebellions such as the Nian Rebellion (1853-68), the Panthay Rebellion (1855-73), and the Dungan revolt (1862-77) continued to challenge the Qing regime. In 1895, China lost its control of its tribute state Korea to Japan in the first Sino-Japanese War. The humiliating defeat for the Qing empire showed their efforts to modernize China’s military had failed and was a catalyst for a series of political actions led by revolutionaries like Sun Yat-sen. China ended the nineteenth century under the control of European powers and generally considered to be “the weak man of Asia.”

here

- Compare the Taiping Rebellion to the US Civil War, which happened about the same time. How were the two conflicts similar and different?
- Why do you think Japan was more able to rapidly respond to the challenge of western culture?

## Primary Sources

**LIN ZEXU, LETTER TO QUEEN VICTORIA (1839)**

Looking over the public documents accompanying the tribute sent (by your predecessors) on various occasions, we find the following: “All the people of my country, arriving at the Central Land for purposes of trade, have to feel grateful to the great emperor for the most perfect justice, for the kindest treatment,” and other words to that effect. Delighted did we feel that the kings of your honorable nation so clearly understood the great principles of propriety, and were so deeply grateful for the heavenly goodness (of our emperor):—therefore, it was that we of the heavenly dynasty nourished and cherished your people from afar, and bestowed upon them redoubled proofs of our urbanity and kindness. It is merely from these circumstances, that your country—deriving immense advantage from its commercial intercourse with us, which has endured now two hundred years—has become the rich and flourishing kingdom that it is said to be!

But, during the commercial intercourse which has existed so long, among the numerous foreign merchants resorting hither, are wheat and tares, good and bad; and of these latter are some, who, by means of introducing opium by stealth, have seduced our Chinese people, and caused every province of the land to overflow with that poison. These then know merely to advantage themselves, they care not about injuring others! This is a principle which heaven's Providence repugnates; and which mankind conjointly look upon with abhorrence! Moreover, the great emperor hearing of it, actually quivered with indignation, and especially dispatched me, the commissioner, to Canton, that in conjunction with the viceroy and lieut.-governor of the province, means might be taken for its suppression!

Every native of the Inner Land who sells opium, as also all who smoke it, are alike adjudged to death. Were we then to go back and take up the crimes of the foreigners, who, by selling it for many years have induced dreadful calamity and robbed us of enormous wealth, and punish them with equal severity, our laws could not but award to them absolute annihilation! But, considering that these said foreigners did yet repent of their crime, and with a sincere heart beg for mercy; that they took 20,283 chests of opium piled up in their store-ships, and through Elliot, the superintendent of the trade of your said country, petitioned that they might be delivered up to us, when the same were all utterly destroyed, of which we, the imperial commissioner and colleagues, made a duly prepared memorial to his majesty;—considering these circumstances, we have happily received a fresh proof of the extraordinary goodness of the great emperor, inasmuch as he who voluntarily comes forward, may yet be deemed a fit subject for mercy, and his crimes be graciously remitted him. But as for him who again knowingly violates the laws, difficult indeed will it be thus to go on repeatedly pardoning! He or they shall alike be doomed to the penalties of the new statute. We presume that you, the sovereign of your honorable nation, on pouring out your heart before the altar of eternal justice, cannot but command all foreigners with the deepest respect to reverence our laws! If we only lay clearly before your eyes, what is profitable and what is destructive, you will then know that the statutes of the heavenly dynasty cannot but be obeyed with fear and trembling!

…

Your honorable nation takes away the products of our central land, and not only do you thereby obtain food and support for yourselves, but moreover, by re-selling these products to other countries you reap a threefold profit. Now if you would only not sell opium, this threefold profit would be secured to you: how can you possibly consent to forgo it for a drug that is hurtful to men, and an unbridled craving after gain that seems to know no bounds! Let us suppose that foreigners came from another country, and brought opium into England, and seduced the people of your country to smoke it, would not you, the sovereign of the said country, look upon such a procedure with anger, and in your just indignation endeavor to get rid of it? Now we have always heard that your highness possesses a most kind and benevolent heart, surely then you are incapable of doing or causing to be done unto another, that which you should not wish another to do unto you!

…

Our celestial empire rules over ten thousand kingdoms! Most surely do we possess a measure of godlike majesty which ye cannot fathom! Still we cannot bear to slay or exterminate without previous warning, and it is for this reason that we now clearly make known to you the fixed laws of our land. If the foreign merchants of your said honorable nation desire to continue their commercial intercourse, they then must tremblingly obey our recorded statutes, they must cut off for ever the source from which the opium flows, and on no account make an experiment of our laws in their own persons! Let then your highness punish those of your subjects who may be criminal, do not endeavor to screen or conceal them, and thus you will secure peace and quietness to your possessions, thus will you more than ever display a proper sense of respect and obedience, and thus may we unitedly enjoy the common blessings of peace and happiness. What greater joy! What more complete felicity than this!

Let your highness immediately, upon the receipt of this communication, inform us promptly of the state of matters, and of the measure you are pursuing utterly to put a stop to the opium evil. Please let your reply be speedy. Do Do not on any account make excuses or procrastinate. A most important communication.

## Quotes from Robert Owen

"To preserve permanent good health, the state of mind must be taken into consideration." (*The Book of the New Moral World*)

"Eight hours daily labour is enough for any human being, and under proper arrangements sufficient to afford an ample supply of food, raiment and shelter, or the necessaries and comforts of life, and for the remainder of his time, every person is entitled to education, recreation and sleep." ("Foundation Axioms of Society for Promoting National Regeneration", 1833)

"Is it not the interest of the human race, that everyone should be so taught and placed, that he would find his highest enjoyment to arise from the continued practice of doing all in his power to promote the well-being, and happiness, of every man, woman, and child, without regard to their class, sect, party, country or color?" (17th of "20 Questions to the Human Race", 1841)

"As there are a very great variety of religious sects in the world (and which are probably adapted to different constitutions under different circumstances, seeing there are many good and conscientious characters in each), it is particularly recommended, as a means of uniting the inhabitants of the village into one family, that while each faithfully adheres to the principles which he most approves, at the same time all shall think charitably of their neighbors respecting their religious opinions, and not presumptuously suppose that theirs alone are right." (*Rules and Regulations for the Inhabitants of New Lanark*)

"The working classes may be injuriously degraded and oppressed in three ways:

1st — When they are neglected in infancy
2nd — When they are overworked by their employer, and are thus rendered incompetent from
ignorance to make a good use of high wages when they can procure them.
3rd — When they are paid low wages for their labour (*Two Memorials on Behalf of the Working Classes*)
"To train and educate the rising generation will at all times be the first object of society, to which every other will be subordinate." (*The Social System*)

"To preserve permanent good health, the state of mind must be taken into consideration." (*The Book of the New Moral World*)

## Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marx & Engels, 1848

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed — a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These laborers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery, and to the division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by the increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of machinery, etc.

Modern Industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

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# 1.7: Imperialism




Figure: Britannia carrying a large white flag labeled “Civilization” with British soldiers and colonists behind her, advancing on a horde of natives, one carrying a flag labeled “Barbarism”.

The 19th century and the turn of the 20th century are often described as a period when the power of many land-based empires diminished and nationalism became the most important organizing principle for societies around the world. Actually, powerful nations in Europe and America pursued overseas empires and expanded into Africa and East Asia, until a wave of “decolonization” after World War Two. And even then, “empires” have remained as important as ever in the late 20th and the 21st century, although the power of the new empires that have been successful has been largely economic rather than political.

Consider the decline of the empires we’ve already become familiar with in earlier chapters, in Asia, Europe, and the Muslim world. They were territorial empires that had used military conquest to impose political control over wide expanses of land adjacent to their ancestral homelands. They existed by providing a degree of civil and economic order, in exchange for taxes on the agricultural produce of the agrarian populations they conquered. These empires usually left their citizens more or less alone to speak their own languages, practice their own religions, and observe their own cultural traditions. Occasionally they took captives from conquered lands, like the janissaries of the Ottoman Empire.




The Portuguese and Spanish began establishing the first European overseas empires in Azores and Canary Islands in the late 1400s, extending their overseas imperial project into the Americas after 1492. In the process, the Spanish defeated several land-based

indigenous empires such as the Aztecs, Inca, and Maya, and replaced the native rulers with Spanish Viceroys. The British, French, Dutch, and others soon followed the Iberians into the Caribbean and North America. All the European colonies in the Americas were controlled by their respective "mother" countries, sending resources like silver and gold and agricultural products (especially sugar) to Europe, and often required to trade only with the "mother" economy. As we will see, Europeans continued this model of overseas empires in the 1800s as Africa and parts of Asia came to be dominated by outside imperial powers.

However, the new project of economic "neo-imperialism" also appeared in the 19th century, especially in the new republics of Latin America. In this case, supposedly independent countries that had recently won their independence from the Spanish and Portuguese empires, were economically dominated by European and U.S. investors, still providing raw materials for the "Great Powers" in exchange for finished industrial goods. As presented later, nearly all of these new nations became indebted to European banks and faced the humiliation of "gunboat diplomacy" in which U.S. and European powers took over custom houses to force payment of loans.

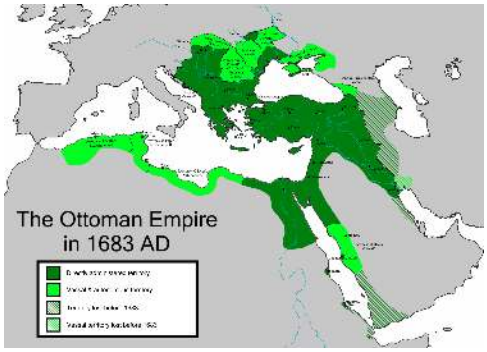
Before World War One, the decline of land-based empires was nearly complete, while overseas empires flourished.

**Question for Discussion**

Why would a shift from land-based to overseas empires be a significant change? How would such a change affect history?

## Declining Land-Based Empires

The land-based empires began a precipitous decline after the Napoleonic wars, some sooner than others. The challenge of nationalism some of these multi-ethnic empires. Members of distinct cultural, religious, and linguistic groups began to demand more autonomy within these empires, which frequently led to the establishment of independent nation-states. In other cases, empires that resisted change were conquered by powerful nations expanding their overseas empires. Often these factors combined to challenge land-based empires.




The Ottoman Empire declined very slowly during the 19th century—when it was called "the Sick Man of Europe"—but it was able to persist until World War I. The Sunni Muslim Ottoman homeland was present-day Turkey, which bordered on Orthodox Christian Russia to the north, the Catholic Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian) Empire to the west, and the Shiite Iranians who succeeded the Safavid Empire in Persia to the east. The Russians aided the Orthodox Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians in their successful struggles for independence. The Ottoman capital, Istanbul, had been Constantinople, home of the Byzantine Empire and of Greek Orthodox Christianity before the Ottoman conquest of 1453; and the leaders of Russia wanted to reestablish Christian rule there.

The Greeks were the first to successfully free themselves from Ottoman rule in the 1820s. They found support not only from Imperial Russia, but also from the British and French, who sought more economic and political influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. The struggle for Greek freedom, in the birthplace of democracy and and home of classical literature and art, fired the imagination of the artists and writers of the "Romantic" movement then flourishing in Europe. English poet Lord Byron lost his life in service to the Greek cause.



Figure: “Charge of the Light Brigade”, October 5, 1854, from the Russian perspective on the high ground.

By the mid-19th century, disputes between European powers over what would happen to Ottoman territory caused the Crimean War (1853-1856), in which France, Great Britain, the Italian Kingdom of Sardinia, and the Ottomans opposed an expanding Russian Empire. The Crimean War was the first major war of the Industrial Age, featuring the use of railways, telegraphs, and modern ordnance like rifles and exploding naval artillery. Disastrous mismatches between traditional military tactics and the realities of modern war occurred, such as the incident immortalized in Alfred Tennyson’s poem “The Charge of the Light Brigade.” The poem describes a frontal assault by a British light cavalry unit armed only with lances and sabers against an artillery battery dug in on high ground at the battle of Balaclava in 1855. Although Tennyson’s poem praises the bravery of the cavalrymen who charged through the so-called Valley of Death, events like these became symbols of the logistical and tactical mismanagement of the war effort. The conflict also revealed the weakness of the Russian Empire, which fielded large armies but lagged in both tactics and technology. In the treaty following the war, Russia was forced to remove its naval fleet from the Black Sea.



Figure: NASA image of the Suez Canal from space, connecting the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea.

The Ottomans also faced an ongoing dispute with the Egyptians, who gained practical independence under the Ottoman-appointed governor Muhammad Ali from 1805-1848. Ali modernized Egypt in many ways, while his son, Muhammad Sa’id, granted a land concession in 1854 to French businessman Ferdinand de Lesseps to dig a canal from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. The

building of the Suez Canal, completed in 1869, was initially opposed by Great Britain because they feared its control by the French would shift the balance of power in Europe. The canal took eleven years to build, using forced Egyptian labor. Although the Suez Canal Company was an international corporation, its shares did not sell well outside France and Egypt. But in 1875, Sa'id's son Ismail put Egypt's shares up for sale and British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli bought the shares with an unsecured £4,000,000 loan from his close personal friend Baron Lionel de Rothschild, head of the famous international bank. Although France still owned more shares, Britain sent troops to protect the canal during an Egyptian civil war in 1882 and in 1888 the canal was declared a neutral zone under British protection. Using the canal, British steamships were able to avoid sailing around Africa and reach India in two weeks instead of two months.

Inspired the example of the Greeks, and encouraged by the Russians and others, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bulgaria achieved nearly-complete independence from the Sultan in Istanbul by 1878. Although they belonged to distinct ethnic and linguistic groups, the majority of people in these territories were Orthodox Christians. However, as we will see in the next chapter, these new countries had trouble resolving disputes over borders and political control, since the different peoples lived all over the region in villages and towns that were frequently "majority-minority." Nationalism was the motivation for independence, but the national community existed across many frontiers—how should they be united? And what should be done about the "other" living within one's own country?

### Questions for Discussion

- Why were Englishmen like Lord Byron so supportive of Greek independence?
- What does the Charge of the Light Brigade tell us about the changing nature of warfare?
- Why is the Suez Canal so significant?



Figure: 1873 painting depicting Russian serfs hearing of their emancipation in 1861.

When the Russian Empire's ambitions were thwarted in the Crimean War, Russians were forced to confront their military incompetence and social backwardness. Serfdom tied peasants and their families to the land, and although they were not slaves, serfs were included in any property transaction among the landed gentry. Tsar Alexander II declared an end to serfdom in 1861, shortly before President Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, during the United States Civil War. Both countries were among the last in their respective regions to formally end forced labor obligations and like the newly-"freed" in the U.S., the liberty of many former Russian serfs existed only on paper.

Russian industries expanded with investment from western Europe: factories and rail networks soon appeared, especially in the European part of Russia. However, the slowness of political and social change led to frustration among potential reformers, who

instead turned to revolutionary action, often led by anarchists. Anarchism is similar to socialism in its concept of class struggle, but anarchists believe that all forms of top-down control—governments, police, organized religion—should be immediately eliminated, allowing the natural cooperativeness of humanity to thrive in smaller consensus-based entities. Russian anarchists succeeded in assassinating the reformist Tsar Alexander II in 1881, on the day he had given approval for a limited form of parliamentary government. His son, Alexander III, rejected this political reform; he, in turn, was also murdered by anarchists, in 1894. His son, Nicholas II, was not open to any checks on his absolute power.

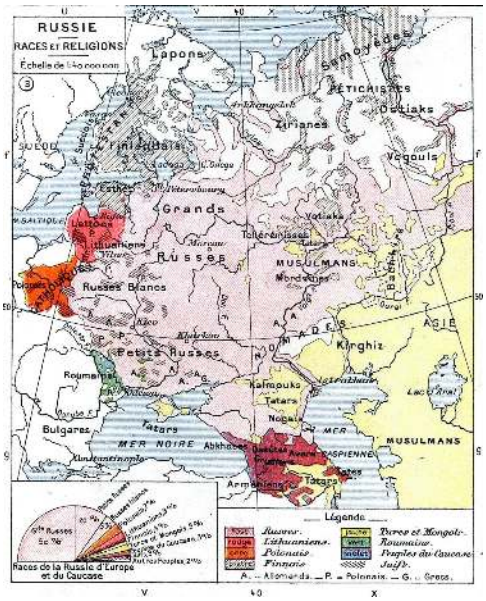


Figure: Ethnic map of European Russia before World War I

Dozens of ethnic and religious groups lived in the territories of the Russian Empire; attempts at “russification” were inconclusive. The Poles, Finns, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Romanians, among many others, chafed under the autocratic rule of the Tsars, and desired independence—or simply immigrated to the U.S. for better economic opportunities. Jewish Russians, many of whom lived in territory taken from Poland in the 1790s, were blamed for misfortunes like the deaths of babies or cattle and attacked in violent “pogroms”. Jews from these Russia and Eastern Europe also often chose a new life in the United States rather than discrimination and persecution. Later pogroms, such as one in Odessa in 1905 in which hundreds of Jews lost their lives, received international condemnation and were presented as proof of Tsarist Russia’s backwardness.

In the late 19th century, the Tsarist autocracy encouraged anti-Semitism: the idea that Jews were the cause of political, economic, and social problems, and needed to be controlled and occasionally “put in their place” in violent pogroms. Although Jews had lived in the region for centuries, they were always considered an “other” and the Tsars restricted their ability to own land and to exercise certain professions. Local and national leaders blamed the Jews for every assassination and economic downturn in order to unite opposition groups with the goals of the Tsars. Attacks on Jewish communities and neighborhoods—pogroms—occurred with frightening frequency from the 1880s until the eve of World War One. Jews from these territories often chose immigration to the United States to flee discrimination and persecution, while later pogroms, such as the one in Odessa in 1905 in which hundreds of Jews lost their lives, received international condemnation and were presented as proof of Tsarist Russia’s backwardness.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why was Tsar Nicholas II unwilling to consider any checks on his absolute authority?
- How did the large numbers of different ethnicities, languages, and religions in the Russian Empire create difficulties for the Tsarist government?

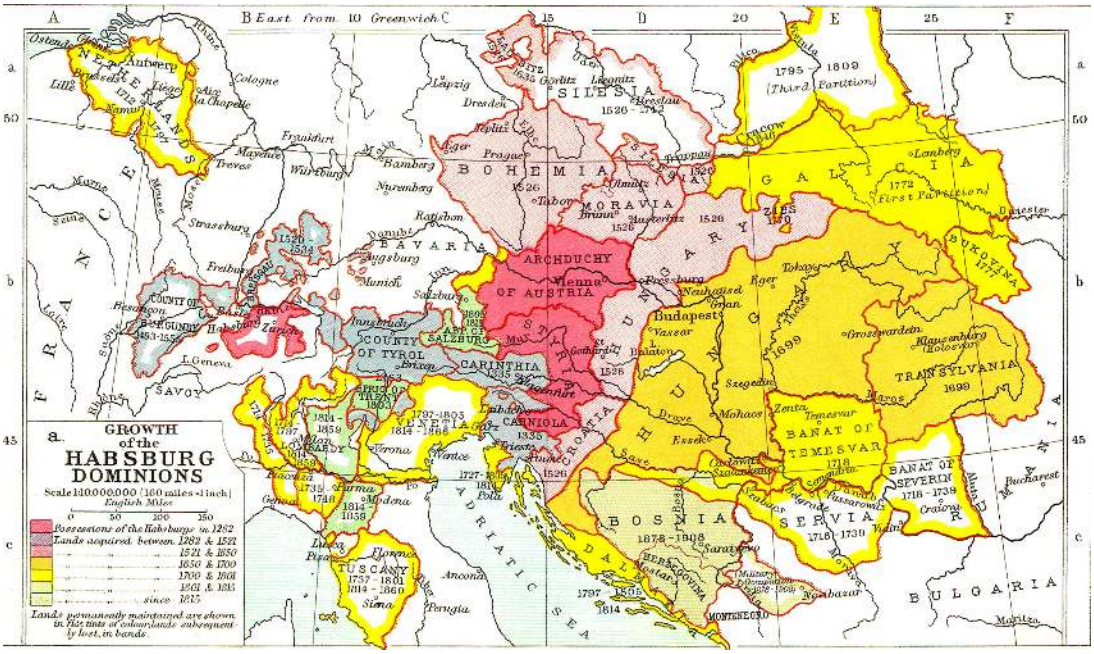



Figure: Growth of the Habsburg Empire from the red and pink center outward to the yellow and green conquests of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Habsburg dynasty had ruled Austria and its territories since the late 1200s; through strategic marriages, the family also controlled the Spanish Empire in the 1500s and 1600s, including the Spanish-American colonies. The Spanish line died out in 1700, but the Austrian House of Habsburg would reign until 1918.

At the end of the Napoleonic period, the Habsburg Empire dominated southeastern Europe, up to the frontiers of the Ottoman and Russians. While the Tsars felt a special kinship with Orthodox Christians under Turkish rule—Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians—the Habsburg monarchs supported Catholics of the Ottoman region, like the Croats. Until 1815, the Habsburgs had been the Holy Roman Emperors; during the Protestant Reformation, they fought to maintain Catholicism as the official religion of their realm.

Although united by religion, the Habsburg empire was divided by a growing sense of nationality. German-speaking Austrian Habsburg emperors ruled Hungarians, Czechs, Ukrainians, Poles, Slovaks, Romanians, Jews, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, and Albanians. By the middle of the nineteenth century, many of these peoples wanted their own nations. The rebellions and revolutions of 1848 came close to breaking up the Habsburg territories in a wave of nationalist and socialist fervor. The revolutionaries did not achieve all of their goals, but serfdom was abolished, several regions gained a greater degree of autonomy, and Emperor Ferdinand I abdicated in favor of his nephew Franz Josef.




Figure: Ethnicities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1911.

Unification of Italy in the 1860s and and Germany in 1870 allowed the Hungarians, who became the most numerous minority within the realm, to achieve near-complete independence. In 1867, the emperor agreed to establish a “dual monarchy”, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Administration was divided between Austrian and Hungarian parliaments, while the Austrian emperor managed foreign policy. This compromise merely spread out the nationalist problem for two kings instead of one: Romanians demanded

more autonomy from the Hungarian administration in Budapest, while the Czechs asked for the same from the Austrian government in Vienna.

**Questions for Discussion**

- What was the main factor uniting the Austro-Hungarian Empire?
- What were the factors fracturing the unity?

A united Germany, achieved in 1870, brought together an agricultural east with an industrialized west, creating an entirely new "Great Power" in Europe to rival Great Britain and France. The new nation called itself the German Empire (*Deutsches Reich*); its ambition to take a place at the table of imperial powers upset the post-Napoleonic European balance of power and, eventually, became a cause of the two twentieth-century world wars.



Figure: Otto von Bismarck, painted when he was Prime Minister of Prussia.

Otto von Bismarck, who had become prime minister of the Kingdom of Prussia in 1862, was the main architect of the German Empire. Although he was not among the young Germans who had dreamed of unification during the revolutions of 1848, Bismarck gradually came to the conclusion that to counter Austria-Hungary, which was over-extended in Italy and in its ambitions in the Balkans, Prussia had to take the initiative and gather the German states under the Prussian king. Bismarck used war as a way to unite the German principalities. First, in 1864, he started a brief war with Denmark that brought together most of the northern German states as allies of Prussia. A war with Austria in 1866 solidified these states in a confederation with Prussian King Wilhelm I, while at the same time, the newly unified Italy took advantage of a weakened Austria to claim Italian-speaking Hapsburg territories.

To bring in the mostly Catholic southern German states (led by Bavaria), Bismarck offended Napoleon III of France, making territorial promises in the Austrian war that he did not keep with the French emperor (among other transgressions). When the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, who had been president of France before declaring himself emperor, went to war with Prussia in 1870, he counted on the neutrality of the other German states and on Austrian help, neither of which happened.

Prussia had one of the best-trained armies in Europe and surprised the French with their rapid advance. Within weeks, they had captured Napoleon III himself. A leaderless France could not halt the united German advance and the capital, Paris, was taken over by a socialist-inspired Commune. The French agreed to territorial losses as they formed a Third Republic to replace Napoleon III. In early 1871, Bismarck initiated a gathering of the German princes at the French royal palace in Versailles, outside Paris, to join together as a new unified national state, with the Prussian King Wilhelm I as emperor.



Figure: Wilhelm I proclaimed Emperor. The man in white is the Prussian chancellor Otto von Bismarck, responsible for organizing the Empire. The whole ceremony is taking place at the French royal Palace of Versailles after the French armies were defeated—Versailles will come up again in the next Chapter!

A German empire created a new dynamic in diplomatic relations, based on French and German antagonism, forming new alliances and altering previous arrangements. The Franco-Prussian War was the first of three major conflicts between the French and the Germans over the next 75 years in which millions would die—but one can take heart in the idea that in more recent decades, the two countries have become strong allies, forming the primary economic and political relationship of the current European Union. If the French and Germans can set aside old conflicts and work together, perhaps Indians and Pakistanis, Sunnis and Shi'ites, Israelis and Palestinians, and other "enemies" can eventually do the same.

**Question for Discussion**

Was Germany justified in its desire to become a "Great Power" like Britain and France?

## Rising Overseas Empires

Even though the British North American colonies achieved independence and became the United States, Britain held on to Canada and retained control of islands in the Caribbean, while (as described below) London's bankers and British industry would dominate the finance and trade in the new Latin American republics.



Figure: Sir John A. Macdonald, first Prime Minister of Canada (1878-1891).

Unlike the Thirteen Colonies, Canada achieved its independence from Britain much more slowly, without a revolution. Although the French-speaking Quebecois and the British in Ontario could easily have been at each other's throats, anxiety over an invasion from the United States (which was tried unsuccessfully in 1775 and 1812) held a fragile alliance together. After two more incursions by American forces in the 1830s, the British North America Act of 1867 created the Dominion of Canada by combining Quebec, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and New Brunswick. John A. MacDonald became the nation's first Prime Minister in 1867, negotiated the purchase of the Northwest Territories from the Hudson's Bay company in 1869, and convinced Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, and British Columbia to join the Dominion. MacDonald knew that like the U.S., Canada's eastern and western coastal regions needed a transcontinental railroad to bind them together. The Canadian Pacific Railroad was completed in 1885. The C.P. Railroad operates mostly just north of the border, although several lines connected to U.S. cities such as Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Detroit, and Chicago. Even today, 90% of Canada's 36 million population live within 100 miles of the U.S. border.



Figure: Canadian-Pacific Rail Map

The British had also claimed Australia, which they settled in the late 18th century with convicts. Most of the crimes were petty or related to debt, while some were political, such as the Irish condemned for protesting English rule. New Zealand was settled in the early 19th century through a private company, following the model established in the colonization of some of the Thirteen Colonies. In both cases, the native peoples lost land in much the same manner as in British North America. In Australia, the vast continent allowed for the aborigines to retreat, until environmental and other factors brought them into increasing contact with the settlers and their descendants. In New Zealand, relations between the native Maori and the settlers followed a pattern similar to those of the western United States: treaties made, treaties broken, wars fought and won by the settlers, who took more land. However, respect and celebration of Maori rights and culture have become integral to New Zealand identity in recent decades.

India was the most important colony for the British, determining much of its international diplomacy until after World War Two. When the British East India Company began its conquest of India in the 1700s, the Mughal Empire was entering a long period of

decline after its peak in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Company took advantage of the empire's weakness to expand its trading activities, and slowly took over the regional principalities that split off from Mughal control. By the 1700s, Indian tea had become an important part of the British diet—even for their colonists in North America, who dumped Indian tea into the Boston Harbor in protest against taxes on the product in 1773. By the middle of the 19th century, the Company controlled most of mainland India, Pakistan, Burma, and Bangladesh, as well as Sri Lanka. The Company shifted its policy away from simply trading, and began reorganizing the Indian economy, clearing forests and establishing widespread cultivation of tea, coffee, cotton, and opium for use in China. By the time the Crown took over direct control of the colony in 1858 after an uprising called the Sepoy Mutiny, India was a producer of agricultural products and raw materials for Britain's growing industrial economy.

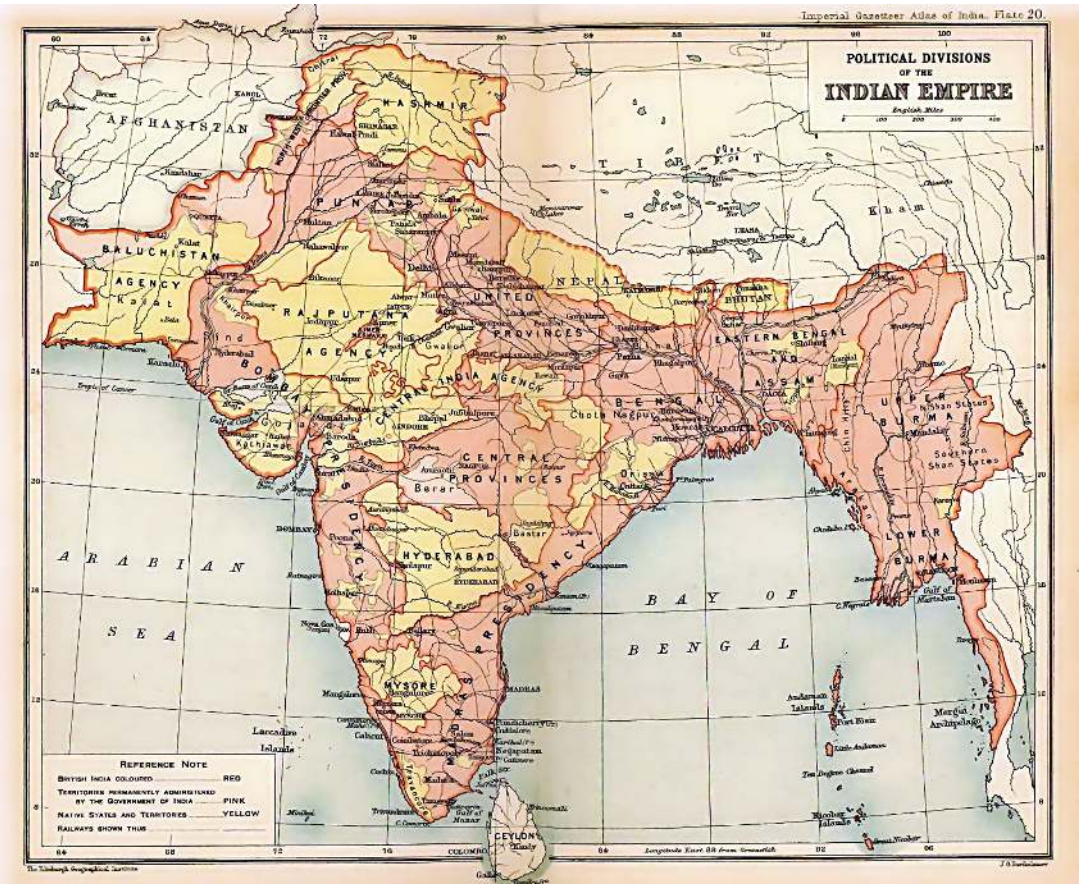


Figure: 1909 Map of the British India, showing British India in two shades of pink and the princely states in yellow.

By the mid-19th century, the British in India had established an imperial model that had proved lucrative for investors: the colony provided raw material and resources for the consumers and industries of the "home country," while Indians purchased mass-produced textiles and other goods from British factories as a "captive market." This closed economic system was attractive to both older and newer European empires—setting off, as we shall see, a scramble for colonies in Africa in the late-19th century.

The British administration of India, however, also provided a model for other European imperialists. Clearly, the tiny island kingdom could not direct all of the affairs of their Indian possession—trained locals needed to aid in governance. This process began under the East India Company with the formation of native army and police forces, commanded by British officers, but soon included educated local administrators who spoke English and understood and applied imperial laws and edicts. By the 1850s, the British had founded their first schools to instruct the local elite in English, engineering, science, and British imperial law. This model proved so effective in India that Indian immigrants often followed the British to their new colonies in Africa, where Indians operated the railways and postal service, and Indian carpenters and bricklayers constructed government offices and private homes for the new colonial political and commercial elites. Indian shopkeepers played an enormous role in the local economies of these new colonies well into the 20th century. Indians even migrated to Great Britain's territories in the Caribbean as indentured servants —in Guyana, in northern South America, over 40% of the population is of "India-Indian" descent.



Figure: Photograph of Mahatma Gandhi in 1909, when he was a lawyer in South Africa.

The story of Mahatma Gandhi, who later helped lead India to independence, is an example of a native trained to manage the Empire. After an education in a British school in India, Gandhi went to London and studied law. On graduating he went to South Africa to serve the British Empire as a lawyer for twenty-five years before beginning a new career advocating for Indian independence. This, too, was a pattern duplicated in other European empires: eventually, educated local elites and professionals would begin to demand greater autonomy, if not outright independence, since they were already administering the colonies for the "mother country." Ho Chi Minh, who would fight with and then against U.S. forces for the independence of Vietnam, applied for admission to the French academy in Marseilles that trained imperial administrators. If the school had accepted him, history might have been quite different.

**Questions for Discussion**

- How did the British shift their imperial goals after losing much of North America in the U.S. Revolutionary War?
- Why were natives trained as an administrative class in the colonies a problem in the long run for imperialists?

## The United States: Slavery, Expansion, and Civil War

Some of the slaveowners among the Founders of the United States thought that slavery would not be a permanent institution in the new country. At the constitutional convention in 1787, they agreed to abolish the slave trade in the U.S. starting in 1808. Many seem to have expected that slavery would gradually disappear. Even the slaveowner Thomas Jefferson idealized the independent, self-sufficient yeoman farmer rather than the Southern planter as the hope of American democracy.

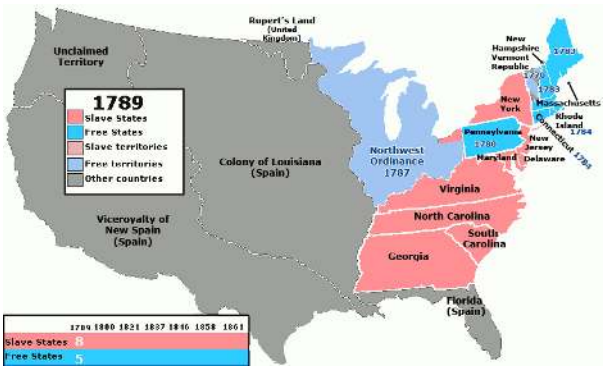



Figure: A time-lapse map of the expansion of slavery in the United States between 1789 and 1861.

However, Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin gave new life to the institution of slavery. Issues such as the infamous "three-fifths compromise" of the U.S. Constitution, in which enslaved people counted as 3/5 of a person for purposes of taxation and representation, became more divisive rather than gradually disappearing. And even in the "free" North, the United States was generally considered a "white man's country". Free men of African descent were only allowed to vote in a handful of states by 1860 and were subject to discrimination in jobs, housing, and movement everywhere. Finally, although many whites opposed the

extension of slavery into the western territories and even advocated for abolition, they also supported schemes for sending freed blacks “back to Africa”. Liberia, on west coast of Africa, was “founded” by white abolitionists and free people from the United States in 1820—incongruously naming their capital “Monrovia” for the U.S. president at the time, James Monroe, who was a slaveholder.




Figure: A map of the process of Indian Removal, 1830–1838. Oklahoma is depicted in light yellow-green.

Whitney’s invention caused an explosion of cotton planting, which led not only to an expansion of slavery but to a hunger for new land. As had happened in the Thirteen Colonies, white-led settlement came at the expense of the Native Americans. The five “civilized tribes” of the south, the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole, were Indians who had embraced Christianity and Anglo-American institutions. They established their own farms and even plantations, published a bilingual newspaper, governed themselves in a bicameral legislature, and even owned black slaves. Nevertheless, they were cast out of the southern states by the Indian Removal Act of 1830, forced to leave ancestral lands and relocate in Oklahoma, west of the Mississippi River. The “Trail of Tears” for these displaced people was well-named: thousands died in the forced march across the South and during their settlement in a completely different environment. Despite treaties, similar processes also occurred in the Louisiana Territory and beyond.



Figure: General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, former President of Mexico, led Mexican troops into Texas in 1836. He returned to the Presidency during the Mexican-American War, but couldn’t prevent his nation’s defeat.

The territories of independent Mexico north of the Rio Grande River had been only lightly settled by the Spanish. Santa Fe was established nearly one hundred years after the conquest of the Aztecs, and the religious missions in California only appeared in the 1700s. The new Mexican government allowed for “Anglo” settlement from the United States into Texas, which bordered the new state of Louisiana, as a way to begin populating this region. While the Mexican government allowed the “Tejanos” a degree of self-government, they insisted that Mexican laws be obeyed, including the abolition of slavery. The new settlers rebelled, and achieved independence after a brief war in 1836, and immediately brought enslaved people to work on cotton plantations.

Although Mexico's treaty with independent Texas included a pledge that the new republic would not become a state of the United States, Texas did join the union in 1845 and a war ensued. Not only did the U.S. government send troops south to defend Texas, they sent enough to defeat Mexico decisively. Many Americans argued that the United States had a "Manifest Destiny" that required it to become a continental nation. The U.S. Army eventually occupied Mexico City in 1848 and conquered all of the territory to the Pacific Ocean. In defeat, the Mexicans signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and ceded all of their territory north of the Rio Grande River. Mexico lost over half its land area, and the United States acquired California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Colorado, Utah, and part of Wyoming. At the same time, the U.S. government negotiated a treaty with Great Britain to establish a border in the disputed Oregon territory. By 1849, the United States had completed its advance across the continent.




Figure: Map of Mexico and the United States in 1824, before the Texas Secession and the Mexican-American War.

Almost immediately after the Mexicans were defeated, gold was discovered by a U.S. settler in northern California. "Forty-niners" joined the Gold Rush from the eastern states and from as far away as Chile and China. California became a U.S. state the next year. Again, rapid settlement came at the expense of Native Americans. Chinese laborers were soon restricted in their movements. The United States was a "white man's country", and they became the first ethnic group explicitly barred from immigrating to the U.S. in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. And finally, the rapid expansion of territory and establishment of new states upended the careful balance between slave and free states that had prevented armed conflict. An escalation of violence in Kansas and increasing political polarization led to the formation of a new political party (the Republicans), election of a president from this party (former Illinois Congressman Abraham Lincoln), and the secession of most of the Southern slave states.

### Questions for Discussion

- How did technological progress impact the politics of slavery?
- How do you think the idea of Manifest Destiny held by people in the United States affected our history?

The Civil War, like the Crimean a few years earlier, was one of the first modern wars that brought new technology to the battlefield. Railroads and steamboats made troop transportation quicker and more efficient, while the electric telegraph not only improved

military communication, but also made war news more immediately available to the newspaper-reading public in the U.S. and abroad. The industrialized northern states benefitted the most from the new technologies, since they could produce more war materiel and get troops to the front more quickly than the South, which lagged in both industry and railroads.

Southern hopes of maintaining an independent Confederacy depended on support from Europe. Southern cotton supplied the textile mills of Great Britain and France, enriching those countries, and Confederate planters expected these business ties to influence government decisions. Great Britain hesitated to recognize the independence of the Confederacy, but in the end declined when the Union began racking up victories in 1863. At the same time, Emperor Napoleon III—nephew of the man who had sold Louisiana to Jefferson—pursued an imperial scheme to create a pro-French monarchy in Mexico which would support the Confederates. Napoleon's plan failed when Mexican troops unexpectedly defeated the French army at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. Although Maximilian, brother of the Emperor, would briefly rule Mexico, the project was a disaster for Napoleon. After the Union victory in the U.S., French troops left Mexico and Maximilian was executed by firing squad in 1867 as Mexican liberals, led by Benito Juárez, reestablished Mexican independence. The date of the Battle of Puebla is still celebrated as *Cinco de Mayo* by Mexican-Americans throughout the United States.

Because some U.S. publishers are interested in selling their textbooks to school boards in the former Confederate States, they often soft-pedal the Civil War in a way that creates confusion. So, let's be very clear: it is absurd to claim that supporting slavery was legitimately based on the "sanctity of private property rights" espoused by the U.S. Founding Fathers as part of their Enlightenment values. It is not reasonable to argue that property is a human right, but only for some humans, and that other humans can *be property*, rather than having property rights. Furthermore, the U.S. Civil War was about slavery, *NOT* about "states' rights." Although the Confederacy made this claim after they lost, when they seceded and while they thought they were winning, the South very clearly stated it was leaving the Union to preserve the institution of slavery.

**Question for Discussion**

What motivates people to argue that the Civil War was fought over something other than slavery?

## Neo-Imperialism in Latin America

As described in Chapter 4, Latin America achieved independence from Spain and Portugal in the first decades of the 1800s. Great Britain was particularly interested in an independent Latin America as a source of markets for its industrial products, while English and Irish mercenaries, available after the Napoleonic Wars, joined the fight for freedom alongside Bolivar and others in Latin America. The Spanish and Portuguese became the first Europeans to begin losing their overseas empires, nearly 150 years before the British, French, and others would go through the same process. The new countries of Latin America suffered through a long period of struggle to establish stable governments and thriving economies—which, depending on the country, included civil wars, dictatorships, social and political reforms, and economic dependence on a handful of exports and their international price.



Figure: Gauchos relaxing in the Argentine Pampas, as a side of beef cooks over the fire.

The new countries also were the first to experience neo-imperialism—a "new" imperialism that technically respected national sovereignty, but in reality forced governments to bend to foreign influence. In the 1820s and 1830s, the new governments of Latin America quickly became indebted to British banks, which had arranged large loans in anticipation that independence would bring rapid economic development as it had in the United States. Meanwhile, local artisans could not compete with British textiles and other manufactured goods that flooded the markets of the new republics. Many countries became dependent on the international

price of a handful—or even a single—export such as copper and nitrates in Chile, coffee in Brazil, beef and grain in Argentina, sugar in Cuba, and bananas in Central America. British investors in Latin America were followed by French and U.S. businesses. This neo-imperialism continues for much Latin America well into the 21st century, while the model was extended to new countries formed in Africa and Asia from the declining European empires after World War Two.

Some Latin America countries had more success than others boosting their economies with world trade. Brazilian plantations still produce more coffee beans than any other country, but in the 19th century, more than half of all coffee came from Brazil. But the country's economy was extremely sensitive to the world price and rate of consumption; and when the occasional frost in southern Brazil damaged the coffee bushes, planters could go bankrupt.



Figure: The Lei Áurea (Golden Act) that ended slavery in Brazil. By then it had imported an estimated 4,000,000 slaves from Africa, or 40% of all slaves shipped to the Americas.

Brazilian coffee also affected politics and human rights. Brazil was the last country in the hemisphere to abolish slavery, but it achieved this change without a bloody Civil War. In the 18th century, enslaved labor was shifted from declining sugar cane plantations in northern Brazil to silver mining districts in the south. As the mines were beginning to deplete in the late 18th century, planters discovered that coffee grew well in the highlands of southern Brazil, and again, the large landowners used enslaved labor to cultivate the bean. The bloody War of the Triple Alliance, in which Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil fought Paraguay over borders from 1866 to 1870, contributed to the end of slavery. Desperate for soldiers, the Brazilian government offered freedom to enslaved men if they served in the army. Impressed with the ability and dedication of these soldiers, many army officers began to feel that slavery should end in their country. The institution was gradually fading anyway, because coffee cultivation used less labor than either sugar plantations or mines. By 1880, nearly three quarters of all people of color in Brazil were free. King Pedro II finally abolished the institution in 1888; a year later, he abdicated and the military organized a republic.

As noted in the last chapter, Chile controlled over 80% of the world's nitrates in the 1880s, making it a serious power in the Pacific. After the War of the Pacific, the Chilean Navy controlled the west coast of South America, Central America, and was even a threat to U.S. interests. In 1885, when a rebellion broke out in the Colombian province of Panamá, the U.S. government sent ships and troops to both sides of the isthmus to protect the railroad owned by North American investors. The Chilean government send its British-built armored cruiser *Esmeralda (*the fastest ship in the world when launched the year before) to the Pacific side of Panamá, to send a message that it would prevent any annexation of the isthmus by the U.S. Whatever its intentions, the U.S. government withdrew its navy and troops after the rebellion had calmed, as U.S. naval observers opined that the mighty *Esmeralda* could sink every ship in the U.S. navy at the time. The incident contributed to the building of a more effective U.S. navy in the ensuing years. The sense of vulnerability also intensified U.S. interest in a canal through the isthmus of Panama, which had been begun in 1881 by a French consortium led by Ferdinand de Lesseps (the man behind the Suez Canal).

Questions for Discussion

- How is neo-imperialism different from the previous types?
- Why was the U.S. concerned about Chile's naval dominance in the Pacific?

## U.S. Imperialism



Figure: Statue of José Martí on horseback in New York's Central Park

After the Latin American independence wars in 1830, the Spanish Crown still maintained control over Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean and the Philippine Islands in the Pacific. With the end of slavery, independence inspired Cubans, including a few from the planter class. José Martí, a Cuban intellectual and poet, organized funds and support in the United States for a new push to liberate his homeland, and a new rebellion began in 1895. Martí died in his first battle, but the independence army continued with guerrilla tactics in their fight against the Spanish. The Spanish set up concentration camps for non-combatants, assuming that anyone who did not submit was an independence sympathizer. Thousands died in terrible conditions in these camps.

Major newspapers soon engaged in sensationalist reporting on Spain's crimes in Cuba in order to increase circulation. Media magnates William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer used what became known as yellow journalism to agitate for war. Yellow journalism, named after a popular cartoon character, "Yellow Kid", is the technique of using inflammatory headlines backed by little or no factual reporting to stir up public emotion, a combination of the click-bait and fake news that is common on the Internet today. It's ironic that Pulitzer is now best known for the prize for journalistic excellence he established in his will.

At the beginning of 1898, public opinion in the US was divided over entering the Cuban war for independence. Still, the McKinley administration was alarmed enough about instability on the island that it sent the battleship *Maine* to Havana in order to protect U.S. interests. These were plentiful: U.S. investors and buyers controlled the all-important sugar industry, they built and owned much of the communications and transportation infrastructure, and U.S. smokers were the main consumers of Cuban cigars. The *Maine* mysteriously blew up in Havana harbor, killing scores of U.S. soldiers. The Spanish were immediately blamed by the sensationalist U.S. press (decades later, investigations showed that the explosion came from the inside and was an accident: the munitions room was located alongside the engine room!). President McKinley asked for and the U.S. Congress granted a declaration of war on Spain. The conflict quickly eliminated the Spanish Empire's control of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Theodore Roosevelt, Secretary of the Navy at the time, formed his own army unit he called the Rough Riders so that he would not miss out on the "splendid little war" in Cuba. However, Black troops from the regular army had to save him and his men at the Battle of San Juan Hill.




Figure: William H. West's Big Minstrel Jubilee was one of several traveling shows to memorialize the dramatic "Charge of San Juan Hill", adding to Theodore Roosevelt's fame.

The most important fighting of the ten-week war was really at sea. The U.S. navy sank the Spanish fleet in the Caribbean *and* in the Philippines, denying any possibility of the arrival of reinforcements and war materiel from Spain. At the end of 1898, the Spanish Crown agreed to Cuban independence and handed over Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the U.S. *Cuba Libre* ("Free Cuba") was shouted for years by Cuban nationalists. Appropriately, it became the name for the classic bar drink "rum-and-coke" in Spanish-speaking countries: the combination of U.S. Coca Cola and Cuban rum. However, Cuba was far from "free" after the war, since the U.S. government demanded the right to intercede in the internal affairs of the island for any reason. The infamous "Platt Amendment" was forced into the constitution of the new Cuban republic, and U.S. Marines were indeed sent in periodically to change governments or put down rebellions, real or imagined. U.S. investors were particularly leery of increased Afro-Cuban participation in politics, projecting their own racism onto the affairs of the island.



Figure: Emilio Aguinaldo (1869–1964), first president of the Philippines, photographed about 1919.

Meanwhile, the U.S. annexed Puerto Rico and Guam, which are still U.S. territories, as well as the Philippines. Filipinos had already been fighting a war for independence since 1892, so they objected to becoming a possession of the U.S. Emilio Aguinaldo, the Filipino leader, had been promised the US would recognize the independence of the Philippine Republic, but when the time came, President McKinley issued a proclamation of "benevolent assimilation." Rudyard Kipling's famous 1899 poem, "The White

Man's Burden," was written in support of the U.S. effort to subdue the ungrateful brown people of the Philippines. The U.S. Navy destroyed the city of Iloilo to suppress the independence movement, and Aguinaldo called for a strategy of guerrilla warfare. 4,200 American soldiers were killed in the conflict and about 250,000 Filipino soldiers and civilians. In 1901, Aguinaldo was captured and forced to surrender. Resistance continued until 1913, but by 1902 most of the guerrillas had been pushed way from major cities. The Philippines finally achieved independence in 1946, after World War Two (which included wartime occupation by Imperial Japan).




Figure: Editorial cartoon "The White Man's Burden" shows John Bull (Great Britain) and Uncle Sam (U.S.) delivering ungrateful colored peoples of the world to civilization.

The Spanish-American War also highlighted the military importance of building a canal in Panamá. The U.S. Pacific Fleet, after defeating the Spanish in the Philippines, had to sail around South America to engage Spain in the Caribbean. The California Gold Rush had brought the Colombian province of Panamá to the attention of investors. Steamships from East Coast ports brought passengers to Panamá, who, by 1855, could take a U.S.-built and -owned railway to the Pacific side, embarking onto other steamers for the trip up to California. In 1902 the U.S. government bought the French canal company's land for $40 million. Although the French project managed to do some of the most difficult digging, they had abandoned the project several years earlier. Ferdinand De Lessups had planned a sea-level canal, like the Suez in Egypt, but the hilly topography made locks more practical, while the tropical jungles meant malaria for canal workers.




Figure: 1903 New York Times political cartoon, commenting on the U.S. interests driving the "liberation" of Panama from Colombia.

Colombia was ending yet another civil war in 1902, and although the Colombian government signed a treaty handing over a canal zone and other rights to the U.S., the Colombian senate hesitated to approve the agreement. Panamanians were upset at the delay, and it did not take much for the U.S. to help engineer the independence of Panama, sending a naval destroyer to discourage the Colombian government from sending troops. Almost immediately, the new government of Panama signed the Canal Zone over to the U.S. The Canal, opened in 1914, was an impressive engineering feat, shortening the trip for cargo between the oceans. The U.S.

medical service, with the help of Cuban researchers, also made the connection between mosquitoes and malaria, and were able to check the spread of both while building the canal. The U.S. withdrew from the Canal Zone and the canal became Panamanian property on Dec. 31, 1999. The canal was expanded in 2016 to accommodate Panamax container ships, and currently about 13,000 ships pass through the canal annually carrying over 330 million tons of cargo.

### Questions for Discussion

- How did “fake news” contribute to history in the early 20th century?
- Can the United States approach to regions like the Philippines and Panama be considered a new expression of Manifest Destiny?

Bananas began as a major Central American industry when a Cape Cod sea captain named Lorenzo Dow Baker bought 160 bunches in Jamaica in 1870 and resold them in Jersey City. The delicious fruit quickly caught on with U.S. consumers. In 1873 Minor C. Keith began planting banana trees alongside his railroad in Costa Rica. The government had defaulted on some payments to Keith, but instead gave him 800,000 acres of tax-free land along the rail line. When the railroad failed to pay for itself in the 1890s, Keith concentrated on bananas. He merged with Baker’s Boston Fruit Company, which was growing bananas on about 10,000 acres in Jamaica. The United Fruit Company was the result, established in 1899. U.F.C. quickly bought up several competitors and gained control of 80% of the bananas reaching the U.S.



Figure: An illustration from the United Fruit Company’s travel book, The Golden Caribbean, 1900.

In 1901, American author O. Henry coined the term “banana republic” in his book *Cabbages and Kings*, inspired by a visit to Honduras in 1897. His point was that companies like the U.F.C. didn’t limit themselves to bananas. In 1900 the company began a travel service to Central America on its steamers and produced an illustrated travel guide called *The Golden Caribbean*. In 1901 the government of Guatemala contracted with U.F.C. to run the nation’s postal service. In 1913 U.F.C. created the Tropical Radio and Telegraph Company, and by 1930 U.F.C. was worth over $200 million and was the largest employer in Central America. The company owned over 3.5 million acres of land, making it the largest landowner in Guatemala. In 1928 when a strike at U.F.C. plantations in Colombia was portrayed by the company as a potential communist insurrection, the U.S. Marines threatened to invade Colombia if the government did not defend the U.F.C. Colombian soldiers massacred workers striking for an 8-hour day and a six-day work week. Hundreds were killed, including dozens gathered in a town plaza in support of the strike. This 1928 Banana Massacre was described by Gabriel García Marquez in his 1967 novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

In 1933, Sam Zemurray (founder of the rival Cuyamel Fruit Company) acquired U.F.C. in a hostile takeover. Zemurray had gotten into the business in 1895 by buying overripe bananas from U.F.C. and selling them cheaply in New Orleans. In 1910 Zemurray bought 15,000 acres in Honduras and the following year he conspired with a former president of Honduras and an American mercenary general to depose the elected government and install a military regime friendlier to foreign business, especially his. Zemurray had objected to a deal made by the previous government that had granted the U.F.C. a monopoly on Honduran bananas

in exchange for U.F.C. brokering U.S. Government loans to Honduras. The general who led the coup became commander of the Honduran Army and was later appointed U.S. Consul to Honduras.

In 1934 members of the banana workers union in Costa Rica began a national strike that spread to thirty other unions. The U.F.C. tried to divide workers and their salaries based on professional or ethnic differences, and even deported foreign workers. The unions and the U.F.C. came to an agreement after about a month, but the U.F.C. did not follow through on its agreements. Instead, the company began a public relations campaign depicting the unions as communist revolutionaries, with the backing of Costa Rica's government. When the union went back on strike, its leaders were arrested.



Figure: With the poem "La United Fruit Co.", Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet Pablo Neruda denounced the corporate subjugation of Latin America.

These interventions by U.S. banana companies in the internal affairs of the "banana republics" mimicked the U.S. Marine occupations of several other countries in the Caribbean. Unrest and instability in the region threatened shipping lanes and the building and maintenance of the Panamá Canal, so between 1903 and 1933, the U.S. government sent troops to quell disorders in Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. By the end of the period, the Marines had trained national police forces, whose leaders then took over their own governments. The Trujillo dictatorship lasted until 1960 in the Dominican Republic, while the Somoza family ruled Nicaragua until 1979. On a lighter note, the Marines also introduced baseball into the countries they occupied; it is still the national sport of Cubans, Nicaraguans, and Dominicans.

**Question for Discussion**

Why did U.S. corporations feel they could do what they pleased in Latin America and the Caribbean?

## The European "Scramble for Africa"

The European scramble for Africa at the end of the 19th century was motivated by international rivalry and by the fact that Africa south of the Sahara remained the last part of the world "unexplored" by Europeans. South Asia was part of the British Empire, East Asia and Oceania were divvied up, and the Americas were either already colonized or had established republics whose existence was accepted by Europeans and the U.S. The rivalries among the Europeans were based on the desire to create captive consumer markets for their manufactures and to secure resources like copper, tin, cotton, rubber, palm oil, tea, cocoa, and coffee upon which their industries depended.

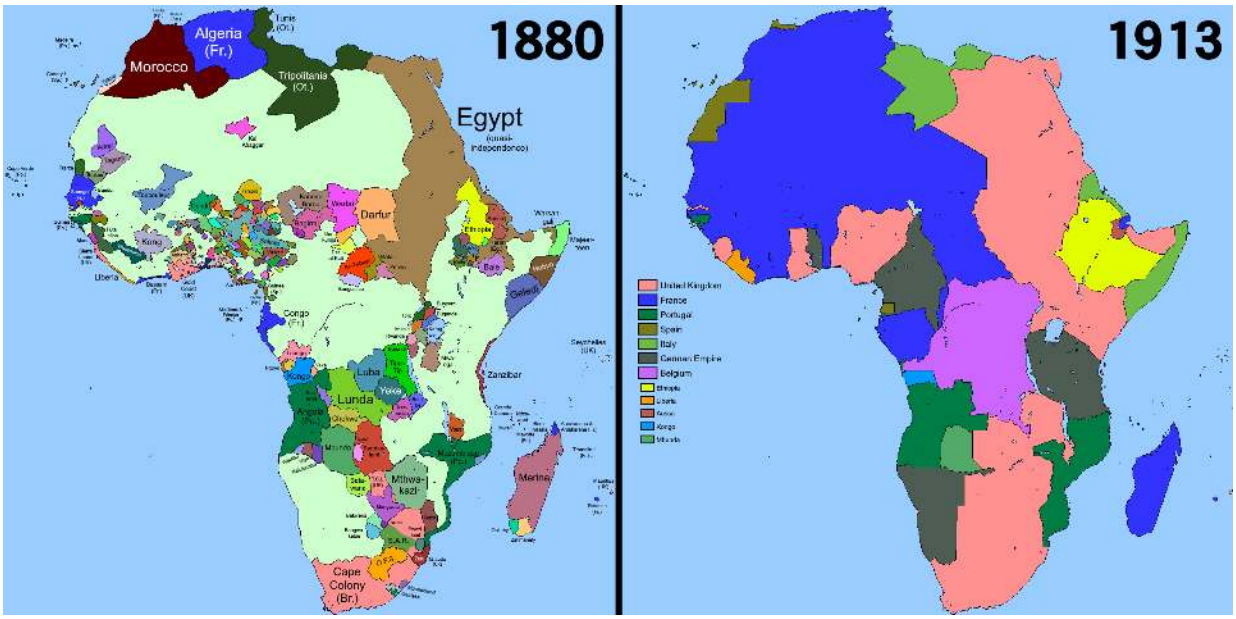


Figure: Comparison of Africa in the years 1880 and 1913, showing how the Scramble for Africa affected the continent.

After the British began enforcing an end to the Atlantic slave trade in 1808, European contact with most of sub-Saharan Africa consisted of trade for ivory and other goods at a handful of trading posts. Belgian King Leopold and the new German Empire began the scramble in the 1870s, sending explorers to claim African territory, much like the Spanish in the Americas 350 years before. The Portuguese in Africa defended their pre-existing arrangements, while the British and French began to rush deeper into the continent. The Europeans made agreements with many local kings and chieftains and went to war with others, always seeking a pledge of loyalty to their particular empire.


Figure: The conference of Berlin, where Europeans divided up Africa in 1884-5.

To bring order to the “scramble”, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1884 organized a conference to delineate claims. The Berlin Conference was attended by representatives from 13 European powers plus the United States. No African countries were represented except for the Ottoman provinces along the Mediterranean. Administrative boundaries deliberately cut across existing political and ethnic boundaries, in some cases forcing warring groups to live and work together, in others dividing tribes and their allies. This weakened resistance in the short run, but, as will be examined in a later chapter, became a source of civil unrest, separatist movements, and boundary disputes among the new African countries formed in the 1950s and 60s.

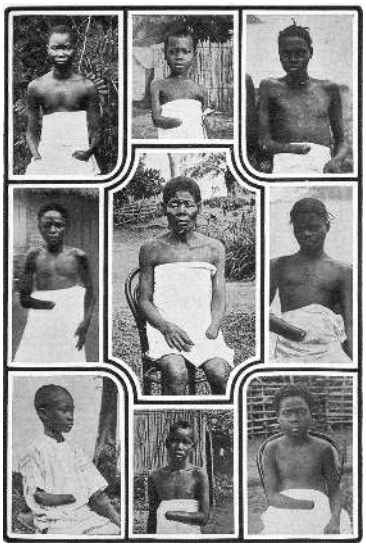


Figure: A photo of mutilated Congolese children, from “King Leopold’s Soliloquy: A Defense of His Congo Rule”, published by Mark Twain in 1905.

Along with the usual proposal of “civilizing” the non-European peoples of their empires, the imperialists also claimed that they were committed to ending the internal slave trade. However, European treatment of African laborers often included whipping, torture, and other punishments, alongside debt peonage. It was standard practice in the so-called “Congo Free State” (really the personal fiefdom of King Leopold of Belgium) to cut off the hands of African workers who did not meet their rubber collection quotas. The international outcry over such practices forced the Belgian government to finally take over Leopold’s holdings in 1908, after thirty years of brutal rule.

South Africa was a special case in European imperialism: the Dutch made it into a “settler colony” beginning in the mid-1600s, rather than merely establishing a trading post. They were interesting in forming a community of farmers that could supply the fleets rounding the Cape of Good Hope on their way to the East Indies. Thousands of Dutch and other Europeans were attracted by the relatively cooler climate of southern Africa and plentiful arable land; and like the British and the United States in North America, they were more interested in removing the natives rather than subjugating them.

The British took control of the territory from the Dutch during the Napoleonic period. In the 1830s, the imperial government began abolishing slavery and requiring English in schools and in legal transactions. In reaction, many Dutch settlers moved farther inland in the “Great Trek”, taking more land from the natives and establishing two republics, Transvaal and the Orange Free State. At the same time, the descendants of unions between Europeans, Africans, and natives of the Dutch East Indies brought in as laborers (collectively known as “coloured”) occasionally established their own autonomous regions.



Figure: Sketch of King Shaka (1781-1828) from 1824.

The British also faced the Zulus, who, led by their extraordinary leader Shaka Zulu and his well-trained army, had established an independent kingdom in eastern South Africa in the 1820s. When local British commanders decided to attack a growing military threat from the Zulus in 1879, the imperial regiments were defeated by Zulu troops in a series of major battles. A second invasion of Zululand was successful, but the British continued to recognize Zulu autonomy in much of their territory.

The descendants of the Dutch settlers called themselves “Boers” (the Dutch word for “farmer”) and successfully repelled a British invasion in 1881. They were defeated in the Second Boer War (1899-1902), after a bloody conflict that included a wide guerrilla war and concentration camps for Boer civilians. A young Winston Churchill, the future Prime Minister of Great Britain, went to South Africa as a journalist to report on the war, and instead was captured by the Boers. Churchill escaped and his story of heroism helped launch his career in British politics. The Germans, who held territory bordering South Africa, supported the Boers in the conflict, adding to the accumulating disagreements between the governments of Great Britain and Germany on the eve of World War One.

Soon after, in 1910, the British organized the Union of South Africa, including the Boers as equal citizens, while continuing to deny such equality to the coloured and native groups (nearly 85% of the population). This new Union was effectively an autonomous dominion within the British Empire, much like Canada.



Figure: “The Rhodes Colossus” cartoon, published after Rhodes announced plans for a telegraph line from Cape Town to Cairo in 1892.

Cecil John Rhodes is now probably most remembered for the scholarship he endowed in his will in 1902 that funds study at Oxford for U.S. college graduates. Rhodes Scholars include Bill Clinton, Rachel Maddow, Bobby Jindal, and Kris Kristofferson. Rhodes Scholarships do a lot for the memory of Cecil Rhodes, just as the Nobel Prize does a lot for the memory of Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite whose company operated over 90 munitions factories during his lifetime.

Rhodes endowed the scholarship at Oxford because the British University was his alma mater. The son of a well-connected Anglican minister, Rhodes joined his brother in 1871 in South Africa at age 18, to recuperate from tuberculosis. He dabbled in farming and then, financed by the Rothschild bank that had helped Britain buy the Suez Canal, began buying diamond mines. Rhodes returned to England to attend Oxford, but left after a year to resume his diamond business, eventually founding the De Beers Company in 1888. A year later, Rhodes controlled 90% of the world’s diamond production. De Beers currently operates in 35 countries and held onto its monopoly until the start of the 21st century. The company still sells about 35% of the world’s diamonds.

During his year at Oxford, Rhodes absorbed the philosophy of imperialism. He attended a lecture by professor John Ruskin that became a famous justification for empire, called “Imperial Duty.” Ruling the world, Ruskin said, “is a destiny now possible to us—the highest ever set before a nation to be accepted or refused.” Rhodes took this idea back to Africa, and once declared “We are the finest race in the world and the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race” As noted, the British were not the only people who believed themselves to be superior to the people they conquered. Europeans and the Americans also believed it was their job to help “civilize” the rest of the world. The “White Man’s Burden” and the “Civilizing Mission” of imperialism were big themes – we still call countries in what was once described as the “third world” as “ developing nations,” as if the goal of all the nations in the world is to become like Europe and the United States, who have a responsibility to help them do just that.

### Questions for Discussion

- What caused Europeans to believe they could meet in Berlin and divide Africa between themselves?
- Did the actions of Europeans in Africa support the argument that their mission was to “civilize” the African people?

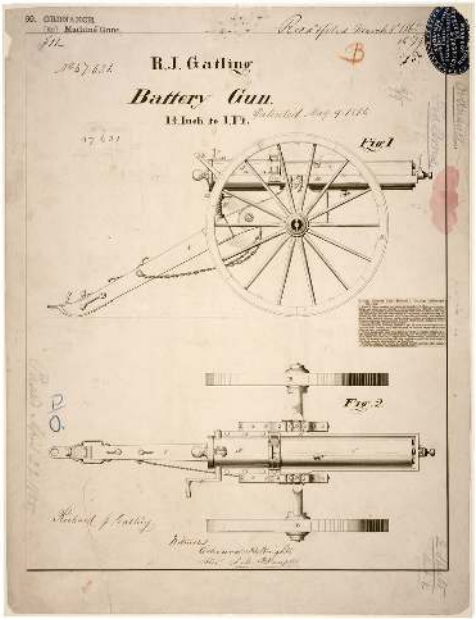



Figure: Patent drawing for R. J. Gatling's "battery gun", 1865.

In reality, the superiority the British, French, and Americans had over the people of "less developed" nations was mostly in military technology. Britain demonstrated the effectiveness of armored steamships during the Opium Wars. They sailed up the Yangzi River and threatened the Grand Canal and Beijing, forcing the Chinese to surrender and agree to the unequal treaty. In the 1870s the British began using Gatling hand-cranked machine guns against the Zulu in Africa and the Bedouin in the Middle East. The Royal Navy used them against the Egyptians in 1882 during Egypt's civil war. The US used them to support American troops during the Battle of San Juan Hill when Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders made their famous charge.

Later the British switched to the Maxim gun, which was the first recoil-operated machine gun and was able to fire 600 rounds per minute. They used it in the 1890s to conquer the Ndebele kingdom in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Cecil Rhodes, who was by this time Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, had about 750 South Africa Company Police against 80,000 tribal spearmen and 20,000 riflemen. But they had Maxim Guns. In one battle, the British used Maxim Guns to "fight off" 5,000 attacking Zulu warriors. In 1898 the British were able to kill 20,000 Sudanese warriors with four Maxim Guns in a few hours without taking many casualties. This was the beginning of a period of asymmetrical warfare based on technology that continues to the present – and forced people who could not stand up to the imperialists' superior weapons to find other ways to resist.

In addition to weapons and transportation, Europeans and Americans had the added advantage of communications. Telegraphs using Morse code became widespread in the U.S., Britain, and Europe during the 1850s, but undersea cables were required to connect the colonies. Before telegraphy, a letter from London took about two weeks to reach New York or Alexandria Egypt, a month to reach Bombay on the west coast of India, six weeks to reach Singapore or Calcutta on the East side of India, two months to get to Shanghai and ten weeks to arrive in Sidney Australia. A successful undersea cable line between Britain and the US was completed in 1866, and Britain and India were connected in 1870. Australia was linked to the system in 1872 and a trans-Pacific cable was completed in 1903 linking the U.S. with Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines. Although telegraphy had been pioneered by Americans like Samuel Morse, the British dominated undersea cable. At the end of the 19th century, Britain owned 24 of the world's 30 cable-laying ships and the British owned and operated 2/3 of the world's cable. During World War I, British telegraph communications were almost completely uninterrupted while Britain was very successful cutting German cables, forcing the Germans to rely on wireless (radio) transmissions that were easy to listen and decipher.

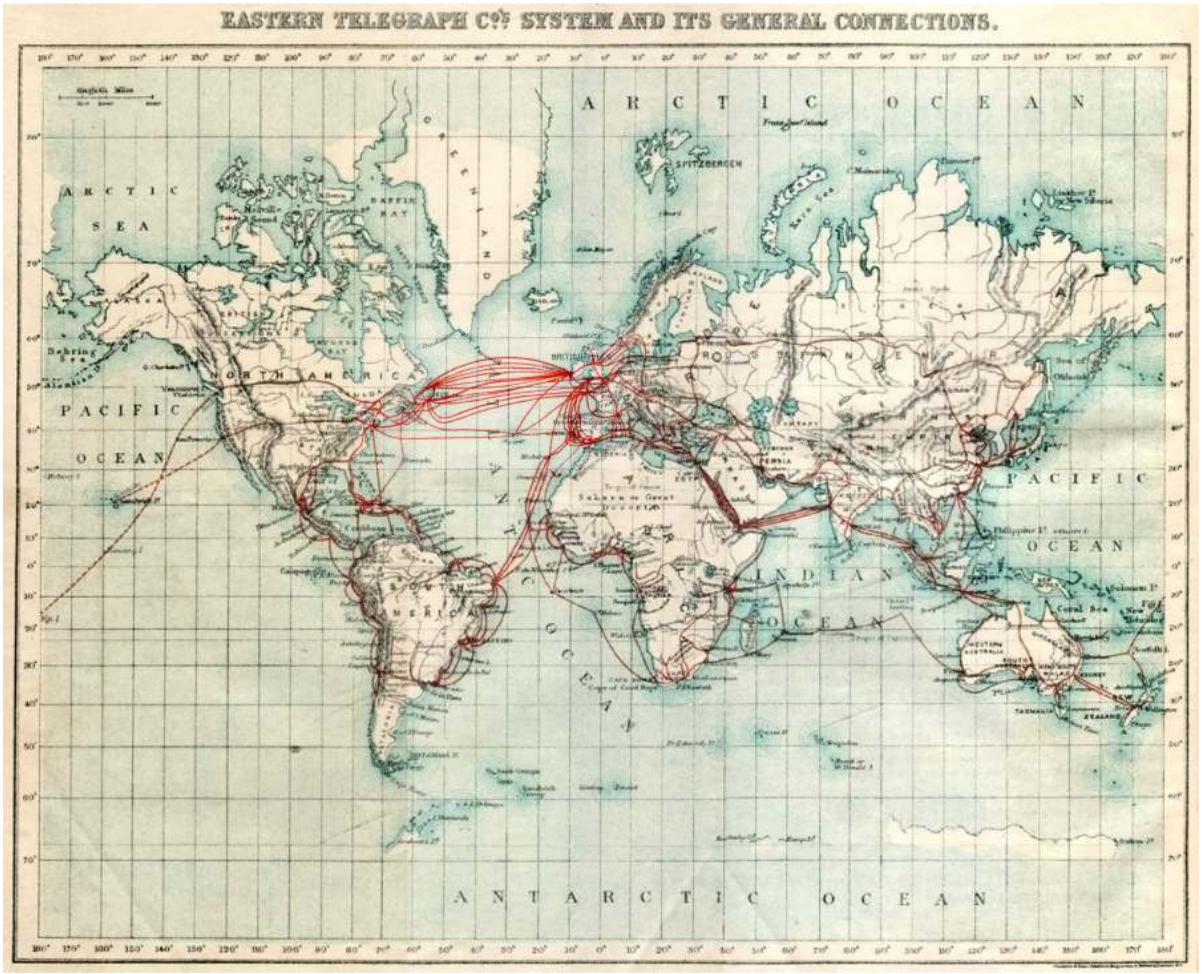



Figure: Chart of submarine telegraph cable routes, showing the global reach of telecommunications at the beginning of the 20th century.

Europeans treated their military success over colonized people as proof of their cultural superiority. They developed theories of scientific racism and Social Darwinism to justify their choice to treat conquered peoples as less than fully human. They also took advantage of previous African customs and tribal animosities to divide the conquered Africans, or created new ones based on their own prejudices. In Rwanda, the Belgians noted the existence of separate castes that lived side-by-side for generations under the same rule. However, the Belgians decided to put the cattle-raising Tutsis, ten percent of the population, over the Hutu farmers. Because of more access to animal protein, the Tutsis seemed taller and better-looking to the Europeans and were deemed to be naturally superior to the Hutus. After independence, the Hutus took control and subjected the Tutsis to periodic pogroms. In 1994, nearly a million Tutsis were killed by their neighbors in a government-orchestrated genocide, until a largely Tutsi-led guerrilla insurgency took over the government. Both groups speak the same language, and the distinctions fostered by the Belgians have officially disappeared. However, in the aftermath up to 2 million Hutu refugees fled Rwanda for the Congo, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis and destabilizing central Africa even further.

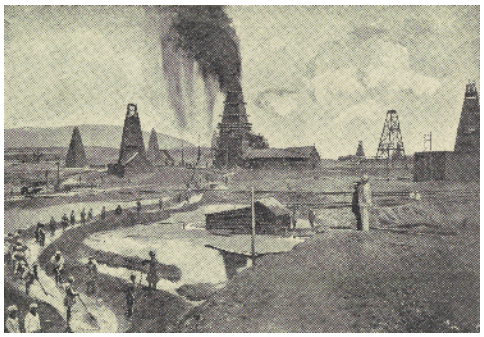


Figure: Oil wells in Baku, Azerbaijan. Illustration from a 1909 book is captioned, “Where it Rains Petroleum”.

Oil was first drilled by a Russian engineer on the Apsheron Peninsula on the west side of the Caspian Sea near Baku, Azerbaijan in 1848. Edwin Drake’s famous well in Titusville, Pennsylvania, was drilled 11 years later in 1859. Although Russian fields and refineries in Azerbaijan were industry pioneers, the U.S. took an early lead and by 1880 the Bradford Field in Pennsylvania produced 77% of the world’s oil supply. But by the end of the 19th century the Russian Empire had taken back the lead in production. By the first decade of the 20th century, commercial oil production was underway in Sumatra, Persia, Peru, Venezuela, and Mexico, as well as Texas, California, and Ohio. In the early twentieth century, the corporations dominating the global oil business were Standard Oil (later Exxon, est. 1870), The Anglo-Persian Oil Company (later British Petroleum, est. 1909), and Royal Dutch Shell (est. 1907).

Oil initially played a fairly simple role in the Industrial Revolution as a machine lubricant. However, by the late 19th century, internal combustion engines, which relied on firing cylinders using gasoline or heavy oil (diesel) as fuel, were quickly becoming more efficient, replacing steam-power in transportation. Diesel-fired ship and train engines, for instance, carried less fuel than needed for coal-fired steam engines, while the gasoline-powered automobile quickly became commonplace by the second decade of the twentieth century.

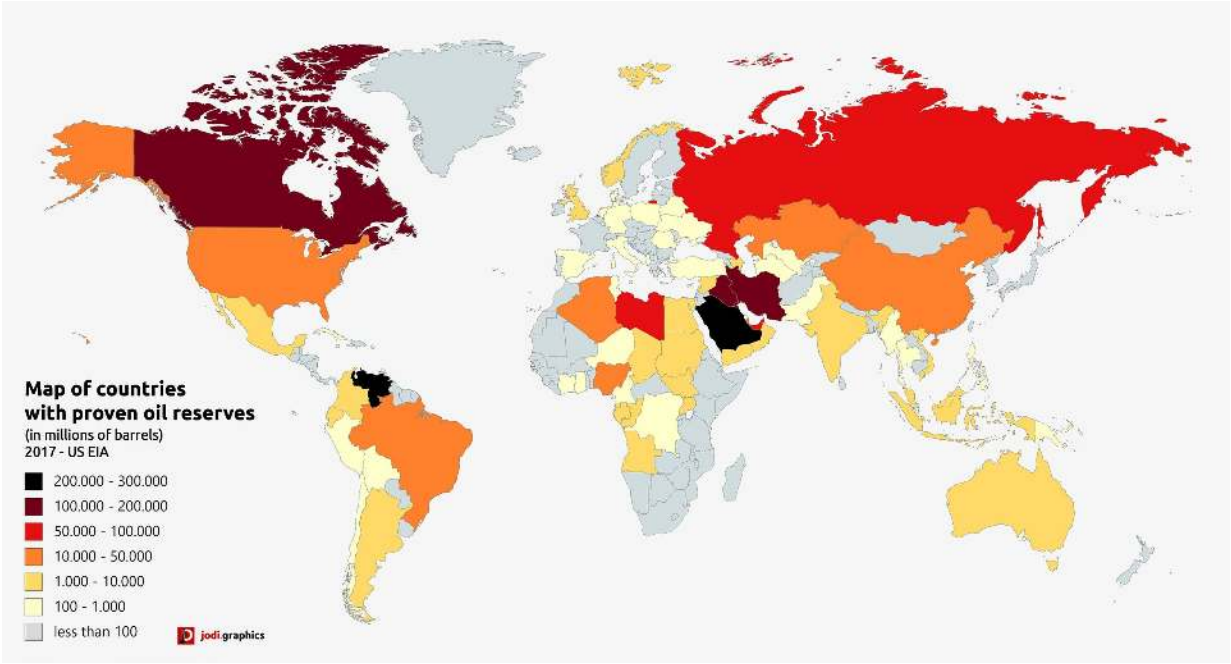



Figure: A 2017 map of world oil reserves. The greatest reserves are in Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

As oil became increasingly central to powering industry and transportation, oil companies became more powerful and were able to project their economic influence to shape the politics of the countries they operated in. This became especially true in the Arabian Peninsula, which until the discovery of oil had been a sparsely-populated desert. Today, about 80% of the world’s readily-accessible oil reserves are located in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the U.S. are the three largest producers.

Questions for Discussion

- How did technology widen the gap between imperial powers and those they conquered?
- How does the division of the world into “developed” and “less-developed” regions influence international relations today?

## China and Japan




Figure: “China – the cake of kings and…of emperors”, a French political cartoon from 1898 depicting the Great Powers cutting up the Chinese cake.

Finally, as we always do, let’s look at what was happening in the world’s biggest nation. The Chinese Empire continued its decline, as Europeans continued their presence in assigned trading ports, divvying up Chinese territory into “spheres of influence” in which commerce and Christian missionary activity was controlled by a particular European power. By the 1890s, however, China also faced the rapidly industrializing Japanese Empire. In less than thirty years, the Japanese reconstructed their government, initiated industrial activity, and built up their military through conscription and the latest weapons and ship technology. However, the Japanese home islands lacked deposits of key industrial inputs, chiefly coal, iron ore, and oil. To acquire guaranteed resources and markets, the Japanese government began to play the imperial game, following the rules established by the Europeans. Like the British in India and China, Japanese commerce laid claim to their own “sphere of influence” in Chinese territory, and claimed sovereignty over tributary states. The brief Sino-Japanese War in 1895 ended with the Qing Empire granting the Ryukyu Islands and Taiwan to Japan, and ceding trading rights in Korea and Manchuria.

At the end of the 19th century, a final conflict with the West would pave the way for radical change and the end of the Qing Empire in China. The Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) was an anti-colonial, anti-Christian revolt led by martial artists who called themselves the Righteous Fists, or “Boxers” by Westerners. The Boxers, believing they were impervious to foreign weapons, marched into Beijing intending to help the imperial government exterminate the foreigners. An eight-nation alliance, which included European nations, the U.S., and Japan, sent 20,000 troops to fight the Boxers. The foreign soldiers freed the legations besieged in the capital, but they also looted Beijing and the surrounding countryside and summarily executed anyone suspected of being a Boxer. The Qing government agreed to pay an indemnity of 450 million taels of silver to the allies (worth about $10 billion today).




Figure: In another political cartoon from 1899, Uncle Sam clutches a “Trade Treaty with China” and says: “Gentleman, you may cut up this map as much as you like, but remember that I’m here to stay, and that you can’t divide me up into spheres of influence”.

The abject state of the Qing dynasty and the increasing regional power of Japan set the scene for China to become a battlefield for territorial conflicts between Russia, Japan, and the United States. The United States acquired the Philippine Islands from Spain after the 1898 war, and immediately began projecting its own political and commercial power into East Asia. Coming late to the imperial game in China, the United States sought to limit the existing “spheres of influence” and prevent new ones from being imposed by either Russia or Japan. U.S. diplomats advocated an “Open Door Policy” in China, in which the Qing Empire would not limit any commercial activity by outside powers.

In 1900, Russia occupied Manchuria and came into conflict with Japanese interests on the Korean peninsula, leading to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. After the Japanese navy sank the main battleships of Russia’s Pacific fleet in the Battle of Port Arthur and held off the Russian army, the world realized the power of an organized and industrialized Japan; forcing the Europeans and Americans to consider the Japanese Empire as an equal, while inspiring non-European colonized peoples that the Europeans were not always invincible in war.

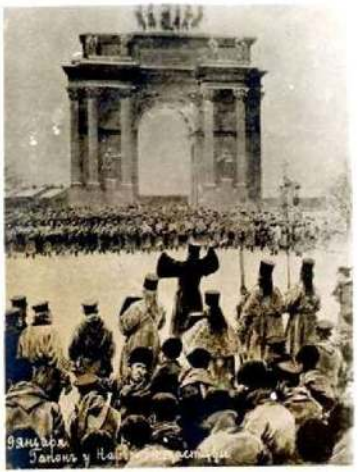


Figure: Crowd of petitioners, led by Orthodox priest, Father Gapon, near Narva Gate, St. Petersburg, January 22, 1905.

From the Russian side, however, defeat by the Japanese on the battlefield and on the seas was not only humiliating, but highlighted the ineffectiveness of the Tsarist regime. At the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in January 1905, a major protest against the inept government ended when the Palace guard fired upon the peaceful demonstration, killing hundreds. This “Bloody Sunday” increased demands for reform, including widespread support for a parliamentary monarch. In the meantime, the Tsar sent most of the Russian Baltic Fleet to retake Port Arthur from the Japanese. Two thirds of the ships were sunk by the Japanese Combined Fleet in the Battle of Tsushima in May 1905. In October 1905, Tsar Nicolas II acquiesced to the formation of an elected parliament, the

Duma, and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. However, he soon reneged granting full oversight powers to this new legislature, preferring to maintain himself as an absolute monarch.



Figure: Peace Treaty between Russia and Japan, signed September 1905 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

However, the Tsar also agreed to end the unpopular war with Imperial Japan. Peace between the Russians and Japanese was negotiated in Portsmouth, Maine, in the United States, highlighting the increasing importance of U.S. interests in East Asia. President Theodore Roosevelt was awarded the 1906 Nobel Peace Prize for his role in ending the war. Japan took over Russia's "sphere of influence" on China's Liaotung Peninsula and was recognized as the sole power in Korea, which became part of the Japanese Empire in 1910.

The Russo-Japanese War also once again highlighted the extent to which the Qing government in China was hardly considered a factor in international relations. Even though the war concerned Chinese territory, Chinese armies were not seriously involved in the fighting; nor were Chinese negotiators present at the Treaty of Portsmouth. By that time, the Qing empire was devolving into a series of warlord-controlled regions. Palace intrigues in the royal "Forbidden City" in Beijing had led to effective power being wielded by the Empress Dowager Cixi for nearly five decades until her death in 1908. Although she at times embraced gradual reform of her government and military and periodically protested European and Japanese incursions, she was realistic enough to understand her limits. More conservative forces took over in the palace in 1908, installing the five-year-old Prince Puyi as Emperor. It was not long before modernizing forces soon overthrew the decadent imperial system.



Figure: Portrait of Sun Yat-Sen, 1911.

The most inspirational leader of the modernizers was Sun Yat-sen. Born in 1866, he moved to the then-independent Kingdom of Hawaii, where an older brother owned a farm, to complete is secondary education at a U.S. missionary school. Sun went on to study medicine in Hong Kong and began advocating for the end of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of a Chinese republic. Because of his opposition to the Qing, Sun lived in exile in Hawaii, Japan, and Malaysia, from where he formed the alliance which would end the Qing regime in the Xinhai Revolution in 1911.

### Questions for Discussion

- What were the main factors leading to China's inability to modernize and resist European imperialism?
- What was the role of the United States in Asia in the early 20th century?

**“The White Man’s Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands”** (1899), by Rudyard Kipling

Take up the White Man’s burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives’ need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.Take up the White Man’s burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain.
To seek another’s profit,
And work another’s gain.Take up the White Man’s burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man’s burden—
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go make them with your living,
And mark them with your dead!

Take up the White Man’s burden—
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
“Why brought ye us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?”

Take up the White Man’s burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—
Have done with childish days—
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!

**Cecil Rhodes, "Confession of Faith", 1877**

It often strikes a man to inquire what is the chief good in life; to one the thought comes that it is a happy marriage, to another great wealth, and as each seizes on his idea, for that he more or less works for the rest of his existence. To myself thinking over the same question the wish came to render myself useful to my country. I then asked myself how could I and after reviewing the various methods I have felt that at the present day we are actually limiting our children and perhaps bringing into the world half the human beings we might owing to the lack of country for them to inhabit that if we had retained America there would at this moment be millions more of English living. I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. Just fancy those parts that are at present inhabited by the most despicable specimens of human beings what an alteration there would be if they were brought under Anglo-Saxon influence, look again at the extra employment a new country added to our dominions gives. I contend that every acre added to our territory means in the future birth to some more of the English race who otherwise would not be brought into existence. Added to this the absorption of the greater portion of the world under our rule simply means the end of all wars, at this moment had we not lost America I believe we could have stopped the Russian-Turkish war by merely refusing money and supplies. Having these ideas what scheme could we think of to forward this object. I look into history and I read the story of the Jesuits I see what they were able to do in a bad cause and I might say under bad leaders.

At the present day I become a member of the Masonic order I see the wealth and power they possess the influence they hold and I think over their ceremonies and I wonder that a large body of men can devote themselves to what at times appear the most ridiculous and absurd rites without an object and without an end.

The idea gleaming and dancing before ones eyes like a will-of-the-wisp at last frames itself into a plan. Why should we not form a secret society with but one object the furtherance of the British Empire and the bringing of the whole uncivilised world under British rule for the recovery of the United States for the making the Anglo-Saxon race but one Empire. What a dream, but yet it is probable, it is possible. I once heard it argued by a fellow in my own college, I am sorry to own it by an Englishman, that it was good thing for us that we have lost the United States. There are some subjects on which there can be no arguments, and to an Englishman this is one of them, but even from an American's point of view just picture what they have lost, look at their government, are not the frauds that yearly come before the public view a disgrace to any country and especially their's which is the finest in the world. Would they have occurred had they remained under English rule great as they have become how infinitely greater they would have been with the softening and elevating influences of English rule, think of those countless 000's of Englishmen that during the last 100 years would have crossed the Atlantic and settled and populated the United States. Would they have not made without any prejudice a finer country of it than the low class Irish and German emigrants? All this we have lost and that country loses owing to whom? Owing to two or three ignorant pig-headed statesmen of the last century, at their door lies the blame. Do you ever feel mad? do you ever feel murderous. I think I do with those men. I bring facts to prove my assertion. Does an English father when his sons wish to emigrate ever think of suggesting emigration to a country under another flag, never—it would seem a disgrace to suggest such a thing I think that we all think that poverty is better under our own flag than wealth under a foreign one.

Put your mind into another train of thought. Fancy Australia discovered and colonised under the French flag, what would it mean merely several millions of English unborn that at present exist we learn from the past and to form our future. We learn from having lost to cling to what we possess. We know the size of the world we know the total extent. Africa is still lying ready for us it is our duty to take it. It is our duty to seize every opportunity of acquiring more territory and we should keep this one idea steadily before our eyes that more territory simply means more of the Anglo-Saxon race more of the best the most human, most honourable race the world possesses.

To forward such a scheme what a splendid help a secret society would be a society not openly acknowledged but who would work in secret for such an object.

…

Take one more case of the younger son with high thoughts, high aspirations, endowed by nature with all the faculties to make a great man, and with the sole wish in life to serve his Country but he lacks two things the means and the opportunity, ever troubled by a sort of inward deity urging him on to high and noble deeds, he is compelled to pass his time in some occupation which furnishes him with mere existence, he lives unhappily and dies miserably. Such men as these the Society should search out and use for the furtherance of their object.

…

For fear that death might cut me off before the time for attempting its development I leave all my worldly goods in trust to S. G. Shippard and the Secretary for the Colonies at the time of my death to try to form such a Society with such an object.

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# 1.8: The Great War



Figure: Australian soldier firing a periscope rifle from a trench at Gallipoli, 1915.

In 1914, Europe had been officially “at peace” for nearly a century. However, the official peace covered a growing tension that was beginning to flare up into military conflict. Unification of Germany in 1870, after the Prussian-led victory over the French, had created a new nation with imperial aspirations in the middle of Europe. Bismarck’s new nation competed with neighboring countries in industry, agriculture, and overseas empire-building. The existence of a strong, united Germany ended the careful balance of power created by the Congress of Vienna in its effort to reset the clock and redraw the map after the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. France and Germany were enemies and sought alliances against each other. By 1914, most governments in Europe were preparing for an eventual war between these groups of allied nations, although no one knew what incident would bring the continent to battle. But, as early as 1888, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck had predicted that “some damned foolish thing in the Balkans” could initiate a widespread European conflict. He was proven correct on the streets of Sarajevo on June 28, 1914.



Figure: Rival military coalitions in 1914: Allied Powers (Triple Entente) in green, Central Powers (Triple Alliance) in brown.

During World War One, the principal members of each of these alliances were the “Central Powers”, consisting of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire against the “Allied Powers”, which at the beginning of the war was called the “Triple Entente” after the original allies, France, Great Britain, and Russia. Russia left the war in 1918, Italy joined the allies in 1915, and Japan was an additional ally on the French side. The United States entered the war to support the allies in 1917.

The underlying causes of World War One were nationalism, opposition to foreign rule, and simmering rivalries between the Great Powers that were exacerbated by treaties requiring allies to enter a war once it began. Previously, potential world conflicts had been

avoided through negotiation among the Powers. Africa was divided among the European empires at the Berlin Conference in 1885, while “Spheres of Influence” were established in China in order to regulate trade. However, such a “Concert of Nations” did not succeed in the Balkans.

The unification of Germany upset the balance of Europe. Not only did the *Deutsches Reich* aspire to become an imperial power like Britain, France, and Russia, it had rapidly built up its military and industrial power. By the first two decades of the twentieth century, Germany surpassed Britain to become the largest economy in Europe and second in the world. German scientists won more Nobel Prizes than any other nation beside the United States. And Germany’s navy was racing to surpass Britain’s.



Figure: Portrait of Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1902.

In 1888, Kaiser Wilhelm II took the imperial throne when both his grandfather and father died in rapid succession. Wilhelm I, the King of Prussia whom Bismarck had made an emperor, ruled until he was 90. His grandson took the throne at 29. Due to the elaborate intermarriages of the European ruling families, Wilhelm II was also the eldest grandson of Queen Victoria of England. Perhaps taking inspiration from the British Empire, Wilhelm II launched Germany on a “New Course” toward overseas imperialism. The Kaiser ordered his military leaders to read Alfred Thayer Mahan’s book, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, which had also impressed Theodore Roosevelt in America. By 1914, the German navy was second only to the British Royal Navy. The new emperor also dismissed Bismarck as Chancellor in 1890 and began looking for ways to make Germany a colonial empire, through a much more aggressive foreign policy than that envisioned by his chief advisor.




Figure: “The boiling point”, a cartoon published in Punch in October 1912.

The eighty-four-year old Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Josef had been reigning since 1848. His nephew, Archduke Franz Ferdinand (age 50) was the Crown Prince and expected to soon become the next Emperor. In the area of western Europe between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea called the Balkan Peninsula, the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian, and the Ottoman empires

each claimed control. As described in the previous chapter, the Ottomans had gradually been losing power in Europe since the 1700s. By the end of the nineteenth century, newly-independent nations of Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Montenegro and Serbia separated the Muslim Ottomans from the Catholic Austro-Hungarians. The Orthodox Russians dreamed of reestablishing Constantinople in Istanbul, and felt a kinship with their fellow Orthodox Slavs, the Serbs and Bulgarians.

The Balkan conflict Bismarck had predicted began in 1908 with the Austro-Hungarian takeover of Bosnia from the Ottoman Empire. Many Serbs lived in Bosnia, so Serbian nationalists wanted it to be part of Serbia. The Serbs and Bulgarians deepened their alliance with the Russians, who also wanted to check the expanding influence of the Austrians in the Balkans.

The independent nations of the Balkans fell into war in 1912-1913, first with the Ottomans, resulting in an independent Albania, and then with each other as ethnic and religious boundaries were contested. These were bloody conflicts that included attacks on civilian populations in waves of ethnic cleansing—people living in this region would experience similar massacres in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War. The Balkan armies on both sides dug into trenches as new arms and technology limited the movement of troops.



Figure: Newspaper illustration of Gavrilo Princip killing Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo.

In an effort to strengthen Bosnian ties to Austria, Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand and his wife made an official visit to the regional capital of Sarajevo on June 30, 1914. A secretive Serbian nationalist group, that had been encouraged and supported by Serbian military officers, plotted the assassination of the royal couple as their motorcade made its way through the city. After some initial bungling, one of the conspirators, nineteen-year-old Gavrilo Princip, shot and killed the Archduke and his pregnant wife.

The Austro-Hungarian government made a series of demands for restitution from the Serbian government. When Serbia refused, Austria decided to invade. Germany was bound by its treaty obligations to support any action taken by its ally Austria-Hungary. Austria's invasion of Serbia activated the European alliance system: Russia sided with the Serbs, France supported Russia, and Great Britain was allied with France.

### Questions for Discussion

- What were the main causes of the world war? Was it inevitable?
- Did the tangled relationships of European rulers contribute to stability or instability?




Figure: Many Europeans celebrated the start of the war, believing it would bring glory and improve the standing of their nations.

All of Europe's armies had been preparing for a continent-wide conflict since the unification of Germany in 1870. Most nations required some form of military service from all young men, so that thousands of trained reserve soldiers could be quickly called up. All war plans relied on the quick mobilization of troops, and the extensive European railway network built in the nineteenth century moved regiments more rapidly than in any previous war. This rapid deployment meant that as soon as one side mobilized,

the opposing side also had to mobilize in defense. Less time was available for calm decision-making as every nation rushed to arms. In July 1914, when Austria declared war and shelled the Serbian capital, Belgrade, Russia mobilized its military. Germany mobilized against Russia. Russia was allied with France, so France mobilized. Great Britain was allied with France, so Great Britain mobilized. The Ottomans sided with Germany as a counter to Russia. Italy, which had a *defensive* alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary, sat out of the first months of war, until its government decided to side with France, Great Britain, and Russia in early 1915.




Figure: German soldiers in a railway supply train on the way to the front in 1914. Early in the war, all sides expected the conflict to be a short one.

Because of the French-Russian alliance, the Germans knew that they would face a two-front war in any European-wide conflict. Expecting to face enemies on Germany's eastern and western borders, the German generals had been planning for years to initially fight a defensive war with Russia in the east and an offensive war with France in the west; holding off invading Russian armies while focusing on defeating the French first.

In the first months of the war, the Germans were successful in carrying out their strategy. The German army on the eastern front was able to stop and even defeat the advancing Russians. On the western front, the German government asked permission of neutral Belgium to pass through on their way to a surprise attack on France. When the Belgians rejected the request, German troops invaded and occupied Belgium in August 1914. The Germans advanced rapidly into France, but were halted by combined French and British forces, miles from Paris. Both sides dug in, creating a network of opposing trenches that ultimately extended from the North Sea to the Swiss border. Armies on both sides would be frustrated in their attempts to break through on this "western front" for the next four years.



Figure: German soldiers of the 11th Reserve Hussar Regiment fighting from a trench, on the Western Front, 1916.

Advances in military technology caused the stalemate. The wars of the nineteenth century had been mobile, with generals coordinating the movements of infantry foot-soldiers, horse cavalry, and artillery cannons on the battle landscape. However,

conflicts like the Crimean War and the U.S. Civil War had begun introducing better, more deadly weapons. The Charge of the Light Brigade had proven that cavalry was ineffective against dug-in artillery. And in the last decades of the nineteenth century, Europeans had perfected the use of machine guns, practicing on native populations in their colonies. By 1914 the armies of Europe had better weapons and better defenses: long-range artillery, machine guns, trenches, and barbed wire. And they were ready to use these on each other, rather than just on the so-called "barbarians" their empires ruled over.

Since neither cavalry nor infantry could stand against machine guns, attacks in trench warfare began with massive artillery barrages to "soften" the other side before troops were sent out of their trenches, "over the top" into the no-man's land between their trenches and those of the enemy, with fixed bayonets to overwhelm any enemy soldiers who had survived the shelling. When their artillery had not "softened up" the opposing forces enough, attackers would be met with enough machine gun fire to slow down any effective advance. During four long years of war, millions would either be severely wounded or killed in the "no-man's-land" that separated the opposing armies.



Figure: Aerial view of opposing trench lines between Loos and Hulluch, July 1917. German trenches at the right and bottom, British at the top-left.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why did Europeans on the western front become trapped in the trenches for four years?
- Imagine being ordered "over the top" in a charge against the enemy trench. How would you react?



Figure: First Serbian armed airplane, 1915.

Frustrated with the stalemate of trench warfare, the opposing sides on the western front tried new technologies and strategies in search of a decisive victory. Airplanes, first developed by the Wright Brothers in 1903, proved their value in reconnaissance and later in strafing trenches with machine guns and dropping small bombs. Early radios allowed aviators to coordinate with ground controllers. And in the spring of 1915, the Germans first experimented using poison gas on the battlefield. Within months, all sides would develop different varieties of poison gas, while racing to improve the designs of their gas masks. Poison gases added another devastating weapon to trench warfare, while achieving no significant advantage. At least 1.3 million people were killed by gas attacks. Chlorine and mustard gas were two of the most common chemical weapons used by both sides in the war. In the case of mustard gas poisoning, the effects took 24 hours to begin and it could take four to five weeks to die.

German development of poisonous chlorine gas and its first use were supervised by Fritz Haber, a scientist who won the Nobel Prize for co-inventing the Haber-Bosch process for synthesizing nitrogen from the atmosphere. After 67,000 troops were killed and wounded by the gas in its first use in April 1915, Haber's wife, the scientist Clara Immerwahr, killed herself with his service revolver in protest. Poison gases were heavier than air, so they settled into low areas like trenches, but also sometimes rolled into low-lying towns, killing and injuring civilians.



Figure: British emplacement after German gas attack, 1916.

Airplanes and poison gas, alongside machine guns and massive artillery, simply became more cogs in the war's increasingly-effective killing machines. More people were killed, but without any change in the outcome of the war. Enormous battles raged for months at a time at Verdun and the Somme in 1916, resulting in millions of casualties but hardly any territorial changes.



Figure: Russian cavalry on the eastern front, 1916

The conflict on the Eastern Front, where the Germans and Austro-Hungarians faced the Russians, was more mobile. In 1916, as the months-long Battle of Verdun seemed to be going against the French, the Russian Army overwhelmed Austrian forces in the Brusilov Offensive, the largest and most deadly of the war. Hundreds of thousands died on both sides as the Russian army

advanced, forcing the Germans to divert their forces from the Western Front. Austro-Hungarian offensive capabilities were largely destroyed, but Russian soldiers were also disillusioned and began to seriously question the competence and decisions of their officers and commanders, including the Tsar himself.



Figure: Japanese troops landing during the Battle of Tsingtao, where they captured the German position.

Even before the entry of the United States in 1918, the war had become truly global. Japan was eager to be counted as a world power, and Japanese leaders seized upon the opportunity the war provided to improve their status in Asia. After taking control of German colonies in China and the Pacific in 1914, Japan sent the Chinese government a list of 21 Demands. The Chinese believed that giving in to Japan's demands would have basically resulted in China becoming a colony of the Japanese Empire. The Chinese government agreed to some of the demands, but leaked the list to British diplomats, who intervened to prevent a complete shift in the balance of power in Asia.

In Africa, Germany lost its colonies in the fighting. The German commander in East Africa, led a largely native African force in guerrilla tactics against Allied troops for most of the war. In eastern Africa, disrupted crop cultivation and led to hundreds of thousands of deaths by starvation and disease.



Figure: Australian troops charging an Ottoman trench during the Anzac attack at Gallipoli, 1916.

The Ottoman Empire controlled territory on either side of Bosporus straits, which connect the Black Sea with the Mediterranean. In 1915, the Allies landed troops at Gallipoli, a peninsula on the European side of the Bosporus, about 200 miles (320 km) from the Ottoman capital in Istanbul The plan was to take Istanbul, knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war and open a third front against Austria-Hungary and Germany through the Balkans. However, the Turks held the high ground above the landing site chosen for the mostly colonial troops. Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) troops were decimated, in a battle that marks the beginning of a sense of nationality in those countries. The anniversary of the Gallipoli landing, April 25th, is still celebrated as ANZAC Day. The disastrous plan nearly ended the political career of the British First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill.



Figure: U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau's caption: "Those who fell by the wayside. Scenes like this were common all over the Armenian provinces in the spring and summer months of 1915. Death in its several forms—massacre, starvation, exhaustion—destroyed the larger part of the refugees. The Turkish policy was that of extermination under the guise of deportation".

The eleven month-long Gallipoli invasion was even more important for the Turks. The hard-fought victory was led by General Mustafa Kemal, who soon became a national hero and would go on to found the modern Turkish Republic and serve as its first president after the war. However, at nearly the same time as the Gallipoli landings, the Ottoman government also decided to take action against the Christian minority in Armenia. Armenians had suffered from periodic pogroms in the decades preceding World War One. The Armenians were loyal subjects (many were serving in the army when the persecution began), but after an unsuccessful Russian attempt to invade Turkey from the east, some military leaders in the Turkish government accused the Armenians of collaborating with the Russian troops and decided to eliminate the Armenian population. Men were executed, while women and children were force-marched across the desert to Mesopotamia. Nearly one million died in what was the worst genocide of the 20th century before the Holocaust of World War Two.



Figure: Indian bicycle troops at a crossroads at the Battle of the Somme, France.

The imperial powers drafted soldiers from their colonies into the fight. Many of the 18 million people killed in battle and 23 million wounded, were people ruled by the empires. The French brought in African troops from Senegal and Morocco, who fought and died in the trenches of Western Front alongside other Allied soldiers. British imperial subjects like the Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders fought beside their English cousins. Over 700,000 Indians fought for Britain against the Ottomans in Mesopotamia. Indian divisions were also sent to Gallipoli, Egypt, German East Africa, and Europe. At least 74,000 Indians died in World War One.

Despite all of the efforts for a breakthrough on the battlefields of France and Eastern Europe, the most effective strategy against Germany was the British-led naval blockade, which cut off grain and other food supplies from overseas. The Germans, who had developed the most effective submarines and torpedoes, tried to blockade Great Britain and France by sinking incoming supply ships. This German naval strategy, however, risked bringing the United States into the war. After the sinking of the passenger ship *Lusitania* in May 1915, when a hundred U.S. citizens were drowned a few miles from the Irish coast, some American public opinion began to shift in favor of entering the conflict. The German government quickly backed away from unrestricted submarine warfare against supply ships bound for the Great Britain and France.

### Questions for Discussion

- How did new technologies change the way war is fought?
- Why did the Gallipoli invasion almost destroy Winston Churchill's political career?
- What motivated the Armenian genocide?




Figure: Jane Addams and other American activists attending a peace conference in the Netherlands, 1915.

The United States had a long tradition of trying to avoid being drawn into the "Great Powers" conflicts of Europe. American attitudes toward international affairs reflected the advice given by President George Washington in his 1796 Farewell Address, to avoid "entangling alliances" with the Europeans. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 had gone further to establish the Western Hemisphere as the United States' area of interest, implying that the U.S. did not intend to intrude in the affairs of Europe. However, although the U.S. did not participate in international diplomatic alliances, American businesses and consumers benefited from the trade generated by nearly a century of European peace and the expansion of the transatlantic economy.

Additionally, by the 1880s and 1890s, millions of Europeans emigrated to the United States to work in factories and mines, or to establish farms in the West. More Irish and Germans arrived, and also Swedes, Norwegians, Finns, Poles, Ukrainians, Italians, and Jews from Eastern Europe. The U.S. needed and (largely) welcomed the newcomers, while America served as a "safety valve" for European nations with an excess of poor landless peasants. The diversity among the immigrants in this American "melting pot" helped bolster the case for U.S. neutrality in European affairs even as the war began.



Figure: Jack Morgan walking alongside his father J. P. Morgan in the last known photograph of the two together (ca. 1913).

A foreign policy of neutrality also reflected America's focus on the building of its new powerful industrial economy, financed largely with loans and investments from Europe and especially London. However, U.S. dependency on foreign capital began to change during the war, when American bankers began making substantial loans to Britain and France. John Pierpont Morgan's successor, J.P. Morgan Jr., who had spent the early years of his career managing the family's bank in London, leveraged a friendship with British Ambassador Cecil Spring Rice to have the Morgan bank designated as the sole-source U.S. purchasing agent for both Britain and France. J.P. Morgan and Company managed the Allies' purchases of munitions, food, steel, chemicals, and cotton; receiving a 1% commission on all sales. Morgan led a consortium of over 2,000 banks and managed loans to the Allies that exceeded $500 million (nearly $13 billion in today's dollars). Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State, the populist-leaning William Jennings Bryan, objected to the loans and argued that by denying financing to any of the belligerents, the U.S. could hasten the end of the war. But a quick end to the war was not the bankers' goal.

J.P. Morgan and Company's Managing Director, Thomas Lamont, presented his views in a 1915 speech to the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Lamont observed that the war offered the United States a unique opportunity to shift from being a debtor nation, dependent on loans from Europe and Britain, to becoming a global creditor. "We are piling up a prodigious export trade [with] war orders," he said, "running into the hundreds of millions of dollars." America was poised, Lamont concluded, to become the trade and finance center of the world, and the U.S. dollar to replace the British pound sterling as the world's currency. But this would only happen, he warned, "if the war goes on long enough" A quick end to hostilities would allow Germany to rapidly regain its competitive position. The best result for America would be a long war that ended in German defeat and left the winners deeply in debt to the United States.

Lamont's prediction came true. Wall Street, in New York City, became and remains the financial capital of world, with international debt denominated in U.S. dollars, largely because of the loans made to the European Allies during World War One. U.S. agriculture also benefitted from the war raging in Europe. Armies needed calories, but the sons of farmers (and their horses) in the wheat fields of France and elsewhere were being drafted into the conflict. Soon grain from the Great Plains of the United States was feeding British and French troops on the Western Front, bringing wealth to Midwestern agricultural communities. Farmers were soon purchasing new equipment and buying or renting additional land to produce more.




Figure: Anti-war protesters at the US Capitol in April 1917.

Despite Wall Street bankers' interest in profiting on the European conflict, the U.S. federal government faced strong public opinion against entering what Americans saw as a fight they had no stake in. Scandinavians and German immigrants (the largest immigrant group in America) declared both their neutrality and their general impression that Germany's culture was superior to that of its European rivals. The Irish, who had no love of England, were a powerful force in the Democratic Party, dominating the big-city political "machines" in the North and Midwest. Business leaders and social activists like Andrew Carnegie, Henry Ford, and Jane Addams were pacifists. Poor southerners reminded America that "a rich man's war meant a poor man's fight". Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, denounced the war in 1914 as "unnatural, unjustified, and unholy." And socialist pamphlets argued that "a bayonet was a weapon with a worker at each end." Woodrow Wilson ran for re-election in 1916 on the slogan, "He kept us out of war." But only a month after his second inauguration, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany in April 1917.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why did many Americans wish to stay out of the war?
- Why did other Americans want the war to last as long as possible?



Figure: Pancho Villa and members of the Division of the North.

The European powers had been building up their military capabilities for nearly a generation before the outbreak of war, and it was unclear whether the United States could mobilize rapidly. In late 1916, border troubles in Mexico served as an important field test for modern American military forces and the National Guard. Revolution and chaos threatened American business interests when Mexican reformer Francisco Madero challenged Porfirio Diaz's corrupt and unpopular conservative regime. Madero was jailed, fled to San Antonio, and planned the Mexican Revolution. Although Díaz was quickly overthrown and Madero became president,

the Revolution unleashed forces that demanded more social change, especially in land reform, that the new liberal government was capable of delivering. New uprisings, led by Pancho Villa and Emilio Zapata, broke out in rural Mexico. Reactionaries assassinated President Madero in Mexico City in early 1913, with the encouragement of the European and U.S. ambassadors, and a military regime was installed—but social upheaval and a guerrilla war continued.

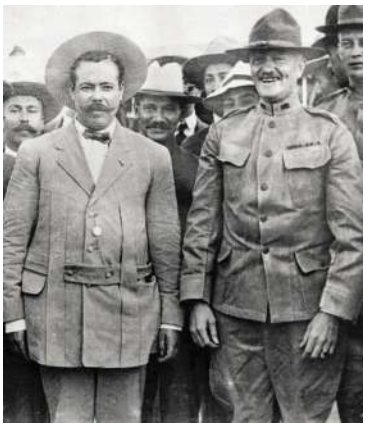


Figure: Pancho Villa and John Pershing posed for a photo together in August, 1914, six months before Pershing would chase Villa through northern Mexico.

In April 1914, President Wilson ordered Marines to accompany a naval escort to Veracruz on the eastern coast of Mexico. The Wilson administration had officially withdrawn its support of the new military government and watched warily as the revolution devolved into assassinations and chaos. In 1916, provoked by American support for his rivals, Pancho Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico. His troops killed seventeen Americans and burned down the town center. President Wilson commissioned General John "Black Jack" Pershing to capture Villa and disperse his rebels and used the powers of the new National Defense Act to mobilize over one hundred thousand National Guard soldiers from across the country as an invasion force in northern Mexico. Although these troops failed to capture Villa, they gained experience in the field and developed into a more professional fighting force, which would form the basis of the U.S. army when war was declared against the Central Powers a few months later.

In November 1916, Woodrow Wilson was re-elected President. the people rallied around the slogan, "He kept us out of war." By the spring of 1917, President Wilson believed a German victory would drastically and dangerously alter the balance of power in Europe. But he had promised to keep the U. S. out of the war. Submarine warfare had been a problem earlier in the conflict, when the Lusitania was sunk in 1915. In 1917, the German general staff decided that a new push for victory on the Western Front needed to be combined with renewal of U-boat attacks in an effort to starve the British and French. The Germans realized that such a policy would draw the U.S. into the conflict on the side of the Allies, but calculated that the military unpreparedness of the United States would give them time to break through the trench lines in France and end the war before the Americans arrived.

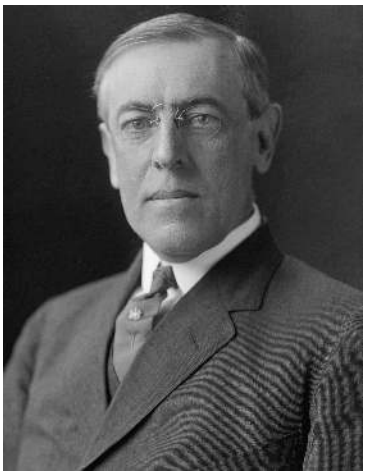


Figure: President Woodrow Wilson, 1916.

In January 1917, a document called the Zimmerman Telegram surfaced. When decoded it was found to contain a suggestion from an official of the German foreign office to the German ambassador in Mexico that if the U. S. entered the war, Mexico should be

encouraged to invade America to regain the territory taken in the Mexican-American War. Many Americans doubted the authenticity of the telegram, especially because it was delivered by British intelligence officers to the secretary of the U. S. Embassy in London. However, Zimmerman soon acknowledged its authenticity, claiming he had only been suggesting a Mexican invasion if the United States had already entered the war. The Mexican government, for its part, announced they had never seriously considered the German suggestion—after all, they were occupied with their own revolution. With American public opinion finally behind him, President Wilson went to Congress in February, 1917 to announce that diplomatic relations with Germany had been severed. On April 2, Wilson returned with a "War Message" that included the argument that "The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind." Congress declared war on Germany on April 4, 1917.



Figure: Russian troops in trenches, awaiting a German attack.

Wilson's request for a declaration of war followed just a few days after Russia's withdrawal from the conflict. The third year of the war saw a major change in German military prospects when the Romanov Dynasty of Tsar Nicholas II collapsed in March 1917. The trouble had begun in late February with a strike by women factory workers in St. Petersburg. 90,000 women took to the streets shouting "Bread!", "Down with the autocracy!", and "Stop the war!" The following day, over 150,000 men and women marched and a general strike began. Within a few days the army had sided with the revolutionaries and Nicholas II was forced to abdicate.

Liberal reformers soon established a republic, which actually made it easier for U.S. President Wilson to proclaim that the war was to "make the world safe for democracy," since a major ally was no longer ruled by an absolute monarch. However, the democratic reformers in Russia were not as well organized as socialist revolutionaries led by Vladimir Lenin, who saw the end of tsarist rule as an opportunity to also defeat capitalism and creating a "dictatorship of the proletariat". The revolutionaries and the soldier and sailors who supported them wanted to end Russian participation in the war.




Figure: Bolshevik political poster showing Lenin sweeping away monarchs, clergy, and capitalists; the caption reads, “Comrade Lenin Cleanses the Earth of Filth”

By the fall, the socialist revolutionaries, called Bolsheviks, established workers’ and soldiers’ councils—“soviets”—in the major cities. In November 1917, overthrew the fledging republic to establish a revolutionary socialist state under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who began to call themselves the Communist Party. Lenin, confident that his revolution would soon inspire oppressed workers everywhere to overthrow capitalism, quickly negotiated a peace with Germany in March 1918, ceding much of Russia’s western territories, including Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine, losing 34% of the former Russian Empire’s population and most of the industrial base. The treaty also called for territories claimed by the Ottoman Empire to be handed over to Germany’s ally, but Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia declared their independence instead. Russia also agreed to pay 6 billion marks to compensate Germany for its losses.

The Russian revolution soon became a civil war between the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army”, formed by the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky, and the armies of the “White Russians” under several leaders, dedicated to restoring the Tsarist monarchy. To prevent the return of the Romanovs to power, the revolutionaries had the entire family killed in July, 1918. The revolutionaries also waged war on uncooperative peasants called Kulaks, whom they accused of withholding grain from the Bolshevik government. Many of the Kulaks were Ukrainian, which contributed to an ongoing aggression toward the Ukraine by the new Soviet Union.

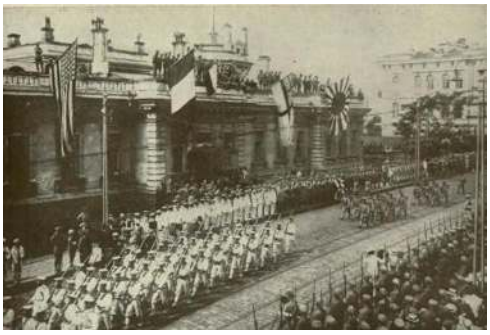


Figure: American, British, and Japanese Troops parade through Vladivostok on the way to providing armed support to the White Army.

Even after World War One ended, the Allies, including the United States, supported the White Russians against the Bolsheviks, sending thousands of troops to support the counterrevolutionaries in Siberia between 1918 and 1920. Years later Josef Stalin, who fought on the Soviet side in the civil war, would remember this fact while negotiating with Britain and the U.S. during World War II.

Questions for Discussion

- How did the Russian Revolution relate to the United States' entry into the war?
- Why did the U.S. support the tsarist "White Russian" counterrevolution?

As soon as the war began, governments on both sides moved quickly to portray the war effort as a success and to eliminate any sign of dissent. Britain censored mail sent by soldiers at the front to their families, instituting standardized postcards that allowed men in the trenches to choose from a menu of statements but not to write anything specific about their experiences. Society became completely focused on the war effort, and governments reorganized the economy around war production. The state also rationed food and strictly controlled the media (which at the time meant the press) to silence dissent and present news of the war that boosted the morale and resolve of the population. Although British author George Orwell was still in school in England during the war, he lived through the period and later served as a military police officer in Burma. The "Orwellian" censorship and propaganda in works like *1984* probably reflect his experience during the first World War.



Figure: Socialist Presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs speaking against the draft in Canton, Ohio in 1918. He was arrested for sedition shortly thereafter.

To stifle dissent in the U.S. , the government passed the Espionage Act in June, 1917. Woodrow Wilson declared the act was designed to prosecute those who had "poured the poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of our national life…to debase our politics to the uses of foreign intrigue." Although Wilson implied that the people he intended to target were "born under other flags," most of the people prosecuted, like labor leader and Socialist Party presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs, were American citizens. Wilson also suggested that labor unions' actions to defend worker rights during wartime would be considered an attack on America. The law was expanded with the Sedition Act of 1918, which prohibited any forms of speech that could be considered "disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States." As the Russian Revolution was taken over by the Bolsheviks, U.S. concern shifted from draft resistance to socialism and a "Red Scare" gripped America. Hundreds were arrested, deported, and jailed under the Espionage and Sedition Acts. By 1919 even the authorities realized they had gone too far, and the U.S. Attorney General convinced President Wilson to commute the sentences of 200 prisoners convicted under the acts.

Women on all sides served as nurses and medics, and worked in agriculture and industry to keep the economy going while men were away fighting. Many governments promised equal pay, although most did not make good on their promise. But women gained

political influence, and achieved the right to vote in the U.S. and many European countries almost immediately after the war's end as a result of their contributions to the war effort.

**Questions for Discussion**

- What did it take for the American people to support US entry into the war?
- How did the ongoing Russian Revolution and the growing prominence of the Bolsheviks influence U.S. government policy?




The European powers struggled to adapt to the brutality of modern war, with its advanced artillery, machine guns, poison gas, and submarines. Until the spring of 1917, the Allies possessed few effective defensive measures against German submarine attacks, which had sunk more than a thousand ships by the time the United States entered the war. The rapid addition of American naval escorts to the British surface fleet and the establishment of a convoy system countered much of the effect of German submarines. Shipping and military losses declined rapidly, just as the American army arrived in Europe in large numbers. Although many of the supplies still needed to make the transatlantic passage, the physical presence of the army proved to be a fatal blow to German plans to dominate the Western Front.



Figure: The Kaiser inspecting a communications trench on the western front, 1918.

In March 1918, Germany tried to take advantage of the withdrawal of Russia and its new single-front war before the Americans arrived, with the *Kaiserschlacht* (Spring Offensive), a series of five major attacks. By the middle of July 1918, each and every one had failed to break through the Western Front. Then, on August 8, 1918, two million men of the American Expeditionary Forces joined the British and French armies in a series of successful counteroffensives that pushed the disintegrating German lines back across France. The gamble of the Spring Offensive had exhausted Germany's military, making defeat inevitable. Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated at the request of the German military leaders and a new democratic government agreed to an armistice on November 11, 1918, hoping that by embracing Wilson's call for democracy, Germany would be treated more fairly in the peace talks. German military forces withdrew from France and Belgium and returned to a Germany teetering on the brink of chaos. November 11 is still commemorated by the Allies as Armistice Day (called Veterans' Day in the United States).

In all between 16 and 19 million soldiers died in World War I along with 7 to 8 million civilians (before the influenza pandemic of 1919). Some of the worst battles were:

- ***Verdun: 976,000 casualties (Feb.-Dec. 1916)***
- ***Brusilov Offensive: Nearly 2,000,000 casualties (June-Sept. 1916)***
- ***Somme: 1,219,201 casualties (July-Nov. 1916)***
- ***Passchendaele: 848,614 casualties (July-Nov. 1917)***
- ***Spring Offensive: 1,539,715 casualties (March 1918)***
- ***100 Days Offensive: 1,855,369 casualties (Aug.-Nov. 1918)***

Civilian populations were also targeted. While bombing cities from airplanes was much more common in World War II, naval blockades were also an effective way of putting pressure on civilians. Even if a nation was relatively self-sufficient in food production under normal circumstances, war was not a normal circumstance. The British blockade of Germany prevented not only war supplies but food from reaching the German people, resulting in a half million civilian deaths. For the Europeans, World War One was a "Total War" involving every level of society.

By the end of the war, more than 4.7 million American men had served in all branches of the military. The United States lost over one hundred thousand men, fifty-three thousand dying in battle and even more from disease. Their terrible sacrifice, however, paled before the European death toll. After four years of stalemate and brutal trench warfare, France had suffered almost a million and a half military dead and Germany even more. Both nations lost about 4 percent of their populations to the war. And death was not nearly done.

### Questions for Discussion

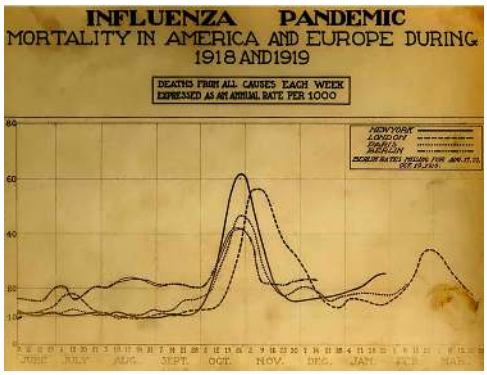
- What effects do you think the trenches and poison gas attacks had on European soldiers and civilians?
- Why did Germany throw so much into the Spring Offensive?



Figure: Soldiers from Fort Riley, Kansas, ill with "Spanish flu" at an emergency hospital ward at Camp Funston in 1918.

Even as war raged on the Western Front, an even deadlier threat loomed. In the spring of 1918, a new strain (H1N1) of the influenza virus appeared in the farm country of Kansas and hit nearby Camp Funston, one of the largest army training camps in the nation. The virus spread like wildfire. Between March and May 1918, fourteen of the largest American military training camps

reported outbreaks of influenza. Some of the infected soldiers carried the virus on troop transports to France. By September 1918, influenza had spread to all training camps in the United States.




The second wave of the virus was even deadlier than the first. Unlike most flu viruses, the H1N1 strain struck down those in the prime of their lives rather than old people and young children. A disproportionate number of influenza victims were between ages eighteen and thirty-five. In Europe, influenza hit troops and civilians on both sides of the Western Front. The disease was misnamed “Spanish Influenza,” due to accounts of the disease that first appeared in the uncensored newspapers of neutral Spain while the warring nations tried to suppress the news of disease for propaganda purposes.

The “Spanish Flu” infected about 500 million people worldwide and resulted in the deaths of between fifty and a hundred million people; possibly more. World population in 1918 was about 1.8 billion; influenza infected nearly a third and killed between 5% and 10%. Reports from the surgeon general of the army revealed that while 227,000 American soldiers had been hospitalized from wounds received in battle, almost half a million suffered from influenza. The worst part of the wartime epidemic struck during the height of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in the fall of 1918 and weakened the combat capabilities of both the American and German armies. During the war, more soldiers died from influenza than combat. But the pandemic continued to spread after the armistice, with a death toll of nearly 20% of those infected, as opposed to about 0.1% in regular flu epidemics. Four waves of worldwide infection spread before cases and deaths finally began fading in the early 1920s. No cure was ever found.

**Question for Discussion**

Compare the “Spanish Flu” with the current COVID-19 pandemic. What can we learn from the past?



Figure: Woodrow Wilson traveling from Versailles Peace Conference, 1919.

On December 4, 1918, President Wilson became the first American president to travel overseas while in office. Wilson went to Europe to end “the war to end wars”, and he intended to shape the peace. The war brought an abrupt end to four great European imperial powers. The German, Russian, Austrian-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires each evaporated and the map of Europe was redrawn to accommodate new independent nations. As part of the armistice, Allied forces occupied territories in the Rhineland

separating Germany and France, to prevent conflicts there from reigniting war. A new German government disarmed while Wilson and other Allied leaders gathered in France at Versailles to dictate the terms of a settlement to the war. After months of deliberation, the Treaty of Versailles officially ended the war.

In January 1918, before American troops had even arrived in Europe, President Wilson had offered an ambitious statement of war aims and peace terms known as the Fourteen Points to a joint session of Congress. The plan not only addressed territorial issues but offered principles on which Wilson believed a long-term peace could be built. The president called for reductions in armaments, freedom of the seas, adjustment of colonial claims, and the abolition of the types of secret treaties that had led to the war. Some members of the international community welcomed Wilson's idealism, but in January 1918, Germany still anticipated a favorable verdict on the battlefield and did not seriously consider accepting the terms of the Fourteen Points. Even the Allies were dismissive. French prime minister Georges Clemenceau remarked, "The good Lord only had ten [commandments]."

President Wilson continued to promote his vision of the postwar world. The United States entered the fray, Wilson proclaimed, "to make the world safe for democracy." At the center of the plan was a new international organization, the League of Nations. It would be charged with keeping a worldwide peace, "affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike." This promise of collective security, that an attack on one sovereign member would be viewed as an attack on all, was a key component of the Fourteen Points. Wilson's Fourteen Points speech was translated into many languages, and was even sent to Germany to encourage negotiation.




THE GAP IN THE BRIDGE.

But while President Wilson was celebrated in Europe as a "God of Peace," many of his fellow statesmen were less enthusiastic about his plans for postwar Europe. Former U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt called the Fourteen Points "high-sounding and meaningless" and said they could be interpreted to mean "anything or nothing." And America's closest allies had little interest in the League of Nations. Allied leaders focused instead on guaranteeing the future safety of their own nations. Unlike the United States, safe across the Atlantic, the Allies had endured the horrors of the war firsthand. They refused to sacrifice further. Negotiations made it clear that British prime minister David Lloyd-George was more interested in preserving Britain's imperial domain, while French prime minister Clemenceau wanted severe financial reparations and limits on Germany's future ability to wage war. The fight for a League of Nations was therefore largely on the shoulders of President Wilson.




Figure: Thomas W. Lamont, partner at J.P. Morgan and Company and peace negotiator at Versailles.

Despite the Allies' lack of agreement with the Fourteen Points, the key role of U.S. troops and U.S. dollars in the outcome gave the Americans an influential seat at the negotiating table at Versailles. Woodrow Wilson was seen as an international hero, and his appointee Thomas Lamont became a central figure in the negotiations that ended the war and set guidelines for German reparations that ultimately bankrupted the nation and led to World War II. Wilson's Fourteen Points have received more attention from historians, but Britain and France were successful getting the punitive items they wanted into the final treaty. Lamont went along because shifting the financial burden to Germany guaranteed that the Allied nations that owed J.P. Morgan and Company so much money would be able to pay it back.

By June 1920, the final version of the treaty was signed and President Wilson was able to return home. The treaty was a compromise that included demands for German reparations, provisions for the League of Nations, and the promise of collective security. Wilson did not get everything he wanted, but Lamont did. According to historian Ferdinand Lundberg, the "total wartime expenditure of the United States government from April 6, 1917, to October 31, 1919, when the last contingent of troops returned from Europe, was $35,413,000,000. Net corporation profits for the period January 1, 1916, to July, 1921, when wartime industrial activity was finally liquidated, were $38,000,000,000." In the years after the war, J.P. Morgan and Company would earn additional millions loaning Germany the money the treaty required it to pay to the allies so they could pay the bankers.

### Questions for Discussion

- Do you see any difficulty with the idea that Woodrow Wilson is typically seen by historians as an idealist, but his chief negotiator at Versailles was Thomas Lamont?
- Were Europeans right or wrong to put their national concerns first?
- In your opinion, what was the point of the League of Nations? As Wilson had imagined it, who did it benefit?
- Was the United States right or wrong to stay out of the League?

The Great War transformed the world. The Middle East, especially, was drastically changed. Before the war, the region east of the Mediterranean had three main centers of power: the Ottoman Empire, British-controlled Egypt, and Iran. President Wilson's call for self-determination in the Fourteen Points appealed to many under Ottoman rule, especially the Arabs. In the aftermath of the war, Wilson sent a commission to determine the conditions and aspirations of the people. The King-Crane Commission found that most favored an independent state free of European control. However, the people's wishes were largely ignored and the lands of the former Ottoman Empire were divided into several nations created by Great Britain and France with little regard to ethnic realities. The British in particular wanted to continue to control the Suez Canal which was their route to India, and to monopolize the oil of the Persian Gulf to fuel the diesel engines of their navy and merchant marine.

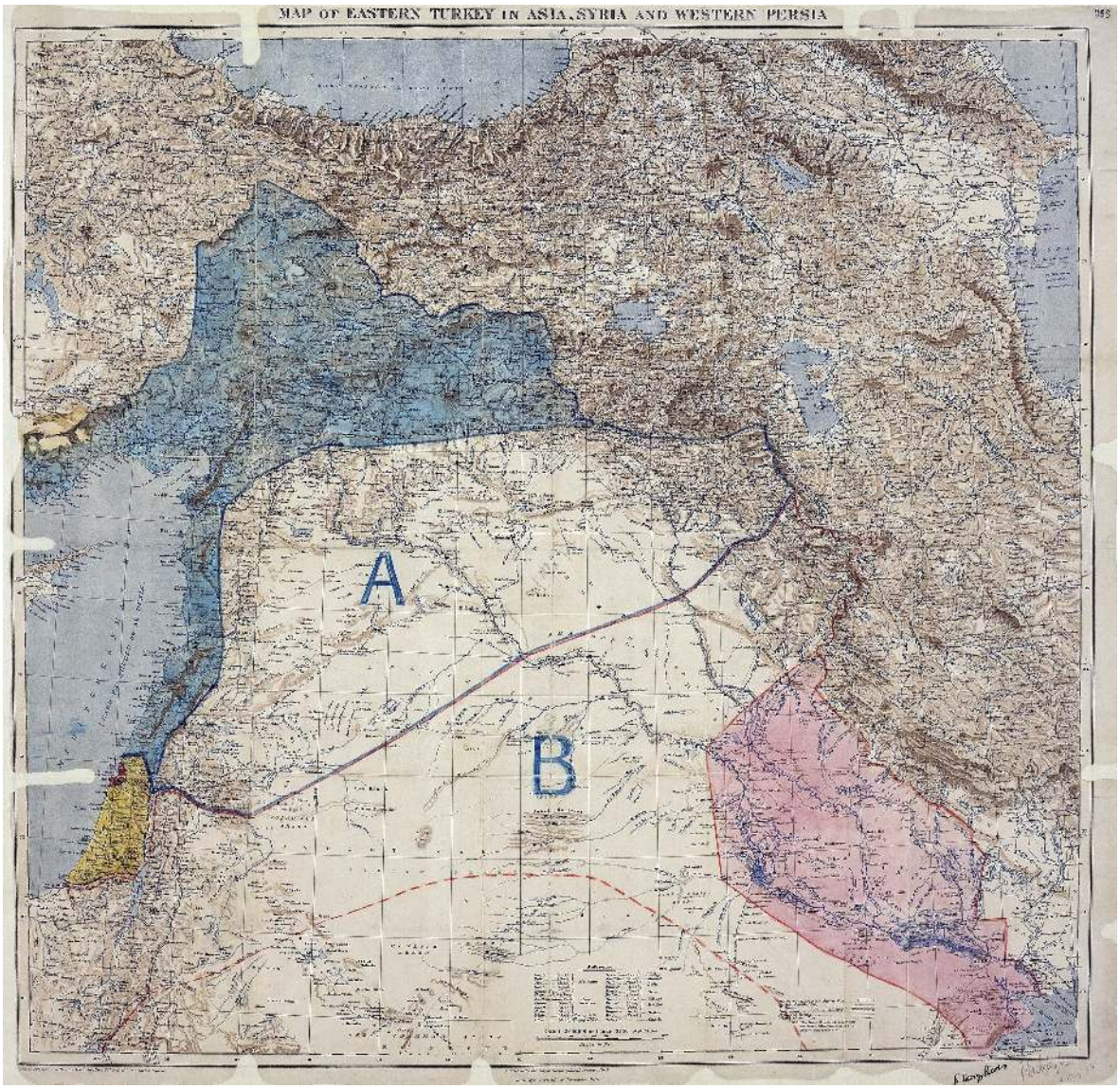



Figure: Map of Sykes–Picot Agreement showing areas of control and influence agreed between the British and the French. Signed by Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot, 8 May 1916.

The Arab provinces of the Ottomans were to be ruled by Britain and France as “mandates” and a new nation of Turkey emerged in the former Ottoman heartland in Anatolia. According to the League of Nations, mandates were necessary in regions that “were inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world.” Though supposedly established for the benefit of the Middle Eastern people, the mandate system was essentially a reimagined form of nineteenth-century imperialism. France received Syria; Britain took control of Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan (Jordan). The United States was asked to become a mandate power but declined.



Figure: Ibn Saud (right) and Iraqi King Faisal (left) in 1931.

To consolidate their power over the Arabs, the British supported Hussein Ibn Ali (related distantly to the Prophet Muhammad) as king of Hejaz on the Arabian Peninsula, including the holy sites of Mecca and Medina, in 1916. His sons Abdullah and Faisal were chosen to be kings of Transjordan and of Syria, where Faisal was rejected and so instead became the king of Iraq. The Iraqi dynasty ended in violence with the murder of Faisal's grandson in 1958, but Abdullah's dynasty still rules Jordan, under Abdullah II and Queen Rania. In Hejaz, Hussein Ibn Ali was overthrown in 1925 by Ibn Saud, a tribal leader from eastern Arabia. Through strategic marriages with other tribes, Ibn Saud established Saudi Arabia. He had so many children that the current king is still one of his many sons.

The disposition of the Middle East was complicated by the increasing importance of its oil resources. Oil had been discovered in Iran in 1908, and during the period when petroleum was becoming the most important commodity of the twentieth century it was also becoming clear that some of the world's largest reserves were located in the Middle East. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company (now known as BP) was established in 1908 to control production in Iran. After the war, British-controlled businesses that had been licensed by the Ottomans to develop oil discovered in Mesopotamia spurred British interest in creating the new Kingdom of Iraq under British mandate in 1920. The British-controlled multinational, TPC (Turkish Petroleum Company, established in 1912), received a 75-year concession to develop Iraq's oil.

However, in 1933 when enormous deposits of oil were discovered in eastern Arabia, Ibn Saud turned to the Americans rather than the British to exploit these oil deposits, fearing renewed British meddling in his country. U.S. oil companies have been there ever since.



Figure: Theodor Herzl on board a vessel reaching the shores of Palestine, 1898,

The movement to establish a Jewish Homeland—Zionism—was begun in the 1890s by Jewish Austrian journalist Theodor Herzl. Shocked by how Jews were being persecuted throughout Europe, even in liberal France, Herzl concluded that Jews would never be fully accepted as citizens anywhere and that they needed to establish a separate Jewish homeland. After some debate, his movement decided to begin buying land in Palestine, the site of the ancient Hebrew kingdom. Originally, most Jews around the world, especially more religious Jews, rejected the movement because they believed that Jews were not to return to Israel until the Messiah came. Zionists in Palestine often had problems with their Arab neighbors, who looked upon these new arrivals as Europeans trying to take over their country.

In the heat of the war, in 1917, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour promised that Palestine would be recognized as a "Jewish homeland," in an attempt to gain support of Jews among the belligerents—not realizing that Zionism was hardly the majority view at that time within Judaism. Of course, the British also promised to respect Arab sovereignty in Palestine; setting the stage for conflict in the region that has continued to today.

**Question for Discussion**

How did the negotiations between European powers set the scene for the conflicts of the following century?

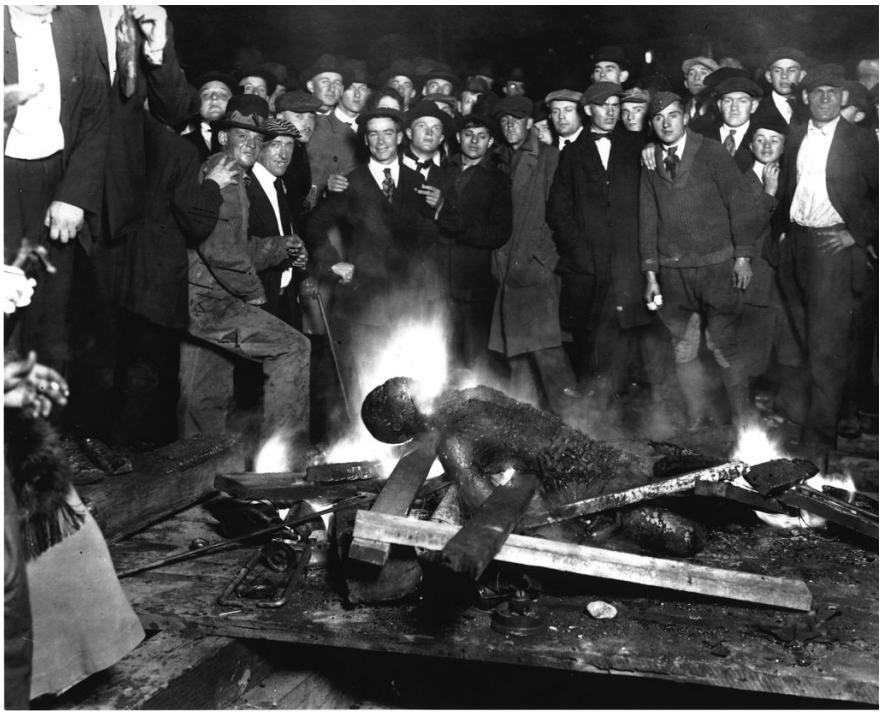


Figure: The charred corpse of Will Brown, victim of Omaha, Nebraska lynching, September 1919.

At home, the United States grappled with harsh postwar realities. Racial tensions exploded in the "Red Summer" of 1919 when violence broke out in at least twenty-five American cities, including Chicago and Washington, D.C. Industrial war production and massive wartime service had created vast labor shortages, and thousands of black southerners had traveled to the North and Midwest to work in factories. But the Great Migration of Black people escaping the traps of southern poverty and Jim Crow sparked new racial conflict when white northerners and returning veterans fought to reclaim the jobs and the neighborhoods they believed were theirs alone.

Many Black Americans who had fled white supremacy in the South or had traveled halfway around the world to fight for the United States would not so easily accept postwar racism. The overseas experience of Black Americans and their return triggered a dramatic change in their home communities. W.E.B. Du Bois, a black scholar and author who had encouraged blacks to enlist, highlighted African American soldiers' combat experience when he wrote of returning troops, "We return. We return *from fighting*. We return *fighting*. Make way for Democracy!" But white Americans just wanted a return to the status quo, a world that did not include social, political, or economic equality for black people. And they were alarmed and frightened by the thought of fearless, capable black men who had learned to handle weapons and defend themselves on foreign battlefields.

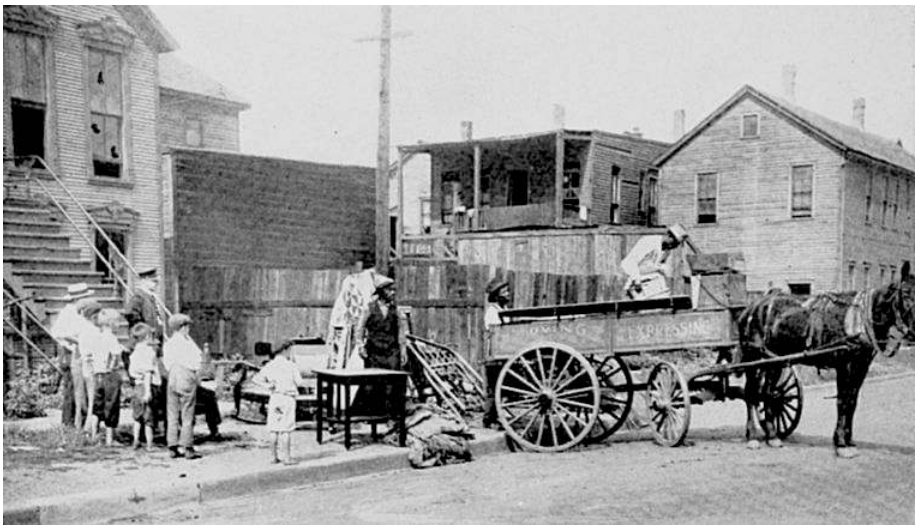


Figure: Family leaving damaged home after 1919 Chicago race riot.

In 1919, racist riots erupted across the country from April until October. The bloodshed included thousands of injuries, hundreds of deaths, and vast destruction of private and public property across the nation. The weeklong Chicago Riot, from July 27 to August 3, 1919, considered the summer's worst, included mob violence, murder, and arson. Race riots had rocked the nation before, but the Red Summer was something new. Recently empowered black Americans actively defended their families and homes from hostile white rioters, often with militant force. This behavior galvanized many in black communities, but it also shocked white Americans who interpreted black self-defense as a prelude to total revolution. In the riots' aftermath, James Weldon Johnson wrote, "Can't they understand that the more Negroes they outrage, the more determined the whole race becomes to secure the full rights and privileges of freemen?" In the fall, an organization called the African Blood Brotherhood formed in northern cities as a permanent "armed resistance" movement. The socialist orientation of its members rapidly led to an affiliation with the Communist Party of America. But the Russian-led Communist International (Comintern) had no interest in semi-independent groups like the ABB with their Afro-Marxist ideas. The Brotherhood's members found their way to other organizations like the Workers Party of America and the American Negro Labor Congress.

The wave of widespread lynching and riots against African-Americans lasted into the early 1920s. One of the most prosperous Black communities in the United States, the Greenwood neighborhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was burned to the ground and over a hundred people were killed by a white supremacist attack that included aerial bombing in June 1921. Many white Americans felt threatened by African-American success and increased social mobility. The early 1920s also saw a resurgence of the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan, which now added immigrant Jews and Catholics to the list of those who would destroy "traditional" white Protestant America. These ideas culminated in the Immigration Act of 1924, which lowered overall immigration to a small fraction of what it was before World War One, while setting up a quota system based on the ethnic makeup in the U.S. in 1890, a time before many Jewish and Catholic immigrants arrived from southern and eastern Europe.

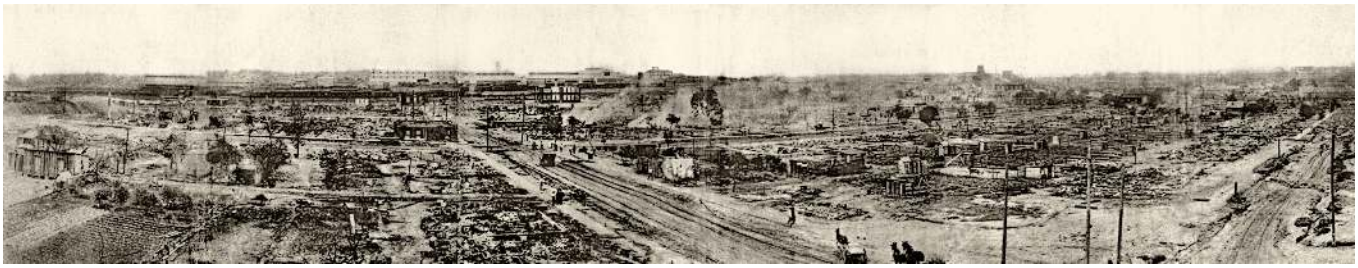


Figure: Panorama of the Greenwood neighborhood after the riot, 1921.

The desire to rid the United States of what the majority perceived as evil is also seen in the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibited the production and sale of alcoholic beverages in the U.S. Liquor had ruined many American families, and women in particular had suffered as abused spouses. The Women's Christian Temperance Union and similar prohibitionist organizations were prominent in the Progressive movement, pushing for a federal graduated income tax to replace the

lucrative tax on liquor. The war made prohibition even more patriotic, since the beer industry was dominated by immigrant Germans, and the amendment was ratified shortly after the end of the war.




Figure: Postcard of a protest for Sacco and Vanzetti in London, 1921.

The success of the Russian Revolution and the Communist victory in the Russian Civil War enflamed American fears of communism. The executions of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two Italian-born anarchists, epitomized the new American Red Scare. Arrested on suspicion of armed robbery and murder, their trial focused not on the defendants' guilt or innocence, but on their anarchist political affiliations. Sacco and Vanzetti were quickly convicted and sentenced to death, setting off a series of appeals and motions for mistrial. In 1925, while the two men sat on death row, another man confessed to the crime and provided details that made his confession credible. The judge, however, refused a petition for a new trial, later remarking to a Massachusetts lawyer, "Did you see what I did with those anarchistic bastards the other day?"

People all over the world demonstrated their sympathy with the accused. Albert Einstein, George Bernard Shaw, and H.G. Wells signed petitions. Demonstrations were held in London, Paris, Geneva, Amsterdam, and Tokyo. Famous authors wrote about the case, such as John Dos Passos's *Facing the Chair*, Maxwell Anderson's *Gods of the Lightning* or Upton Sinclair's *Boston*. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) labor union called a three-day national walkout to protest the executions. Sacco and Vanzetti were executed just after midnight on August 23, 1927. The Sacco-Vanzetti case demonstrated an American paranoia about immigrants and the potential spread of radical ideas, especially those related to international communism. On the 50th anniversary of the executions, Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis issued a proclamation that Sacco and Vanzetti had been unfairly tried and convicted and that "any disgrace should be forever removed from their names".

### Questions for Discussion

- What did the extension of racial conflict into the North after the war suggest about American attitudes regarding race?
- Was the anxiety of the Red Scare justified? Why were Americans so afraid of communism in the early 1920s?

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# 1.9: Modern Crisis



Figure: Ernest Hemingway in uniform in Milan, 1918. He drove ambulances for two months until he was wounded.

The horror of World War I was a shock to the self-satisfaction of Europeans who had believed themselves to be the pinnacle of world civilization. Intellectuals had shared in the celebration when war had been declared, parading in the streets of many national capitals. It is unclear exactly what they were expecting from the war, but their experience was quite different. No one exposed to the misery of trench warfare could hang onto illusions of the heroism and nobility of the struggle they were engaged in. The cold, the mud, and the terror of pointless charges over the top ordered by commanders who had no clue what they were doing and who rarely led their men into the slaughter – all these factors were captured by journalists and then by novelists like the American Ernest Hemingway (*A Farewell to Arms*, 1929), the German Erich Maria Remarque (*All Quiet on the Western Front*, 1929), and the British Ford Madox Ford (*The Good Soldier*, 1915, and *Parades End*, 1925) and Robert Graves (*Goodbye to All That*, 1929). The absurdity of Western culture was on display in what has come to be known as the modern crisis. The trenches had also been an unusual opportunity for the classes to mix. Some upper-class British officers such as Ford developed a new understanding of people they probably would never have met in their normal lives at home. Other novels dealing with these themes include German author Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* (1924), Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (published in England as the war was ending in 1918), and even Virginia Woolf's most famous book, *Mrs. Dalloway*, where one of the main characters, Septimus Smith, is a war veteran suffering hallucinations caused by what we might now call Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)—what was then called "shell-shock." Smith avoids being committed to a mental institution by jumping out a window to his death.

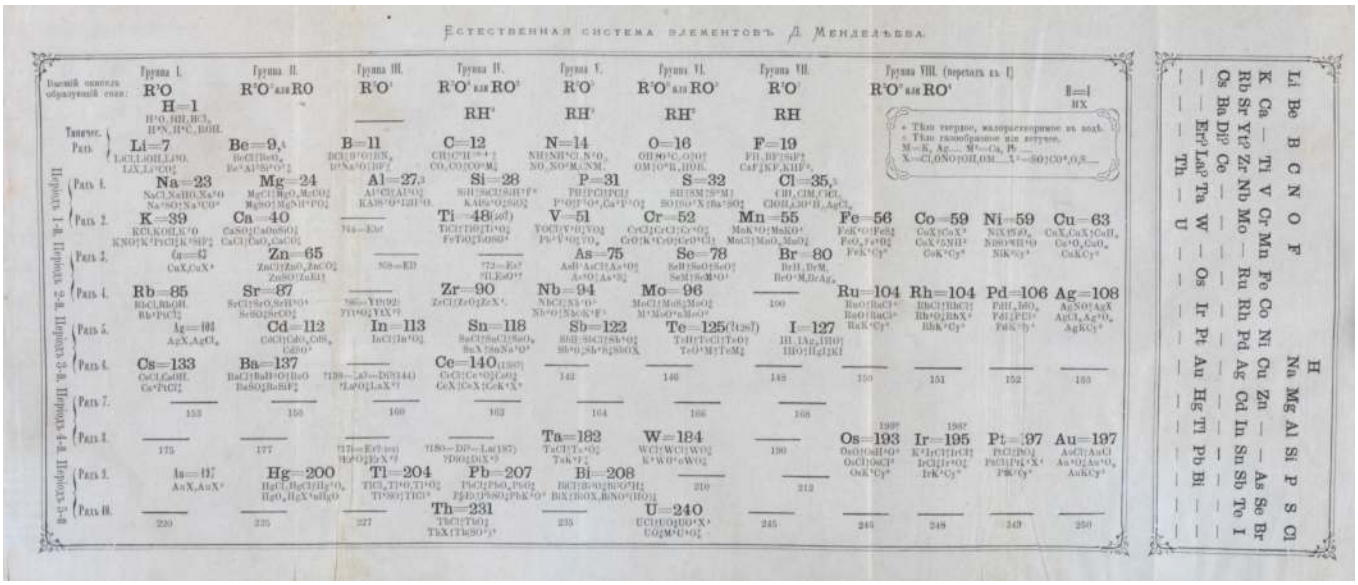



Figure: Dmitry Mendeleev's "Natural system of the elements", 1870

Alongside the novelists and intellectuals questioning the value of culture and social traditions that had led to the disastrous war, scientists were beginning to question the assumptions that formed the basis of our understanding of the universe. Since Newton, science had been pretty certain of the fundamental nature of reality. The atoms that were assumed to be the basic building blocks were imagined to function like little billiard balls, obeying all the laws of motion that scientists had studied in the "macro" world of regular experience. By the late 19th century scientists had discovered nearly 70 elements out of the 90 or so that occur naturally on earth. Russian scientist Dmitri Mendeleyev had explored the chemical nature of the elements and developed the periodic table that expresses their chemical relationships. On the other end of the spectrum, at the astronomical scale, the universe was believed to be made up of an eternal field of stars that spread in all directions.



Figure: Photograph of the "Great Andromeda Nebula", 1899.

This idea was challenged by Edwin Hubble's discovery around 1925 that the Andromeda nebula, a fuzzy patch on the star maps, and other "spiral nebulae" were actually distant galaxies and that all the visible stars were just nearby members of our own, Milky Way galaxy. Hubble discovered more galaxies, and then used measurements of their Doppler shifts in light wavelengths to deduce that the universe was not steady and eternal, but expanding. Albert Einstein's theories of special and general relativity suggested there were no static cosmological solutions, which led to the formulation of the Big Bang Theory (originally called the hypothesis of the primeval atom) by Belgian Catholic priest Georges Lemaitre.

Atoms had been thought of as tiny billiard balls, obeying the basic laws of motion suggested by classical physics. Einstein challenged these ideas with his work on electromagnetics, and then Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, Louis De Broglie, and Erwin Schrödinger smashed the classical model entirely with their development of quantum mechanics. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle alerted the public that things were not what they appeared—that it was impossible to measure the position and velocity of a particle at the same time, and that the act of observation changes the process being observed. Others picked up on this idea, which became a metaphor for the intrusion of explorers and experimenters into the things they were exploring.

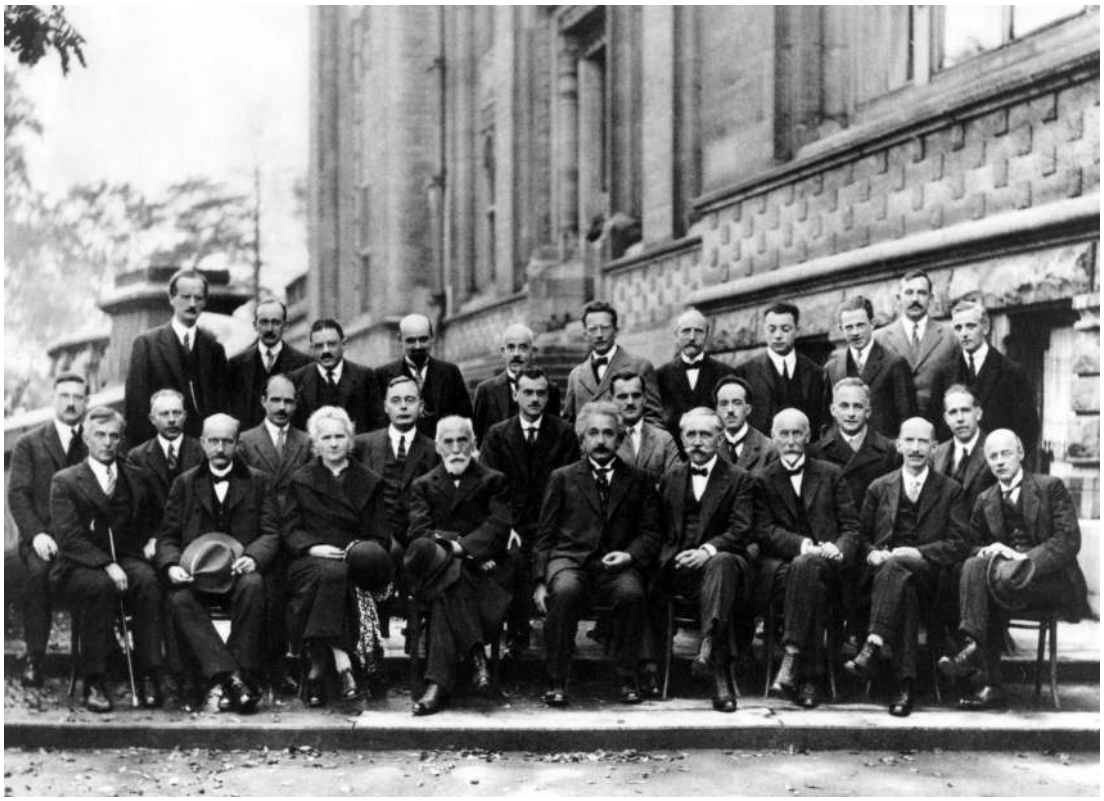


Figure: Scientists at the 1927 Solvay Conference in Brussels included Marie Curie, Erwin Schrödinger, Wolfgang Pauli, Werner Heisenberg, Louis de Broglie, Niels Bohr, Max Plank, and Albert Einstein.

Even sociologists and anthropologists were influenced by the uncertainty principle, and began wondering how their arrival in people's lives to gather data about their cultures actually altered those cultures. Psychologists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung complicated matters even more when they suggested that there was a whole lot going on in the human subconscious over which we do not have control or even direct knowledge. The solid, rational basis of the western world was beginning to look like a house of cards or a shared hallucination that might evaporate at any moment.



Figure: Edvard Munch's "The Scream"

The destruction of World War One, and the new ideas in science, sociology, and psychology led artists, architects, and filmmakers to reconsider "reality" as well. Already in the 19th century, the challenge and promise of industrialization, liberalism and nationalism had changed the themes traditionally considered by artists, while the attempt to get at the essence of a scene inspired painters to record their first "impression" of a scene, highlighting color and light over form. Even before World War One, the experimentation of the mainly French impressionists and post-impressionists (like Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent Van Gogh, and Paul Gauguin) inspired artists like the Norwegian Edvard Munch towards expressionism—using the impressionist

style to express interior emotions. Munch's "The Scream" from 1893 perhaps best sums up the "shock of the new" experienced not just by the artists but by much of society in the new industrializing world.



Figure: Yellow-Red-Blue, Wassily Kandinsky, 1925

Abstract expressionism after the war reverted to forms and shapes to reveal interior thoughts and feelings, such as in Wassily Kandinsky's "Yellow-Red-Blue" and Paul Klee's "Ancient Sound", both painted in 1925. The surrealist and Dadaist movements of the 1920s especially pointed to the absurdity of societal conventions, exploded in the carnage of World War One. The surrealists also focused on imagery inspired by Freud's theories about dreams, such as René Magritte's "The Menaced Assassin" from 1927.




Figure: Poster for the 1927 German film Metropolis depicting the Maschinenmensch (Machine-person) in front of a dystopian city of the future.

Film-making had progressed quickly from simple experimental images in the late 1890s to more complex stories in the years leading up to the war, with directors like Charlie Chaplin and D.W. Griffith taking the camera out of the theatre and introducing camera angles, close-ups, and moving carriages following the action, with editing to combine scenes into longer narratives. After the war, German expressionists produced the horror film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), using abstract sets to tell a story to criticize the insane authoritarianism they believed had directed society during the recent conflict. Other German directors like F.W. Murnau (*Nosferatu*, 1922 and *Sunrise*, 1927) and Fritz Lang (*Metropolis*, 1927 and *M*, 1931) also explored challenging themes in their films, while the Russian Sergei Eisenstein used metaphoric images and camera angles to tell stories of the workers' struggle in *The Battleship Potemkin* and *Strike* (both released in 1925).

### Questions for Discussion

- Why were artists and authors thrown into a "modern crisis" after the Great War?
- How did science contribute to undercutting the sense of self-satisfaction felt by people before the "crisis"?

## Hyperinflation

Peace began in Europe with the hope that the new nation-states that replaced the German, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian Empires in Central Europe would deliver social justice and prosperity through new democratic constitutions. Not everybody was willing to wait patiently for life to get better after the war and pandemic, however. And the new Soviet Union, which had survived attempts by the allies and the U.S. to defeat the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War, felt justified in trying to export their "workers revolution" to the rest of Europe. Attempts at violent communist-inspired revolution led to violent reactions. Revolutionaries found support among the workers of many nations. Many believed the bloodbath in the trenches had to have meant something more than just gaining the right to vote—perhaps it was to birth a new socialist utopia, replacing the not just the monarchs who started the war, but the capitalists who profited from it.



Figure: Spartacist rebels holding a street in Berlin, 1919.

In Germany, liberals and social democrats had declared a republic when Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated in the final days of World War One, with the hope that they could negotiate a peace as equals with the democratically-elected governments of Great Britain, France, and the United States. However, just weeks later, Bolshevik-inspired revolutionary actions like the Spartacist Revolt in Berlin were brutally suppressed by the new German government with the help of the paramilitary *Freikorps*—troops returning from the front who, having just fought for their nation, did not want Germany taken over by a "foreign" socialist revolution.

Although the new government was not treated as an equal by the Allies at Versailles, delegates elected from all over Germany met at Weimar, the cultural capital of Germany, at the same time to write the most representative constitution in the world, which was adopted in August 1919. The Weimar Republic included an elected president and parliament, the *Reichstag*, as well as a chancellor who organized a cabinet of government ministers. Elections were based on proportional representation, which almost always results in a multi-party government. The spectrum of political parties included pro-Republic social democrats, liberals, and Christian democrats in the middle, with anti-democratic nationalists, monarchists and fascists on the right, and revolutionary socialists and communists on the left. This wide range of political orientations was typical in most European democracies between the world wars.

All the countries of Europe, both old and new, faced massive unemployment and inflation after the war as their economies readjusted and veterans returned to the workforce. However, these problems were magnified in Germany because on top of everything else, under the Versailles Treaty, the new government had to pay reparations to the Allies in the form of gold, coal and timber. By 1923, the Germans were unable to keep up with coal deliveries (any of the richest coal fields of Imperial Germany were now part of the new country of Poland); so French and Belgian troops moved in to occupy the northwestern Ruhr Valley, location of much of German industry. The German government encouraged a widespread strike to protest the occupation, which it funded funded by printing more paper money. Like nearly all of the world's currencies, the German *Deutschmark* had originally been backed by gold, but the Kaiser had taken the country off the gold standard at the beginning of the war. Germany had expected to capture territory that would pay for its war expenses, but defeat and reparations changed the situation drastically. Printing more *Deutschmarks* decreased the value of each one, until ultimately they were not worth the paper they were printed on.




Figure: Piles of new Notgeld banknotes awaiting distribution at the Reichsbank during the hyperinflation.

The 1923 Weimar German inflation became a textbook case of hyperinflation. At the end of World War One, 170 *Deutschmarks* bought an ounce of gold; by January 1923, at the start of the occupation of the Ruhr, the same ounce of gold was worth 372,477 marks. With the strike and increased printing of paper money, Germans needed nearly 270 million marks to purchase an ounce of gold by September, and the inflation rapidly got worse. By the end of November, 87 *trillion* marks would buy an ounce of gold. And of course, gold was not the only commodity that was becoming unaffordable in terms of marks. Stories circulated of people taking wheelbarrows full of *Deutschmarks* to the marked to buy a loaf of bread.

The disruption to the German economy was severe. As typically happens with hyperinflation, when workers received their pay they would rush to markets and immediately buy everything they could before the currency was worth any less. Workers demanded higher wages to keep up with higher prices, which only added more worthless currency to the money supply and created more inflation. The savings of middle-class families, set aside for a house, a car, or for retirement, were wiped out to purchase food for a week. Adding to the financial chaos, previous debts were quickly paid off with the now-worthless marks.



Figure: Charles G. Dawes

U.S. bankers, led by Charles G. Dawes, sat down with financial representatives of the other Allied powers to renegotiate German reparations. Dawes had helped secure the $500 million Anglo-French Loan and had then served as a General during the war. American financiers understood that a chaotically unstable German economy would never be able to pay indemnities to the British, French, and others, which made it more difficult for these Allies to cover their own debts to Wall Street. The solution Dawes negotiated was to have U.S. banks lend Germany the money it needed to keep up payments to the European Allies, who could then

pay the Americans, who in turn could lend more to Germany. The arrangement brought economic and political stability to the Weimar Republic, and Dawes was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for his work and became Calvin Coolidge's Vice President in 1925. The cycle of payments continued until the American banks were forced to stop lending at the beginning of the Great Depression, which we will discuss shortly.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why does printing excessive money affect prices?
- Why was it important to American bankers to save the German economy?

## The Soviet Union

After its victory over the counterrevolutionary White Army, the Communists began establishing their version of the workers' state envisioned by Marx in the new Soviet Union. A successful socialist revolution in Russia inspired dedicated Marxists around the world, prompting general strikes and attempted workers' uprisings in Europe and even in the United States. However, Lenin's tactics divided the revolutionaries from the reformers in the international socialist movement. Marx had predicted that the first step towards the socialist state was the establishment of a liberal democracy and an industrial economy filled with wage-workers (the proletariat). Russia had barely begun moving toward democracy and had very few industries when Lenin and Bolsheviks overthrew the government. Did this mean that in more developed democracies, dedicated socialists should embrace communism and foment an immediate revolution? Many believed Russia was an exception, and even Lenin struggled to fit events in the new Soviet Union into the outline of future history that Marx had provided. Part of the Communists' focus on fomenting revolution in Germany was based on a belief that industrialized nations were more natural settings for these types of advances in the cause of a worldwide workers' paradise.

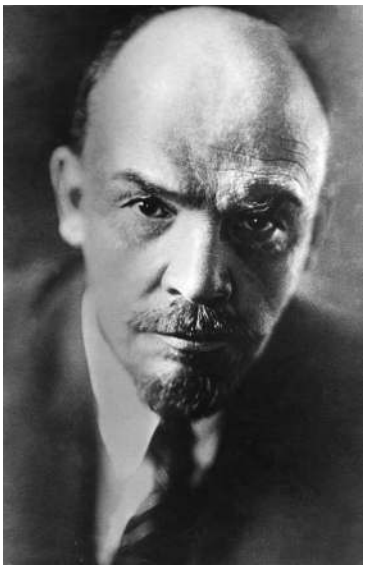


Figure: Lenin

Furthermore, Lenin was less than democratic within his own new nation. Russia became a one-party state dominated by a trained cadre who would follow the orders of Communist Party leadership, rather than a multi-party democracy with full and open discussion of issues. The Bolsheviks were able to take over the Russian government in 1917 because they were more organized and aggressive than any of their political rivals. Lenin and the communists declared themselves the true representatives of Marx's ideas and argued that their model should be followed by communist parties in other countries. Others who also called themselves socialists disagreed with Lenin's interpretation of Marx (or even with Marx himself), and many were more interested in reform than in revolution. Debates over both doctrine and actions split the international movement into revolutionary communists and reform socialists, with Lenin setting up his own "Communist International" (the Comintern) to oppose the older Socialist International of social democratic political parties. Until the mid-1930s, Soviet communists often spent more energy struggling against social democrats and other parties on the left in an attempt to be the only force representing the working class, rather than fighting right-wing reactionaries and fascists.

Meanwhile, debates over policy and leadership in the Soviet Union itself had both domestic and international consequences. One important problem was how to organize the agricultural sector. Marx had focused his analysis on an industrial society where workers would own the means of production rather than the bourgeoisie—so Lenin and other Soviet leaders took over Russia's factories and embarked on further industrializing their country. But Marx had not considered agriculture in as much detail. The Red Army broke up the large landholdings of the old Russian nobility, distributing the land to those who worked it. But it was unclear to Marxists (and it became very important to the Communist Party to believe it was fulfilling the ideas and predictions of Karl Marx) whether leaving small landowners alone in the countryside might create a class of small property-owners who might form their own bourgeoisie to rival the proletariat. Already during the war and the civil war, distrust had grown against the Kulaks, small farmers living mainly in the Ukraine. Lenin had denounced them as "wreckers" when it seemed they were withholding their grain from government collectors. These debates were still continuing when Lenin suffered a stroke and died in 1923.

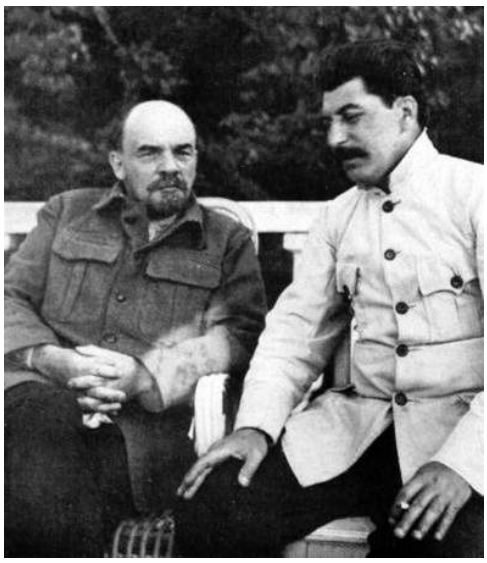


Figure: Stalin confers with an ailing Lenin in September 1922.

One of the main dangers of a cadre party is deciding on changes of leadership. Factions dividing the Soviet Communists formed around Leon Trotsky, Lenin's close ally during the revolution and the successful commander of the Red Army, and Joseph Stalin, an extremely capable organizer who controlled much of the Party machinery. Trotsky argued in favor of a "permanent revolution," constantly perfecting the workers' state, which including eliminating private property in the countryside and collectivizing the agricultural sector. Stalin insisted that Lenin had already established a precedent by allowing a degree of market orientation in farming and that it seemed to be working well. Stalin won the argument and became the new leader of the Soviet Union. Trotsky went into exile, where he and his followers founded yet another Trotskyist International of like-minded revolutionaries. He was assassinated in 1940 in Mexico City, by a Soviet agent.

Stalin, in the meantime, announced the first in a series of Five-Year plans to industrialize the Soviet Union even more rapidly. In his second plan, he embraced the forced collectivization of agriculture. Stalin essentially came around to Trotsky's view that small land-holders would become bourgeois anti-revolutionaries. Stalin was becoming increasingly paranoid of any social sector or group of leaders that he thought threatened his own authority, including his hold over the Communist cadre, the Comintern, and the apparatus of the Soviet bureaucracy. The forced collectivization of agriculture in the early 1930s led to death by starvation of nearly three million Ukrainians. Peasants resisted the loss of their land by planting and harvesting fewer crops and by killing their livestock before they could be seized. Many peasants were punished by the authorities, who confiscated everything they had and left them to starve. By 1931 when Stalin announced to the world that the wildly successful five-year plan had been completed ahead of schedule, at least 3 million peasants had died. The famine is known in Ukraine as Holodomor, or the Ukranian Genocide.



Figure: Starved peasants on a street in Kharkiv, in northeast Ukraine, 1933.

As the claims made by Stalin diverged more and more from reality, dissenters had to be dealt with. Stalin began sending critics to Gulag concentration camps in Siberia, or simply having them executed by his secret police. In the late 1930s, about 1.7 million suspected dissenters were arrested and 724,000 people were shot in the back of the head by Russian secret police. Among these were hundreds from the Red Army officer corps, who Stalin suspected were sympathetic to the ideas of Trotsky. Stalin had published a book about Lenin that outlined a "Correct" view of Marxist-Leninist ideology leading to himself and excluding Trotsky. When Leningrad party leader Sergei Kirov was murdered in 1934, Stalin launched what became known as the Great Purge. Thousands of party members, including many leaders who had worked closely with Lenin, were targeted. A series of show-trials in Moscow featured shocking scenes of senior Party officials confessing to counter-revolutionary crimes and begging for execution. Among the people accused of treason and shot was Mikhail Tukhachevsky, Russia's most brilliant military commander who had been awarded the highest rank in the country, Marshall of the Soviet Union. Stalin wiped out an entire generation of seasoned military leaders who had helped the Bolsheviks achieve their power. Both the purge and the famine in Ukraine would make it easier for Hitler to invade the Soviet Union in 1941: the Germans found willing collaborators among the Ukrainians, while they rapidly chased the ill-led Soviet army all the way to the gates of Moscow itself.

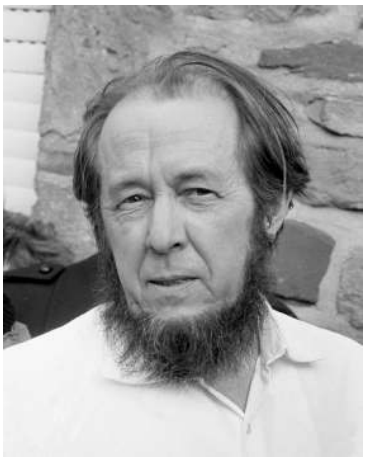


Figure: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in 1974.

There is considerable debate about the number of people killed under Stalin's rule. At the time, most of the world's communists either refused to believe or tried to justify Stalin's excesses, and his regime certainly did not advertise its deeds. The low estimates are 10 to 15 million killed and the high estimates of non-war-related deaths reach 60 to 65 million. One of the advocates for the 60 million number was Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a Russian dissident author who had been sent to Siberia when accused of writing anti-Soviet propaganda in 1945 (while an officer in the Red Army), and who won the Nobel Prize for his writing in 1970.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why was it important for the Communist Party that it was remaining true to Karl Marx's ideology?
- How do you think the Soviets were able to maintain power in light of all the people they were killing?

## Rise of Fascism



Figure: From 1925, Mussolini styled himself Il Duce (the leader)

Like other European countries, Italy was disrupted by labor and socialist agitation after World War One. Strikes in the industrial north and agitation by landless peasants in the agrarian south were suppressed only with great difficulty by the government, a multi-party parliamentary democracy with a figurehead king. Since the 1870s, constant shifting of political coalitions, cabinets, and prime ministers had resulted in governments that were barely ready for war—the Italians had little to show for the nearly 750,000 dead soldiers who fought the Austro-Hungarians to a draw in the Alps. The government was even less prepared for what seemed to be an imminent Red revolution. In October 1922, in the midst of yet another general strike, the Fascist Party, led by Benito Mussolini, marched on Rome. To prevent civil war, the King asked Mussolini to form a government. He would remain prime minister for the next twenty years.

Mussolini had begun his political career as a revolutionary socialist before World War I. However, he despised the pacifism of Italian socialism and became a convinced nationalist. He served in the war; like Germany's Adolf Hitler, reaching the rank of corporal. Shortly after the war's conclusion, he reentered politics, trading his previous socialism for a militarist nationalism in a new Fascist Party.



Figure: Blackshirts with Benito Mussolini during the March on Rome, 28 October 1922.

In addition to being anti-socialist, Fascism was anti-liberal and anti-democratic. Mussolini and his followers believed that parliaments were ineffective talk-fests of corrupt politicians that should be replaced by strong authoritarian leaders. Although fascists in Italy and the rest of Europe participated in elections, they did so with a high level of organized street violence by their own paramilitary units against political opponents, especially socialists and communists. Mussolini's black-shirted *squadristi* were imitated by the Nazi brownshirts in Germany and the Falangist blue-shirts in Spain, among many others in the rest of Europe and the Americas. Not only did they break up rival political meetings, they also brutally attacked strikers and labor organizers.

By 1925, Mussolini had outlawed all other political parties and declared himself the supreme leader: *Il Duce*, in Italian. He went on to impose "totalitarianism", his word for state control over the entire social and economic life of the nation. Claiming that they were protecting private property against socialism, fascists actually created a form of state corporatism that was every bit as autocratic as Stalin's system but retained the appearance of private ownership. "Corporations" in this case means not only industrial companies, but also "corporate groups" of citizens based on their occupations, guilds, and associations. The leaders of these corporate groups represented their members in the national government, under "coordination" by the dictator. The establishment of corporate groups supported the claim that a wide array of political parties was no longer necessary; but in reality, the selection of leaders was limited to members of the official state party.




Figure: Eritrean children vow allegiance to the National Fascist Party in Italy's African colonies, 1922.

Mussolini and other fascists wanted to impose upon their countries military discipline and unquestioning loyalty to the leader. Imperial expansion became a priority and war was encouraged to bring grandeur to the nation and strengthen its people. Fascists

promoted a mythic past of glorious conquest to inspire a warrior culture. Mussolini wanted to build a large army and navy to dominate the Mediterranean and to expand the Italian Empire—all to "make Italy great again."

Fascism gained ground more slowly in most other countries in the 1920s, until the onset of the Great Depression. Italy did not seem to suffer as acutely from the social, labor and political unrest that came with the unexpected international economic crisis because the Italian opposition had been eliminated or jailed years before. For property-owners and capitalists, fascism was a defense against revolutionary communism, while even for some in the working class, it seemed to provide a degree of social and political stability that democracy was struggling to retain. This impression, even if it was not entirely accurate, did a lot to interest Italy's neighbors in a political system that "made the trains run on time."

**Question for Discussion**

Why were people in Europe and America not more alarmed by Italian Fascism?

## The Great Depression

The exact causes of the Great Depression are still being argued by historians and economists. An ongoing agricultural recession in the United States and abroad during the 1920s was an important element, as was a Wall Street stock market bubble caused by excessive use of margin to buy company shares. Investors were able to buy the shares of companies for pennies on the dollar by borrowing 90% to 97% of the purchase price. This allowed them to buy ten to twenty times the number of shares they could actually afford, with lenders putting up the rest. This system works very well as long as prices continue to rise, and the extreme demand for stocks powered by margin-buying drove the prices ever higher. Insider trading was also quite common, with secret "pools" of investors buying up stocks to inflate prices, waiting for others to join in the game, and then selling when the price reached a profitable new height. During the 1920s, the value of the stock market doubled without a corresponding increase in corporation assets or earnings. The market grew at a rate of over 20% per year while the economy shrank. Most stock prices rose to levels that could not be explained by their assets or earnings, since industry was actually starting to feel the pinch of the agricultural recession. Stock prices typically reflect the underlying value of the company; in the bubble they mostly reflected the buying frenzy. When credit became a bit tighter and people began receiving margin calls and trying to sell more of these inflated shares than there were new buyers for, the bubble burst.



Figure: A solemn crowd gathered outside the Stock Exchange after the crash. 1929. The building across the street from the Exchange (at top left) is 23 Wall Street, headquarters of J.P. Morgan and Co.

Black Thursday was October 24, 1929. But it was only the beginning of a series of economic calamities. The Dow Jones Industrial Average (the most popular average of the value of America's largest stocks) had fallen nearly 5% the day before, and opened Black Thursday at 305. As soon as the opening bell rang, the market began dropping fast on volume three times greater than normal. The three major banks, Morgan, Chase, and National City, began buying heavily to try to stabilize the market, and the Dow recovered a bit, ending the day at 299. On Friday, the market closed a bit higher, but the following Monday the average dropped to 260 which triggered another round of heavy panic selling on Black Tuesday, when the Dow dropped to 230. After this weeklong crash, the market continued sliding for the next three years. The Dow average finally bottomed out at 41. The market lost 90% of its pre-Crash value, and would not reach the levels it had seen in September 1929 for another 25 years until 1954.

The sudden evaporation of the market, even though the prices of stocks had been ridiculously inflated, resulted in a collapse of lending. Loan amounts had been based on these inflated asset values; the values had disappeared but the debt remained. Companies stopped producing products and laid off workers. Families lost their life savings and their jobs at the same time. After foreclosing on bankrupt farmers, rural banks were stuck with farms whose worth continued to drop. Rural banks began to fail: they had lent the money of their depositors to farmers who could not pay them back. "Runs" on banks everywhere became more frequent as anxious depositors rushed to take out their cash. Smaller banks had also borrowed from larger banks, affecting the entire financial system. Wall Street stopped lending money to Germany to pay its reparations to the Allies.

Worldwide, the cost of food and industrial goods dropped considerably as businesses sought to lessen the effect of losses. But unemployment was so staggering that few farmers and workers had enough to pay for anything, even at rock-bottom prices. Governments embraced protectionist high tariffs in a last-ditch effort to stimulate domestic industry; however, this led to a collapse of global free trade which hurt the world economy even more.

In their desperation, people everywhere began to question the effectiveness of capitalism and liberal democracy to resolve the crisis —indeed, many began to blame liberalism and market capitalism for their sudden impoverishment. Many saw the Soviet Union as a new model for economic stability, especially because Stalin was claiming the success of his Five Year Plans and no one knew what was going on behind the scenes. There seemed to be no unemployment under the Communists. Some who felt threatened by revolutionary communism embraced fascism. Although labor unrest and mass protests broke out all over, Mussolini seemed to be maintaining order in Italy. Also, fascists did not seek to end capitalism and private property like the communists promised to do. Many in the middle class supported new fascist-inspired governments as a better guarantee of their livelihoods than the liberal democracy that seemed to have failed them. This is essentially the story of how a minor political figure, Adolf Hitler, was able to become Chancellor of Germany in January 1933, as we will see below.

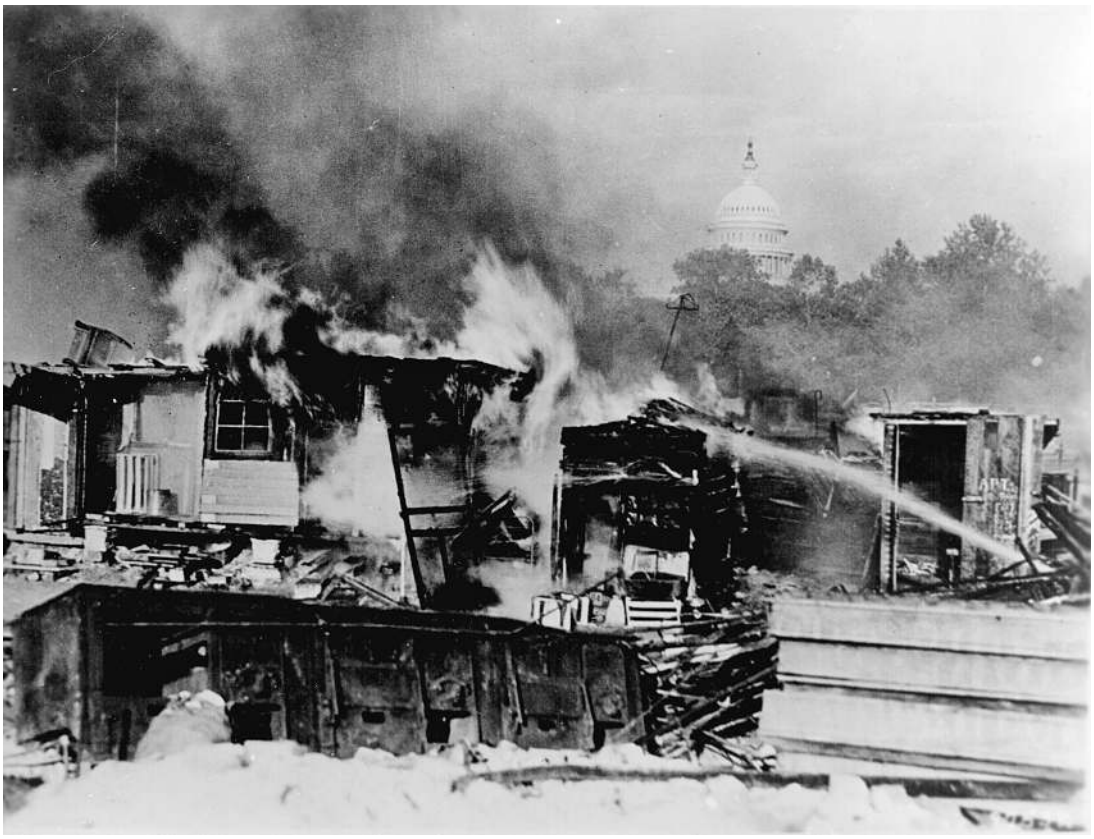


Figure: Shacks that members of the Bonus Army erected on the Anacostia Flats, across the Potomac from the Capitol, burning after its confrontation with the army.

In the United States, bread lines became common, although Republican President Herbert Hoover, elected in 1928, insisted things weren't as bad as they appeared. Shanty-towns and tent villages began appearing all over the country and were ironically nicknamed Hoovervilles. The American Legion, formed in 1919 by World War I veterans, agitated for the early payment of military bonuses that had been awarded after the Great War but could not be redeemed until 1945. A "Bonus Army" formed and marched on Washington to demonstrate, setting up a Hooverville in Washington and camping on the lawn outside the Capitol Building. Hoover ordered his Secretary of War to disperse the protestors, and in July 1932 U.S. troops armed with tanks and machine guns attacked and burned the bonus camp, killing a few of their former comrades in the process. Hoover lost the 1932 election to the Democrat Franklin Roosevelt, who issued an executive order enrolling 25,000 veterans in the Civilian Conservation Corps. In 1936 Congress authorized the early payment of $2 billion in World War I bonuses.

To make matters worse, a drought in Great Plains in the early 1930s created an agricultural disaster. The Russian Revolution and World War I had reduced European farm production and had driven up the price of American grain in international markets. Marginal high plains grazing lands in western Kansas and Nebraska, Oklahoma and northwestern Texas were put under the plow. Cropland in this region doubled between 1900 and 1920, and then tripled again between 1925 and 1930. As European agriculture recovered, grain prices began to drop, so U.S. farmers planted more to try and earn the same amount.



Figure: A farmer and his two sons during a dust storm in Cimarron County, Oklahoma, April 1936.

Plowing fields for annual corn and wheat planting is such a common farming practice, it seemed normal to continue the practice as farmers expanded westward. However, on the high plains, perennial grasses had evolved to find water deep in the soil and hold onto it. Plowing exposed the soil to the sun and wind, and cut the roots that trapped moisture and bound the soil together. The western edge of the prairie was actually a completely different ecosystem from the eastern edge by the Great Lakes, but the change in climate was very gradual. Although many farmers moving west to convert the high plains rangeland to cultivation failed to notice it, rainfall was scarcer and the wind blew harder. Those who did notice were reassured by experts that “rain followed the plow.” But of course, that was just boosterism and wishful thinking: rain did not follow the plow. Between 1933 and 1935, drought struck the area. Over half a million people were left homeless when the topsoil blew away.



Figure: A dust storm approaches Stratford, Texas, in 1935.

In a single storm, beginning on November 11, 1933, topsoil from Oklahoma was blown all the way to Chicago, where over 12 million pounds of it fell on the city like snow. On Black Sunday, April 14, 1935, dust storms were reported from the Canadian border to Texas. Newspaper reporters throughout the affected area wrote that they could not see five feet through the blowing dust. The agricultural disaster that became known as the Dust Bowl caused an exodus from the high plains region. But the disaster was not just agricultural. Of 116,000 refugee families surveyed on their entrance into California, only four out of ten were farmer families. A full third of the heads of families who fled Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas were white collar professionals. When the farms blew away the whole regional economy was wiped out.



Figure: Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt on Inauguration Day, 1933.

In the United States, there were some who saw communism or fascism as a solution. However, U.S. democracy proved stable enough that the voters simply changed the party in power in the 1932 elections, from the Republicans to the Democrats. Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated president a few weeks after Hitler took power in Germany. Roosevelt was neither a communist nor a fascist, although he did accept a degree of government intervention in the economy to alleviate the worst effects of the crisis.

Franklin Roosevelt, born into an old, wealthy New York family, actually surprised many by embracing government intervention and regulation to address the ongoing Depression, and by spending government money to put people back to work. However, most people believed Roosevelt was “saving capitalism” rather than “imposing socialism.” Many New Deal agencies and programs are still with us today.

Roosevelt saw the role that Wall Street had in the crisis, and wanted to restore confidence in the banking system. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is insurance, paid for by banks, which guarantees that depositors will receive their savings (nowadays up to $250,000), in case of a bank failure. FDIC helped bring an end to “runs on banks” by increasing people’s confidence in the banking system. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) was a new agency that would oversee Wall Street. New regulations put an end to “pooling” and other forms of stock manipulation and insider trading, in order to restore confidence in the stock exchange. Borrowing money “on margin” to invest in stocks is still closely regulated. Finally, the Glass-Steagall Act prevented banks from dabbling in the securities and insurance industries—its repeal in the 1990s is seen as one of the causes of the 2008 Financial Crisis.

In agriculture, the Roosevelt Administration began paying farmers not to over-plant and stabilized farm prices with the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Agricultural Extension programs also taught new farming methods to prevent a future Dust Bowl.

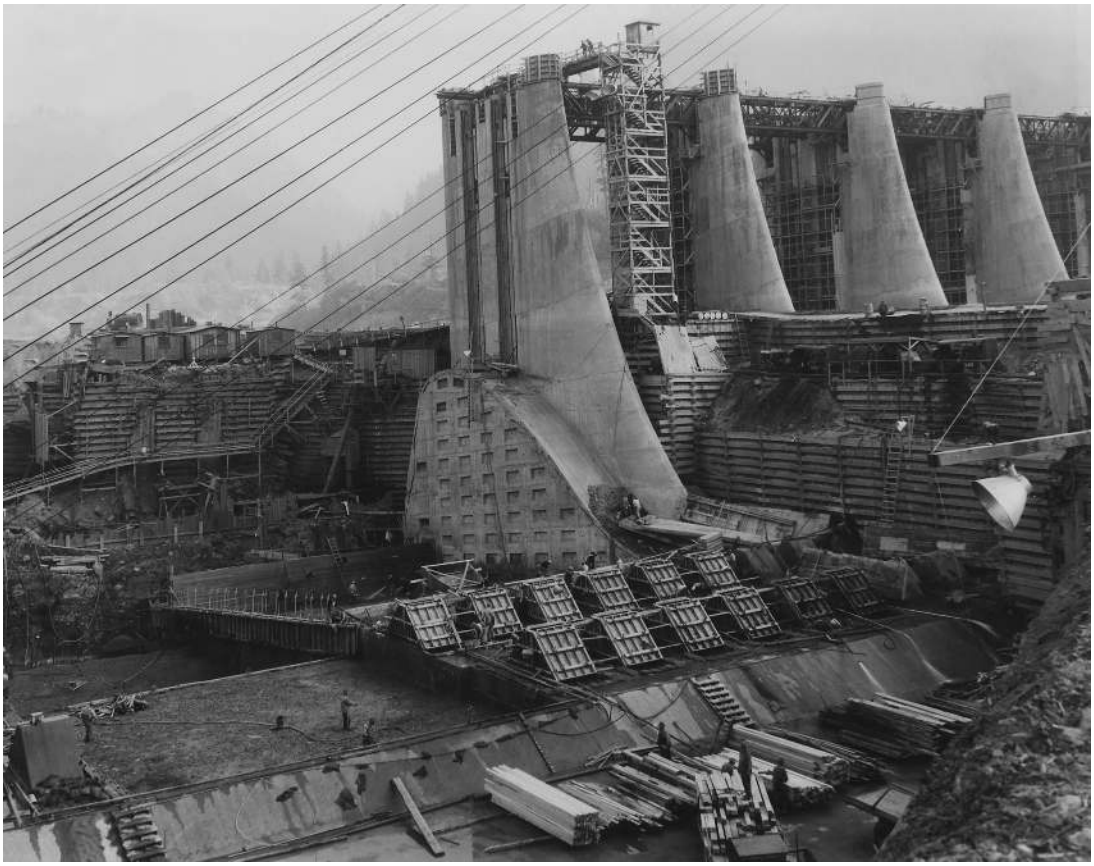


Figure: Public Works Administration construction of the Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River between Oregon and Washington.

Federal government programs also put people back to work. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) included large building projects like the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge, but also many smaller local projects like sidewalks, post offices and schools. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) attracted unemployed young men to mainly work on reforesting projects and improvements to national and state parks. When you see long straight lines of 85-year-old trees in the United States, you're seeing the work of the CCC. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) focused on developing an entire region. TVA dams controlled the flow of rivers to prevent flooding and to provide electricity to factories and rural homes. Since it ran a multi-state project, TVA was a federal agency. Governments throughout the world sent representatives to see how it worked.




The Social Security System was established in 1935 to support widows and their children and to provide the elderly with a government pension so they would be able to retire without burdening their children. This opened jobs to younger workers, who could then afford a government-backed mortgage through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The Roosevelt Administration also encouraged labor union organizing under the Wagner Act. Instead of the government siding with industry and

sending troops to put down strikes as in it had in the (recent) past, the Wagner Act legalized unions and strikes, and set up the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to arbitrate between industry and labor in contract disputes. Organized labor became an important political ally of Roosevelt and the Democratic Party as a result.

**Questions for Discussion**

- What is margin buying and how did it contribute to the Crash of 1929?
- What caused the Dust Bowl and how did it exacerbate the Great Depression?
- Do you think President Roosevelt went too far with his New Deal policies?

## The Nazis

In the 1920s, Germans had elected moderate, social democratic governments. The disruption caused by the collapse of Wall Street and world trade especially affected German industry. Loans and markets dried up, and millions of employees lost their jobs. Hyperinflation wiped out people's life savings. Previously, communists and (especially) National Socialists (Nazis—German fascists) had been fringe parties, easily ignored. But as Germans became increasingly desperate, they looked for easy solutions, or at least someone to blame for the crisis of world capitalism. Political conflicts took to the streets, with social democrats fighting communists and both groups fighting Nazis. Government instability led to frequent elections; the moderates coalesced around chancellor Heinrich Bruning, a conservative of the Catholic Center Party, who was positively Hooverish in his tight-fisted social and economic policies. In the 1932 elections, no party won a clear majority (which was not unusual), but for the first time, most German voters backed either the Communists or the Nazis.

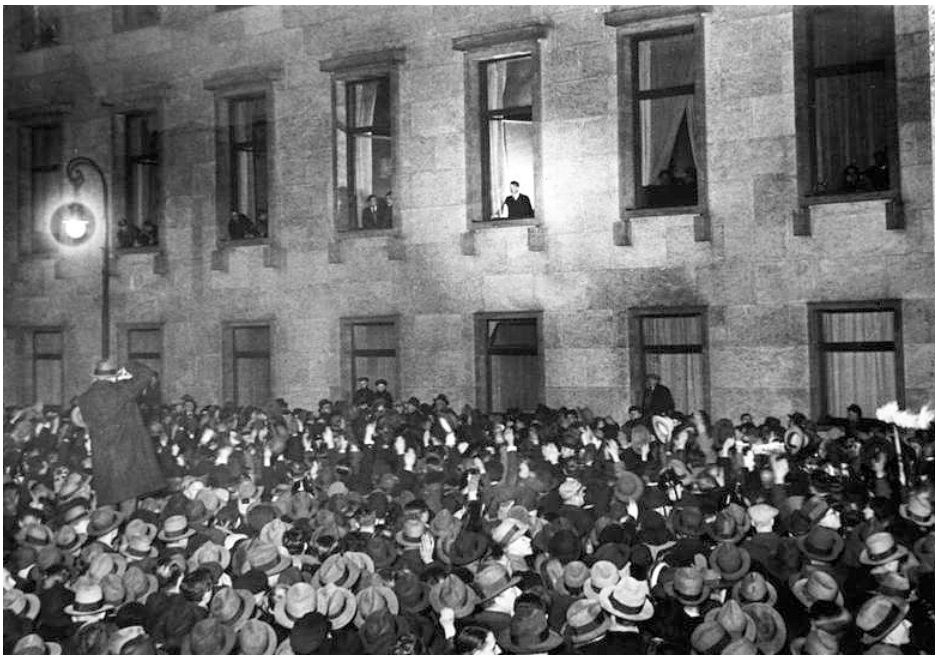


Figure: Adolf Hitler, at the window of the Reich Chancellery, greets cheering crowds on the evening of his inauguration as chancellor, 30 January 1933

Meanwhile, intrigues began swirling around President Otto von Hindenberg, who (like a king in a parliamentary monarchy) was responsible for choosing a politician to take the role of Chancellor and form a government. The octogenarian Hindenburg took the advice of aristocratic nationalists in January 1933 to call upon Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi Party, to form a government. The aristocrats believed Hitler could be controlled; he had other ideas.



Figure: In 1934, Hitler became Germany's head of state with the title of Führer und Reichskanzler (leader and chancellor of the Reich).

Hitler and the Nazis were like the Italian Fascists in their anti-liberal, anti-democratic, hyper-nationalist ideology, and support of the totalitarian ideal for ruling their nation. They even had their own paramilitary force with uniforms and insignia, and a powerful symbol in the swastika. The Nazis also appealed to many voters because of their consistent opposition to the Versailles Treaty, which nearly all Germans blamed for their economic distress. For the Nazis, the Versailles peace was a national humiliation and the real reason that Germans were unemployed. They blamed the liberals and social democrats who had signed the treaty for having "stabbed Germany in the back."

As Hitler took control, new elections were called for March 1933. During the campaign, the Reichstag building was burned down by a disgruntled communist; Hitler used this incident to arrest Communist politicians. Although once again the Nazis failed to win a majority in the election, Hitler was granted near-dictatorial powers. He outlawed the Communist Party and then the Social Democratic Party. By the end of the year, all other parties were outlawed or dissolved; by mid-1934, Hitler purged his own party of "left-Nazis," eliminating all organized opposition. He was declared the leader (*Führer*) of Germany. Hindenberg's death the following year allowed Hitler to combine the offices of President and Chancellor, so that the democratic Weimar constitution was a completely dead letter.

This was a remarkable achievement for Hitler, who until World War I had been a frustrated Austrian artist living in Vienna, absorbing extremist German nationalist and anti-Semitic ideologies. He had joined the German army at the beginning of the war; after the armistice, he was assigned by the army to observe and report on the various political groups that were appearing in Munich. Instead, he joined one of them, the National Socialist German Workers Party, and quickly became an effective speaker and leader. In 1920, he adopted the ancient Hindu swastika symbol in his design for the party's flag. After an attempted coup failed in Munich, Hitler was imprisoned in 1923. While in prison, he wrote *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) an outline of his plan for the domination of the pure German "Aryan race" over Europe. Hitler's anti-Semitism blended with his hatred of "foreign" Bolshevism, and he imagined German "Aryans" as Europe's defense against Jews and socialism. Nazi focus on racial hatred set them apart from the Fascists in Italy, although anti-Semitic ideas were shared by other nationalists and fascists in Europe.



Figure: Benito Mussolini with Hitler on 25 October 1936, when the axis between Italy and Germany was declared.

Hitler and the Nazis, like the Fascists in Italy, built their power by appealing to people's worst prejudices and to their feelings of resentment that their problems were someone else's fault. Jews were always a convenient scapegoat. As a group, they were perceived as being more successful in academia, the professions, and business than their Christian counterparts. Close study of scripture was respected and encouraged, and these habits were quickly applied to careers in law, medicine and science once Jews were liberated from the ghettos. Although they continued to face discrimination, Jews seemed to have benefitted more from industrialization and "modernity" than most of the working-class and lower-middle class farmers, factory-workers, and displaced white-collar workers who would become the base for the Nazis and other fascist parties. It was easy to blame Jews for the economic and social problems facing Europe in the 1930s, especially since they were believed by many to not fully be part of the "nation," but rather a separate international community that divided their loyalty away from the fatherland. Incongruently, the Nazis claimed that Jews were behind both Communism and the international banking and financial system that Communists wanted to destroy–a Jewish cabal was supposedly fomenting every crisis in a complex (and nonsensical) conspiracy theory.



Figure: Adolf Hitler laying the foundation stone of the Volkswagen factory near Fallersleben (Wolfsburg) on 26 May 1938. Ferdinand Porsche at far right.

Still, in the mid-1930s, Hitler's popularity in Germany was not initially based on Nazi racism. Instead, Germans appreciated the political, social, and economic stability the regime brought, and the ways Hitler was thumbing his nose at the Versailles Treaty. The Nazis suppressed labor unions, but work projects like building the *Autobahn* superhighway put men back to work. Hitler called for an affordable "people's car", and in 1937 his government built a state-owned factory to manufacture a design created by race-car designer, Ferdinand Porsche. The original *Volksauto* (renamed Volkswagen) would be available to German citizens for $396 through a government-sponsored savings plan. Rebuilding the military also provided jobs and opportunities. Hitler expanded the

army well beyond the 100,000-man limit set by the treaty, and added air and submarine forces in further violation. In early 1936, when he moved troops to the French border, the Allies did not respond militarily; much to the surprise of many German generals. Berlin successfully hosted the Olympics in July 1936, showcasing the regime to the world while also starting the tradition of lighting an Olympic flame brought from Greece by relay runners. Germans felt pride that Hitler had “made them great again.”

German Jews, however, suffered under the regime. Almost immediately after Hitler became chancellor, the Nazis called for a boycott of Jewish-owned businesses and Jews were fired from government positions. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws prohibited marriage with Jews and defined Jewishness based on ancestors. Many Nazified German towns “encouraged” Jews to leave so that they could put up signs declaring that they were “Jew-free”. A trickle of German Jews were able to emigrate: artists, actors, and film directors moved to Hollywood, while academics like Albert Einstein found positions in U.S. universities. But most of Europe and the world did not accept Jewish immigrants. Anti-Semitism was an international problem: although it was not as violent and discriminatory as the Nazi regime, even in the United States Jews were subjected to quotas at universities, were not allowed to buy houses in certain neighborhoods, were denied service at hotels and resorts, and were not accepted in many private clubs and associations.

## China, Japan, India



Figure: The Kuomintang reveres its founder, Sun Yat-sen, as the “Father of the Nation”

In 1911, Sun Yat-sen and his Xinhai Revolution finally overthrew the empire that had ruled China for over two thousand years, but the revolutionaries were not strong enough to install an effective government throughout China. Warlords (army generals and minor regional nobility) quickly organized troops to bring order to the countryside. However, they were not interested in respecting or supporting the new republic, which was seen as a European novelty. In the power struggle between Sun Yat-sen and General Yuan Shih-kai, the head of the Imperial Army, Yuan won. Instead of Sun Yat-Sen, a warlord became president of the republic under the new constitution. In the chaos of the republic’s early years, remote imperial provinces were able to establish their own nations, separate from China. Mongolia is still independent, while Tibet was reconquered by Mao Zedong in the 1950s and is still seeking independence.

After Yuan’s death in 1916, cliques and civil conflict broke out between the republic and the warlords. Yuan had declared himself emperor in 1915, and additional provinces had broken away in protest. Sun and the nationalists experienced a resurgence on May 4, 1919, when students revolted in Beijing against the Versailles Treaty, in which Japan received the German protectorates in Shandong province, rather than China. These demonstrations marked an important modernizing moment for the new Republic. Later that year, Sun Yat-sen formed the Kuomintang (Nationalist) Party, inspired by the May 4th Movement. By 1921, Sun had reestablished the republic in Canton. Meanwhile, western-educated intellectuals had begun organizing the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Shanghai, supporting Sun and the Kuomintang against the warlords.



Figure: Sun Yat-sen (seated on right) and Chiang Kai-shek

As the struggle continued against the northern warlords, Sun died of cancer in 1925, and his protege, General Chiang Kai-shek took over the Kuomintang. Chiang was a capable leader who was able to unite the government. In 1927, Chiang married U.S.-educated Soong Mei-ling, the sister of Sun's widow Soong Ching-ling. By 1927, the "Northern Expedition" against the warlords was successful, led by Chiang with CCP and Soviet support.

A few months later, however, a new civil war began in China. Chiang turned against his communist allies, who he feared were strengthening their support in the cities. Chiang purged CCP-members from the Kuomintang, and beginning in the commercial and financial capital in Shanghai, began rounding up and executing many Communist leaders, while imprisoning others. In 1931, the Japanese military invaded Manchuria and created the puppet Kingdom of Manchukuo, installing the heir to the Qing dynasty, Pu Yi, as the monarch. The Chinese Republic, in the midst of a new civil war, was not in a position to fight the Japanese.



Figure: Zhou Enlai (left) and Mao Zedong (middle) in Yan'an in 1937, shortly after the Long March.

With so many communists imprisoned or executed, Mao Zedong, a charismatic leader of peasant origin, rose to prominence in the Chinese Communist Party by the early 1930s. The Nationalist armies reconquered parts of China's interior under Communist control, surrounding the communists in the Jiangxi Province in October 1934. The CCP forces broke out of the trap and began what became known as the Long March. In 370 days, the communists covered 5,600 miles including some of the most rugged terrain in china. Mao Zedong gradually emerged as a leader of the CCP, along with Red Army leader Zhou Enlai. Zhou would become the first Premier of the Peoples Republic of China and Mao would become the Chairman of the CCP.

As seen in previous chapters, by embracing western technology and government, Japan went in the opposite direction of China in the late 19th and early 20th century. By 1910 the Japanese Empire had extended its territory to include the Ryuku Islands and Taiwan, had defeated the Russians in the 1905 war, and had taken control of the Korean peninsula. Japanese industrial goods, especially textiles, found markets in the U.S. and other parts of the world. And as part of the victorious Allied coalition in the Great War, the Japanese were awarded the Marshall Islands and Shandong peninsula from Germany, although their proposal to condemn racism was not approved by the Allied diplomats in Paris.

Japan enjoyed a parliamentary monarchy, with political parties, trade unions, a parliament, and a "divine" emperor. In international affairs, the civilian government joined the World War I allies in an effort to decrease the militarization of the Pacific and East Asia

and agreed to maintaining a smaller navy in the Pacific than either the U.S. or Great Britain in the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty. Increasingly ultra-nationalist officers in the army and navy were upset with the civilian government for negotiating the treaty. They advocated a Japan that would dominate East Asia, eventually replacing European rule and influence. “Asia for the Asians” was a motto they would use as they turned their attention to more regions that needed “liberating”.



Figure: Shōwa Emperor (Hirohito) at his enthronement in 1928.

As the reign of the new Emperor Hirohito began in 1926, the nationalist resurgence continued in the military, taking over Japanese foreign policy at the beginning of the Great Depression. The protectionism of many countries in the wake of the international financial crisis harmed the export-dependent Japanese economy. Ultra-nationalists in the military began advocating an extension of the Japanese Empire, following the example of the British in India. In 1931, an “incident” was staged by Japanese forces in Manchuria, giving Japan an excuse to take the region Manchuria from China. The civilian Japanese government was not in a position to reverse the conquest of Manchuria by their own military. Japanese diplomats ended up defending the takeover at the League of Nations.




Figure: 1935 poster of Manchukuo promoting harmony between Japanese, Chinese, and Manchu. The caption, written from right to left, says: “With the help of Japan, China, and Manchukuo, the world can be in peace.”

In the following years, the nationalists gradually took control of the Japanese government, using the same anti-democratic, anti-Bolshevik rhetoric as the European fascists. In late 1936, Japan united with Germany in an Anti-Comintern Treaty in opposition to the Soviet Union and communism. The ideology of Japanese militarists similar to the Nazis in its racism: they believed that it was the destiny of the “Yamato” people to dominate East Asia and replace the Europeans, just as Hitler claimed a similar mantle for his pure “Aryans” in Europe. The Japanese Empire would bring order and prosperity to an Asia, “for the Asians” through the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Japanese imperialism seemed like an attractive proposition to some in East Asia who wanted to rid themselves of European imperial rule.

As mentioned previously, the British trained and educated locals in India as soldiers, police, government administrators, and professionals in the nineteenth century in order to run the Empire, claiming they were preparing India for eventual self-rule. When the promised self-rule would begin became a source of debate and conflict between the colonizers and the colonized. In 1885, British-educated Indian reformers organized the Indian Congress Party to protest unfair treatment of Indians by British. They believed they were already administering the country and no longer needed British bureaucrats to tell them what to do. In 1909, British reforms provided for Indian representation in provincial legislatures, and as seen in the last chapter, Indian soldiers took part in many of the British campaigns during the Great War, especially in Africa and the Ottoman Empire. After the war, this service inspired increased agitation for independence.



Figure: Studio photograph of Mohandas K. Gandhi, London, 1931.

The politics of the Congress Party was greatly influenced by Mohandas Gandhi and his tactic of non-violent civil disobedience. Gandhi was a perfect example of the colonial serving the Empire: after being educated as a lawyer in England, he had lived in South Africa for twenty-five years, serving the growing Indian community there. However, reacting to racial discrimination, he began to organize on behalf of non-whites. Gandhi was already famous for his actions in South Africa when he returned to India in 1915, joined the Congress Party, and embraced asceticism and simplicity as a way of life. The following year, the mostly-Hindu Congress Party united with Mohammed Ali Jinnah's Muslim League in a sincere attempt to create a party that represented all of British India.

Popular calls for complete independence from Britain were accelerated by the horrific Amritsar Massacre in 1919, in which the British army killed hundreds of unarmed civilians. Increasing protests against British rule had led to oppressive measures, including the prohibition of public gatherings. In Amritsar, a religious celebration was interpreted as a political demonstration by the local British administrator, and he ordered his troops to open fire.

In the 1920s, the Congress Party organized the Non-Cooperation Movement, encouraging a boycott of British goods. Indian raw cotton was exported to Great Britain, where it was made into textiles that were sold back to the Indians. The Congress Party argued that factories could easily be built in India to serve the local market. By 1930, Congress Party leader Jawaharlal Nehru openly called for complete independence. The following year, Gandhi led his famous Salt March protest against the British salt monopoly. The British controlled the production and sale of salt, so Gandhi led a massive march to the sea to illegally make salt from the ocean. Non-violently disobeying an absurd law effectively highlighted the futility of Britain's position in India.

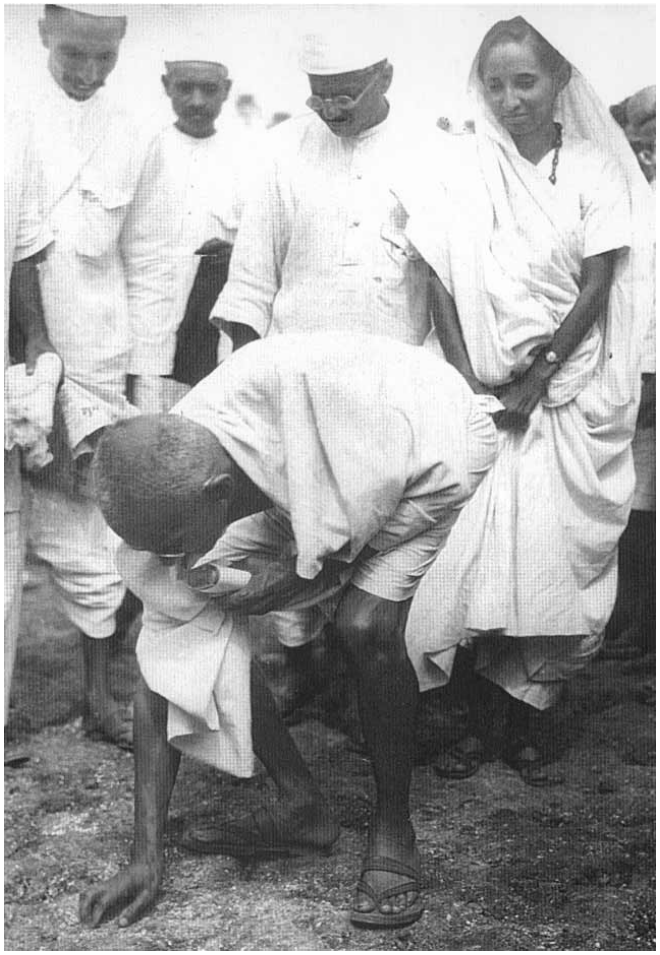


Figure: Gandhi at Dandi, South Gujarat, picking salt on the beach at the end of the Salt March, 5 April 1930. Behind him is his second son Manilal Gandhi.

The British Parliament responded with the Government of India Act in 1935, which established regional legislatures. Voting was arranged by religious and social categories, applying a “divide and conquer” method that the British had been using since the nineteenth century. Focusing Indians on their religious differences would have disastrous long-term results, down to today. Nevertheless, the more inclusive Congress Party started winning regional elections in 1937.

It is important to consider that at a time when totalitarian fascism and communism were on the rise in throughout much of the world, Gandhi and the All-India Congress Party presented the option of effective non-violent civil disobedience to achieve social goals. They were radically in favor of independence, but also encouraged democracy. The asceticism and simplicity of Gandhi was an example to be emulated, not a way of life imposed from above. Indian ideas and techniques would become an example for other struggles by colonized peoples and oppressed minorities, directly influencing the course of decolonization and the struggle for civil rights by African-Americans in the United States after World War Two.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why do you think the Long March is such an important element of the Chinese Communist Party’s history?
- Why did some Asians welcome Japan’s expanding empire?
- What elements of Gandhi’s approach to politics do you think were the most effective and memorable?

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# 1.10: World War II



Figure: U.S. Marines of the Second Battalion, Twenty-Seventh Regiment, wait to move inland on Iwo Jima, soon after going ashore on 19 February 1945.

In many ways World War Two was a continuation of World War One, especially in Europe. Germans supported Hitler and the Nazis because they promised to overcome the humiliation of Germany at the Versailles peace conference in 1919: being forced to admit "war guilt," to pay massive reparations, and to limit the size and quality of their armed forces. The Nazi regime promised to reverse all of it, and place a powerful new German Empire as the dominant force on the continent—and perhaps the world.

However, World War Two was also a result of the worldwide reaction to the Great Depression, which was seen by many as not only a failure of capitalism, but also a failure of democracy. Fascism and communism seemed to some to offer the only plausible reactions to the crisis—remember that although neither the Nazi nor the Communist parties in the German Weimar Republic ever won a majority in a contested election, by 1932 most German voters opted for one or the other, and essentially voting against liberal democracy. Germany was not alone in abandoning democracy and embracing authoritarianism—the same happened all over Eastern and Central Europe, Latin America, and, most importantly, Japan. The last chapter presented how the Japanese military, taking the initiative against the weak objections of Japan's elected government, initiated the conflict that would become World War Two by invading and occupying the northern Chinese province of Manchuria in 1931. Again, it is striking how similar the racial beliefs in the Japanese military were to those of the Nazis: the "Yamato" people of Japan had a special mission to dominate East Asia in the same way that the "Aryans" of Germany were destined to rule all of Europe.

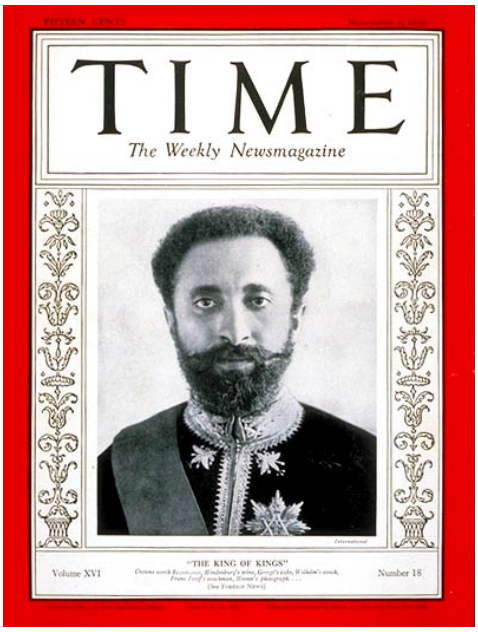



Figure: Ethiopian King Haile Selassie on cover of Time magazine, November 1930

The belief that their nation's greatness lay in war and conquest was fundamental to fascist ideology in both Italy and Germany. While Hitler was still consolidating the Nazi regime and rebuilding German armed forces in violation of the Versailles Treaty, Mussolini decided to act. In October 1935 Italy invaded independent Ethiopia from its colonies in Eritrea and Somalia. The Italians had been defeated by the Ethiopians in 1896; this time was different. Using air power and poison gas, Mussolini's military swept through Ethiopia. By the end of 1936, most pockets of Ethiopian resistance were defeated. In April 1936, Ethiopian King Haile Selassie went to the League of Nations to ask for help, but the League had no army to attack Mussolini's.

Emboldened by the ineffectiveness of world opinion, the Italian occupation of Ethiopia was brutal. In February 1937, in response to an attempted assassination on the new Italian viceroy in the capital city, Addis Ababa, Italians went on a three-day killing spree to exact vengeance on the Ethiopians. At least 20,000 were murdered, including Ethiopian intellectuals who had already been imprisoned in wretched conditions. As we'll see, such atrocities were typical of the racism inherent in fascist regimes, who thought that using such terror was the only way to "teach a lesson" to "inferior" conquered peoples.



Figure: Review of Soviet armored fighting vehicles used to equip the Republican People's Army during the Spanish Civil War.

After losing most of its Latin American colonies in the early nineteenth century, Spain fell into decades of civil wars. By the time Spain lost the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico to the United States in 1898, the Spanish empire was less stable and poorer than several of its former territories such as Argentina and Chile. In the early years of the new century, Spanish workers were inspired by socialism and anarchism, the belief that taking down all forms of repression would liberate the natural socialist and communal tendencies of humanity. Many found fault with the Catholic Church, which received government funds to educate and provide welfare for the poor, but was seen as ineffective and hypocritically enjoying its own riches by the starving, illiterate, and landless peasants and proletarians.

By 1931, even the middle class had had enough of Spain's backwardness. The king abdicated—another victim of the crisis of the Great Depression—and a Spanish Republic was established. A new Spanish constitution formed a presidential-parliamentary government with proportional representation, much like the Weimar Republic in Germany. Agrarian reform and limiting the temporal power of the Catholic Church divided the Spanish people and the liberals and socialists lost control of the government in 1933, when conservatives won the national elections. Rebellions by radical miners in northern Spain in 1934 led to repression and the imprisonment of thousands, leading to the formation of a "Popular Front" government in February 1936 after very close elections.



Figure: Francisco Franco in 1930

Soviet leader Joseph Stalin ordered the world's communist parties to join anti-fascist Popular Front coalitions. The Spanish Popular Front government was a coalition of socialist, anarchist, and workers parties seeking to preserve and extend liberal reforms. However, when the new government rolled out agrarian reforms and began suppressing the Church, street fighting and assassinations led to a fascist-supported military coup orchestrated by General Francisco Franco in July, 1936. Although the "nationalists" took control of northern and western Spain, the fascists were stopped in the region around Madrid and Barcelona by socialist and anarchist workers who had been armed by the Republican government. A bloody civil war commenced.

Hitler and Mussolini immediately sent weapons, troops and air support to Franco, while Stalin supported the Republic. The leading European democracies—Great Britain and France—declared neutrality while the United States chose once again to try to stay out of Europe's disputes. Individual British, French, and American volunteers arrived to fight for the Republic, hoping to make Spain "the graveyard of fascism". However, even before Franco and the nationalists finally defeated the Republic in April 1939, Stalin had pulled Soviet advisors out of Spain and abandoned the Popular Front strategy. Francisco Franco remained the authoritarian dictator of Spain until his death in 1975.



Figure: Guernica, by Pablo Picasso, 1937.

### Questions for Discussion

- What were the main causes of World War II?
- How did racism play an early role in fascist expansionism?
- Why did Stalin support the Spanish Popular Front?



Figure: Adolf Hitler greeting UK Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain at the beginning of the meeting in September 1938, where Hitler demanded annexation of Czech border areas.

Why this reaction from the victors of World War One? By the 1930s, and the Great Depression, the French, British, and Americans were wondering what "winning" the Great War had really meant. The deaths of millions and the wounding of millions more did not seem worth repeating. The Germans, on the other hand, had been humiliated by the peace and were now led by a man, and a party, that claimed that they could have won if they had not been "stabbed in the back" by liberals, social democrats, and Jews. And unfortunately, many fascist sympathizers in the democracies agreed with this assessment: that corrupt politicians and capitalists, as part of a Jewish-led cabal, had been the only ones to benefit from leading their countries into a useless war. There was truth in the observation that bankers and capitalists had profited from the war, but there was no evidence of a conspiracy. The fact that public

opinion descended into fantastic conspiracy theories is a testament to the psychological effect of the worldwide economic crisis on a fearful humanity.

Hitler's foreign policy, which he had announced to the world in his book *Mein Kampf* in 1923, was based on the idea of absorbing regions with German-speaking populations into his Greater Reich. *Lebensraum*, living space, for Aryans would be taken from the Slavic peoples of eastern Europe. In March 1938, Germany annexed Austria, its ally in the previous war and homeland of Hitler, with the support of most Austrians (the Trapp family of *Sound of Music* fame were the exception, not the rule). Once again, Great Britain and France failed to respond. Hitler set his sights on the Sudetenland, an ethnically German region of Czechoslovakia. In October 1938, the British and French leaders, alarmed but still anxious to avoid war, attended a diplomatic conference in Munich where they agreed that Hitler could annex the Sudetenland in return for a promise to stop all future German aggression. They were desperate to believe the *Führer* could be appeased, but in March 1939, German troops rolled into the rest of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak government had not even been invited to the conference in Munich; despite being the only democracy standing in Central Europe by 1938, they were betrayed by the appeasement policy of their fellow democracies.




Figure: Cheering crowds greet the Nazis in Vienna a few days after the Anschluss, March, 1938.

Nor were the democracies moved by Nazi excesses against the Jews in Germany. In November 1938, after a German diplomat was assassinated by an exiled German Jew in France, the Nazi government allowed a massive outpouring of violence against Jews and Jewish-owned businesses. German mobs murdered dozens of Jews, publicly humiliated thousands, and burned businesses and synagogues. The Nazi-sponsored violence became known as *Kristallnacht*, "the Night of Broken Glass." Many people in the democracies were outraged, thinking that such a pogrom was only impossible in a civilized nation like Germany. However, no government took action against Hitler, nor did any country accept Jewish refugees—anti-Semitism was all too common in most "civilized" countries.

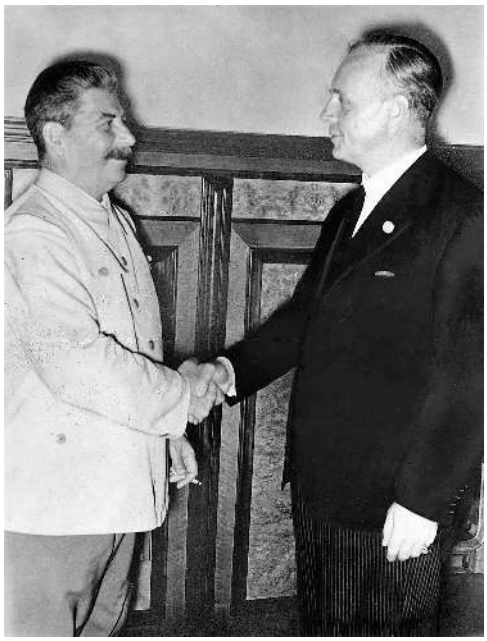


Figure: Stalin and German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop shaking hands after the signing of the non-aggression pact in the Kremlin.

All of this was happening as Stalin was still supporting the Spanish Republic, hoping that the democracies would join in a struggle against rising fascism. When they instead appeased Hitler, Stalin concluded that the capitalists perceived Hitler as a bulwark against the communist Soviet Union rather than as a threat to their own territories and interests. The Soviet Premier changed his diplomatic strategy and on August 23, 1939 signed a Non-Aggression Pact with Germany. By that time, Hitler had set his sights on "liberating" the German-speaking population in Poland and their territory. German troops poured across the border on September 1, 1939. The world learned of the secret agreement to divide Poland included in the Nazi-Soviet Pact when the Stalin sent his armies into eastern Poland three weeks later.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why did the European democracies try to appease Hitler?
- Was Stalin wrong to sign a non-aggression pact with Germany?

## The Road to War in East Asia

As described in the previous chapter, the government ruling in the name of Japanese Emperor Hirohito also shifted toward fascism after the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the establishment of the puppet state Manchukuo in northeast China and Inner Mongolia. Manchukuo provided Japan with the benefits of an imperial colony: raw materials for Japanese industries that were not available on the islands of Japan and a captive market for Japanese goods. The Japanese military also justified their conquests by claiming they were liberating Asia from European colonialism. Not all the Asian territories they invaded, however, were happy to become part of the Japanese "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere."




Figure: Japanese-controlled territory after invasion, 1939.

China was still in the midst of a civil war between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party, and the Kuomintang leader and President of the Republic, Chiang Kai-shek, ignored the Japanese threat in northern China until it was too late. Chiang appealed to the League of Nations for assistance against Japan. The United States supported the Chinese protest, and after a six-month investigation, the League found Japan guilty and demanded the return of Manchuria to China. The diplomats of the League had no way to enforce their ruling, of course. Japan ignored the demand and simply withdrew from the League of Nations. Japanese diplomatic isolation further empowered radical military leaders who could point to Japanese military success in Manchuria and compare it to the diplomatic failures of the civilian government. The military took over Japanese policy. In the military's eyes, the conquest of China would not only provide for Japan's industrial needs, it would secure Japanese supremacy in East Asia.



Figure: A Chinese POW about to be beheaded by a Japanese officer.

Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China on July 7, 1937, and routed the forces of the Chinese National Revolutionary Army led by Chiang Kai-shek. The broken Chinese army gave up Beijing to the Japanese on August 8, Shanghai on November 26, and the Nationalist capital, Nanjing, on December 13. In the first six weeks after capturing the capital, Japanese troops killed half of the city's population of 600,000. They began by executing 90,000 Chinese Army deserters who they despised for surrendering, and then moved on to civilians. Japanese troops raped up to 100,000 women and girls and then shot or bayonetted most of them in what

is now recognized as one of the worst atrocities of World War II. To pacify the rest, the Japanese distributed opium and heroin to the captive population. Like the Italian fascists in Ethiopia and the German Nazis in occupied Europe, the Japanese military felt themselves to be superior to the conquered peoples, and believed that only terror could subdue the civilian population.

Hoping to halt the invading enemy, Chiang Kai-shek adopted a scorched-earth strategy of "trading space for time." His Nationalist government retreated inland, burning villages and destroying dams; in the process killing more Chinese peasants than the Japanese had killed in the atrocities in Nanjing. Chiang established a new capital deep in the interior at the Yangtze River port of Chungking. Although the Nationalists' scorched-earth policy hurt the Japanese military effort, it alienated Chinese civilians and became a potent propaganda tool of the emerging Chinese Communist Party.


百人斬り,超記錄'
向井106—105野田
兩少尉さらに延長戰
'百人斬り競爭'の兩將校

Figure: . The headline reads, "'Incredible Record' (in the Contest to Cut Down 100 People) – Mukai 106–105 Noda – Both 2nd Lieutenants Go into Extra Innings".

When news of the "Rape of Nanjing" first reached the West, many were skeptical because the violence was so extreme. However, U.S. missionaries and European businessmen had established an "International Safety Zone" in Nanjing during the atrocities, which saved 200,000 Chinese civilians and documented the Japanese actions. Curiously, the effort was led by the German businessman John Rabe, at the time a card-carrying member of the Nazi Party. Eyewitness accounts written by Westerners were published in American newspapers, along with photographic evidence, and the brutality of Japanese imperialism began to sink in. However, no one was going to declare war on Japan to save the Chinese.



Figure: Madame Chiang Kai-Shek and Eleanor Roosevelt on the White House lawn.

The United States lacked both the will and the military power to oppose the Japanese invasion, and even continued to sell oil and scrap iron to Japan. The Japanese army was a technologically advanced force consisting of 4,100,000 men and 900,000 Chinese collaborators armed with modern rifles, artillery, armor, and aircraft. By 1940, the Japanese navy was the third-largest and among the most technologically advanced in the world. Still, Chinese Nationalists lobbied Washington for aid. Chiang Kai-shek's popular wife, U.S.-educated Soong May-ling, known to Americans as Madame Chiang, led the effort. In contrast to her gruff husband, Madame Chiang was charming and able to use her knowledge of American culture and values to garner support for Chiang and his government. But although the United States denounced Japanese aggression, it took no action.

As the Nationalists fought for survival, the Chinese Communist Party was busy accumulating supporters and supplies in the northwestern Shaanxi Province. Mao Zedong recognized the power of the Chinese peasant population and began recruiting from the local peasantry, capitalizing on the outrage caused by both the Nationalist failure to prevent Japanese invasion and its scorched-earth retreat. Mao gradually built his force from a meager seven thousand survivors at the end of the Long March in 1935 to a robust 1.2 million members by the end of the World War Two.

**Questions for Discussion**

- What would you say to Japanese leaders today who claim the Rape of Nanjing never happened?
- Do you think Chiang Kai-Shek was an effective leader of the Kuomintang?

## 1940-1942: Axis Conquests in Europe and Asia



Figure: German column of panzers and mechanised infantry advancing through Ukraine, June 1942, typifying fast-moving advances of Blitzkrieg.

Two days after the German *Wehrmacht* invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, Britain and France declared war and began mobilizing their armies. The war planners hoped the Poles would be able to hold out for three to four months, enough time for the Allies to intervene. Poland fell in three weeks, partly due to the Russian invasion in the east and partly due to a new form of warfare. The German army, anxious to avoid the rigid, grinding war of attrition in the trenches of World War I, had built its new army for speed and maneuverability. German strategy emphasized the use of tanks, planes, and motorized infantry to concentrate forces, smash front lines, and wreak havoc behind the enemy's defenses. It was called *Blitzkrieg*, "lightning war."



Figure: A group of Finnish soldiers in snowsuits manning a heavy machine gun in a foxhole.

After conquering eastern Poland, Stalin's armies shifted focus to occupying the Baltic States, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, and to invading Finland. The Soviet leader was planning to reestablish the borders of the former Tsarist Russian Empire. However, the invasion of Finland met stubborn resistance and winter—the conflict ended with the Finns losing only a bit of territory on their southeastern borders.

Meanwhile, after the fall of Poland, France and Britain braced for the inevitable German attack. In April 1940, the Germans quickly conquered Denmark and Norway in an effort to prevent the British naval blockade which had been so key to the German defeat in World War One. The following month, Hitler launched his *blitzkrieg* into Western Europe through the Netherlands and Belgium to avoid well-prepared French defenses along the French-German border. Poland had fallen in three weeks; France lasted only a few weeks more. By June, Hitler was posing for photographs in front of the Eiffel Tower. In another propaganda victory, Hitler made the French diplomats sign their surrender in the same railroad car used for the German surrender in the First World War.



Figure: Philippe Pétain meeting Hitler in October 1940

Germany split France in half, occupying the north and allowing a collaborationist government to form in Vichy to govern the south and the French colonies. Led by the "Hero of Verdun," Marshal Philippe Petain, the Vichy regime sought to reorganize France along authoritarian fascist lines. Significant support for Germany by the French right was one of the reasons for their defeat in June 1940. Many in France had also abandoned democracy and welcomed the demise of the Third Republic. If the future held a German-dominated Europe, they reasoned, then it would be better for France to collaborate as partners rather than as subjects in a new Nazi empire. Although this rationalization fit into the scheme proposed by German propaganda, Hitler would never allow a full partnership with any of the conquered peoples.

With France under control, Hitler turned to Britain. Operation Sea Lion, the German invasion of the British Isles, required air superiority over the English Channel. From June until October 1940, the German *Luftwaffe* fought the Royal Air Force for control of the skies. Despite having fewer planes, British pilots won the so-called Battle of Britain, saving the islands from invasion and prompting the new prime minister, Winston Churchill, to declare, "Never before in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few."



Figure: Four 264 Squadron Defiants (PS-V was later shot down on 28 August 1940 over Kent by Bf 109s.)

But if Britain was safe from invasion, it was not immune from ongoing air attacks. Frustrated by losing the Battle of Britain, Hitler began a bombing campaign against cities and civilians. The Blitz, as the British came to know the nightly bombing raids on London, killed at least 40,000 civilians. Population centers like Bristol, Cardiff, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Southampton and industrial cities like Swansea, Belfast, Birmingham, Coventry, Glasgow, Manchester, and Sheffield were also targeted for heavy bombing. The Royal Air Force defended the cities as well as they could, and British industrial production which had been moved out of major cities was unaffected by the air attacks. The British people, encouraged by Churchill, kept calm and carried on.



Figure: Original 1939 poster

In anger, Hitler and his Vice Chancellor Herman Göring began a policy of hitting London every day to try to break the will of their enemy. Beginning on September 7 1940, London was bombed every night for 56 days, including a large daylight attack on September 15. British morale failed to break, and Germany eventually shifted to targeting Atlantic shipping and bombing port cities

in an attempt to starve the enemy. When the port of Clydebank in Scotland was bombed in March, 1941, only 7 of 12,000 houses escaped damage. But the Germans failed to gain complete air superiority, partly due to the deployment of RADAR (Radio Detection and Ranging) by the British. The technology had been developed in the 1930s and was advanced and finally perfected by Britain in the early 1940s. It would be offered to the Americans in exchange for financial and industrial support as the two nations strengthened ties to "defend democracy" even before U.S. involvement in the war.

Nazi ideology considered the English as racial equals, and Hitler hoped that Great Britain would eventually join a crusade against Bolshevism. However, Nazi doctrine focused on establishing German *lebensraum* in Eastern Europe, enslaving the lesser Slavic peoples to work for the Aryans. Hitler had always planned on breaking his 1939 nonaggression pact with Stalin and invading the Soviet Union. First, German armies invaded the Balkans and set up puppet regimes in Hungary and Romania, giving them a wider front for attacking the Soviets. This action was a bit unplanned and chaotic. Mussolini, playing catch-up with his Axis partner, had sent his troops to conquer Greece from Albania, which Italy had acquired in April 1939. The Greeks not only defended themselves, but pushed the Italians back into Albania; Hitler had to bail out Mussolini and invade, sending his armies into Yugoslavia and Greece.

In June 1941, German forces crossed into the Soviet Union in a massive surprise attack. "Operation Barbarossa" was the largest land invasion in history. France and Poland had fallen in weeks, and Germany hoped to use the same *Blitzkrieg* tactics to break Russia before the winter. The German military caught the Red Army and Stalin unprepared and quickly conquered enormous swaths of land and captured nearly three million prisoners. But Russia was too big. After recovering from the initial shock of the German invasion, Stalin moved his factories east of the Urals, out of range of the Luftwaffe. He ordered his retreating army to adopt a scorched earth policy, destroying food, rails, and shelters to slow the advancing German army.




Figure: Masha Bruskina, a nurse with the Soviet resistance, before her execution by hanging. The placard reads "We are the partisans who shot German troops", Minsk, October 26, 1941

The German army split into three forces and reached the gates of Moscow and Leningrad, but their supply lines stretched thousands of miles. Soviet infrastructure had been destroyed, partisans harried German lines, and the brutal Russian winter arrived. Germany had won massive gains but the winter found German troops exhausted and overextended. In the north, the German army starved a million and a half people in Leningrad to death during an 827-day siege that has been called a genocide. In the center, on the outskirts of Moscow, the German army faltered and fell back after a three-month battle that killed a million people.

### Questions for Discussion

- How was Hitler able to surprise Stalin with Operation Barbarossa?
- Why was the *Blitzkrieg* strategy that had worked so well in Europe less successful in Russia?

While Hitler marched across Europe, the Japanese continued their war in the Pacific. In 1939 the United States dissolved its trade treaties with Japan and the following year America cut off supplies of war materials by embargoing oil, steel, rubber, and other vital goods. Instead of being starved into submission, Japan's resource-challenged military accelerated invasions across East Asia to sustain its war effort. The Japanese took control of French Indochina from the Vichy Regime, and began threatening the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) after the Netherlands was occupied by Germany. Diplomatic relations between Japan and the United States collapsed. The United States demanded that Japan withdraw from China and the French and Dutch territories; Japan considered the oil embargo a *de facto* declaration of war.



Figure: Photograph taken from a Japanese plane during the torpedo attack on ships moored on both sides of Ford Island shortly after the beginning of the Pearl Harbor attack. View looks about east, with the supply depot, submarine base and fuel tank farm in the right center distance. A torpedo has just hit USS West Virginia on the far side of Ford Island (center).

Japanese military planners, believing that American intervention was inevitable, planned a coordinated Pacific offensive to neutralize the United States and other European powers and provide time for Japan to complete its conquests and fortify its positions. On the morning of December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise air attack from their carriers on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Japanese military planners hoped to destroy enough battleships and aircraft carriers to cripple American naval power for years. The Japanese destroyed or seriously damaged eight battleships (four sank), three cruisers, three destroyers, and 180 aircraft, and killed 2,403 American servicemen and wounding a thousand. 353 Japanese bombers, fighters, and torpedo planes wiped out nearly the entire US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. Luckily for the U.S. Navy, its aircraft carriers were out on maneuvers and not at port during the attack.

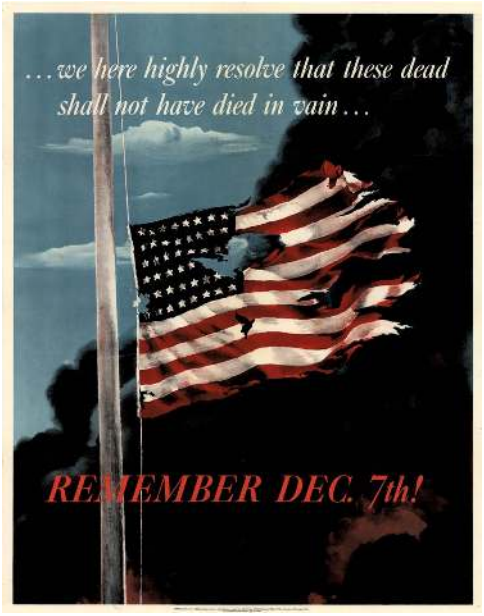



Figure: “Remember December 7!”, by Allen Saalburg, poster issued in 1942 by the United States Office of War Information.

American isolationism fell at Pearl Harbor. Japan also assaulted Hong Kong, the Philippines, and American holdings throughout the Pacific, but it was the attack on Hawaii that threw the United States into a global conflict. Franklin Roosevelt called December 7 “a date which will live in infamy” and called for a declaration of war, which Congress approved within hours. Germany and Italy declared war on the US on December 11th. Within a week of Pearl Harbor the United States was at war with the entire Axis, turning two previously separate conflicts into a true world war.

After Pearl Harbor, Japan conquered the American-controlled Philippine archipelago. After running out of ammunition and supplies, the garrison of American and Filipino soldiers surrendered. The prisoners were marched eighty miles to a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp without food, water, or rest. Ten thousand died on the Bataan Death March.

Although Japan hoped the United States would be unable to respond quickly, four months after Japan’s surprise attack on Hawaii, in April 1942, the US Army Air Force bombed Tokyo using sixteen B-25 medium range bombers launched from an aircraft carrier in the Pacific. The man who planned and led the raid, Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle, said of the plan, “The Japanese people had been told they were invulnerable…An attack on the Japanese homeland would cause confusion in the minds of the Japanese people and sow doubt about the reliability of their leaders.” Doolittle added, “There was a second and equally important psychological reason for this attack: Americans badly needed a morale boost.”

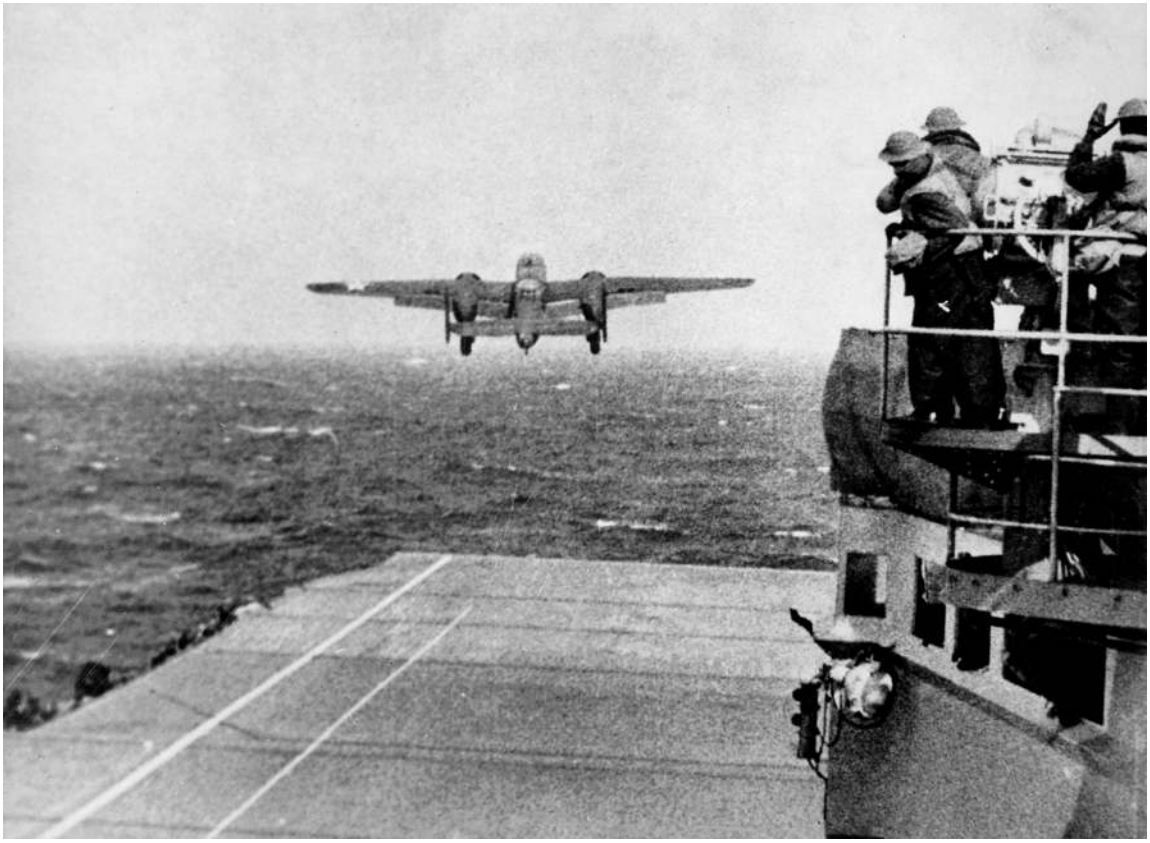


Figure: Take off from the deck of the USS HORNET of an Army B-25 on its way to take part in first U.S. air raid on Japan, the Doolittle Raid, April 1942.

However, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill understood that Germany was a more immediate threat. In 1940 and 1941, the United States had already begun providing financial and material support to Great Britain and to Russia, as it had previously in World War I. Britain had stood alone militarily in Western Europe, but the British people refused to be conquered and American supplies bolstered their resistance. Roosevelt and Churchill met in April 1941 and declared the Atlantic Charter—a pledge to defend freedom and democracy from fascism.

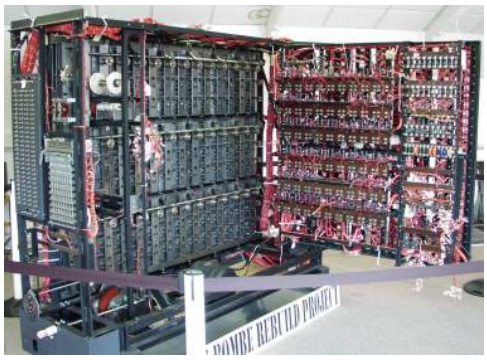


Figure: A complete and working replica of the computer Turing invented to break the Enigma cypher, called a “Bombe”, at the British National Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park.

After the U.S. officially entered the war, Hitler unleashed U-boat “wolf packs” into the Atlantic Ocean with orders to sink anything carrying aid to Britain. After losing thousands of merchant ships in 1942 and early 1943, British and U.S. tactics and technology won the Battle of the Atlantic. British code breakers at Bletchley Park led by Alan Turing cracked Germany’s Enigma radio cryptography. The surge of intelligence, dubbed Ultra, coupled with naval convoys escorted by destroyers armed with sonar and depth charges and air support, gave the advantage to the Allies. By mid-1943, Hitler’s navy was losing ships faster than they could be built. Soon the wolf pack was sheltering in a defensive crouch in the harbors of occupied Europe.

Questions for Discussion

- Did Japan make a strategic error, attacking the United States?
- Reflect on the technological developments that were accelerated by the war.

## Allied Victories

When Hitler renewed his invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1942, he focused on conquering the bread basket and oil fields of southern Russia. The *Blitzkrieg* again brought rapid success, but again got too far ahead of its supply lines. Although the strategy included sophisticated tanks, armored troop carriers, and dive bombers, the Germans still used horse-drawn wagons to bring up food, ammunition and spare parts to the advancing armies. As the advance slowed, Axis armies arrived at the new industrial city on the Volga River, Stalingrad. Hitler badly wanted to conquer and wipe out Stalin's namesake city, and the Soviet Premier was just as determined to defend it. In late 1942, the two armies bled themselves to death in the destroyed city; fighting house to house in a five-month battle that killed nearly two million people on both sides. Stalin placed his trust in General Georgy Zhukov, who planned a brilliant Soviet pincer move, cutting off the German 6th army in Stalingrad. When his army was forced to surrender in February 1943, Hitler was apoplectic in his anger and his generals began to doubt that he any longer had the strategic brilliance he showed in the previous years.



Figure: 1944 portrait photograph of Georgy Zhukov.

The Germans planned to follow up with renewed attacks to get at Soviet oil, but their battle with the Red Army at Kursk turned the course of the war definitively to the Soviets. Zhukov correctly guessed the German strategy, and fortified Kursk while massing armies to the north and south. After the greatest tank battle in world history, Zhukov unleashed another pincer move, and the Germans retreated from battle as quickly as they could. The Red Army began rolling westward, putting the Germans permanently on the defensive for the remainder of the war. More than any other Ally, the Soviet Union was most responsible for defeating Hitler, but at great sacrifice. Twenty-five million Soviet soldiers and civilians died in what Russians call the Great Patriotic War, and roughly 80 percent of all German casualties during the war came on the Eastern Front.

Allied victories in North Africa in 1942 also reversed Axis gains. The Germans and Italians had been threatening British Egypt since late 1940, and led by the capable General Erwin Rommel, seemed to be on the brink of victory in the spring of 1942. Hitler's decision to invade southern Russia was based on the expectation that the Middle East would soon fall into Axis hands. In November, the first American combat troops entered the European war, landing in French Morocco, where French Vichy forces switched sides and joined the struggle to defeat the Axis. The Americans pushed the Germans and Italians eastward while the British, after defeating Rommel at El Alamein in Egypt, began rolling the Axis armies back to the west. By early 1943, the Allies had pushed Axis forces into Tunisia and then out of Africa.



Figure: Douglas “Devastators” aboard USS Enterprise being prepared for takeoff during the battle of Midway, June 4, 1942.

Meanwhile, the Americans gradually stopped Japanese expansion in the Pacific. In the summer of 1942, American naval victories at the Battle of the Coral Sea and the aircraft carrier duel at the Battle of Midway crippled Japan’s Pacific naval operations. The battles were the first time two naval fleets engaged one another by air and not by sea. At Coral Sea, the U.S. Navy blocked the Japanese threat to Australia; Midway eliminated Japan’s advance toward Hawaii, while sinking three Japanese aircraft carriers which were irreplaceable, as Japan did not have the industrial capacity to replenish its fleet. The U.S., in contrast, was producing ships almost by the day.



Figure: Marines rest in the field on Guadalcanal

To dislodge Japan’s hold over the Pacific, the U.S. began attacking island after island, bypassing the strongest but seizing those capable of holding airfields to continue pushing Japan out of the region. Combat was vicious. At Guadalcanal Japanese soldiers launched suicidal charges rather than surrender. Many Japanese soldiers refused to be taken prisoner or to take prisoners themselves. Such tactics, coupled with American racial prejudice, turned the Pacific Theater into a much more brutal and barbarous conflict than battle in the European Theater.

In January 1943, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met at Casablanca to discuss the next step of the European war. The meeting leaders also declared that they expected nothing short of unconditional surrender from the Germans—to assure Stalin, who still did not trust the Allies to keep their word. At Casablanca, Churchill convinced Roosevelt to chase the Axis up the Italian peninsula, into the “soft underbelly” of Europe. Stalin preferred a cross-Channel invasion of France, but the British and Americans were not yet prepared in 1943. In July, Allied forces led by General Dwight Eisenhower crossed the Mediterranean and landed in Sicily. The Italian King dismissed and arrested Mussolini, who escaped with Germany’s help and established a fascist government in northern Italy. The south, however, switched sides and fought alongside the Allies for the rest of the war. However, the advance

northward toward Europe's "soft underbelly" turned out to be much tougher than Churchill had imagined. Italy's narrow, mountainous terrain and Mussolini's newly-formed fascist state gave the defending Axis the advantage. Movement up the peninsula was slow, and in some battles, conditions returned to the trench-like warfare of World War I as the German armies fell back to new defensive positions, exhausting Allied forces in one battle after another. It would take nearly a year to capture Rome, and northern Italy was not liberated until the last weeks of the war in 1945.



Figure: Dresden after the bombing raid, February 1945.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) sent thousands of bombers to England and North Africa in preparation for a massive strategic bombing campaign against Germany—another move to assure Stalin the Allies were opening a "second front" against Germany. The Allies' plan was to bomb German cities around the clock. Initially, U.S. bombers focused on destroying German ball-bearing factories, rail yards, oil fields, and manufacturing centers during the day because the U.S. was reluctant to target civilians in terror bombings. However, after the London Blitz, the British felt no compunction against retaliating in kind, and carpet-bombed German cities at night. By the end of 1944, the Americans joined the British in the same strategy, bombing urban industrial targets despite massive civilian casualties. The joint RAF-USAAF bombing of the industrial city, Dresden, in February 1945, dropped 3,900 tons of high explosives on the city, causing a firestorm that killed 25,000 civilians.



Figure: B-29 "Super-fortress" in flight during World War II.

Flying in formation, the air squadrons initially flew unescorted, since many believed that "flying fortress" bombers equipped with defensive firepower flew too high and too fast to be attacked. However, advanced German technology allowed fighters to easily shoot down the lumbering bombers. German fighter planes shot down almost half of American and British aircraft until long-range escort fighters were developed that allowed the bombers hit their targets while fighters confronted opposing German aircraft.

Historians still debate the effectiveness of the Allied bombing campaign against both Germany and Japan, and the overall usefulness of bombing civilians in World War II. The Germans actually increased production of war materiel during the war, relocating factories and streamlining production. German and Japanese civilians, like the Londoners in 1940, learned to live with

aerial attacks instead of rising up to overthrow their own governments and sue for peace. Critics of terror-bombing argue that targeting civilians rarely results in surrender, and instead often stiffens a country's resolve to fight on and inflict the same terror on its foe.



Figure: The "Big Three": From left to right: Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill on the portico of the Russian Embassy during the Tehran Conference to discuss the European Theatre in 1943.

In the wake of the Soviet victory at Stalingrad, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met in Tehran in November 1943. Dismissing Africa and Italy as a sideshow, Stalin demanded that Britain and the United States invade France to support the Soviet advance on the Eastern Front. Churchill was hesitant, but Roosevelt was eager. The invasion was tentatively scheduled for May 1944. The leaders also began post-war planning, considering the best ways to prevent another world war and Great Depression. The Allies had already begun calling themselves the "United Nations," especially as Latin American republics and other countries began joining the fight against the Axis. In April 1945, diplomats gathered in San Francisco to design a way for the United Nations to address world problems in a post-war world.

To avoid another Great Depression and to reconstruct war-torn nations, in 1944 the Allies also sent representatives to the Bretton Woods resort in New Hampshire to forge new international financial, trade, and developmental relationships. The results of both conferences will be discussed below, but it is important to notice that both international meetings were held in the United States. Americans had become convinced that isolationism was not longer a practical foreign policy, and the world recognized that the U.S. was going to be instrumental in a post-war effort to keep the peace.

### Questions for Discussion

- How did the different wartime experiences of the Allies influence the goals of the "Big Three" leaders, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt?
- If terror-bombing civilian populations is ineffective, why did everyone continue doing it?



Figure: The photograph “Into the Jaws of Death” shows American troops, part of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division, leaving a Higgins Boat on Omaha Beach.

On the same day the American army entered Rome, American, British and Canadian forces launched Operation Overlord, the long-awaited invasion of France. D-Day, as it became known, was the largest amphibious assault in history. American general Dwight Eisenhower was uncertain enough of the attack’s chances that the night before the invasion he wrote two speeches: one for success and one for failure. Using over 5,000 landing and assault craft, about 160,000 men crossed the English Channel on D-Day. The Allied landings at Normandy were successful, and by the end of the month 875,000 Allied troops had arrived in France. Paris was liberated in late August.

Allied bombing sorties intensified, continuing to level German cities and reduce Axis industrial capacity. The Royal Air Force estimated that the Allies destroyed more than half of the “built up areas” in seven of the ten German cities with more than 500,000 residents. The RAF’s goal, similar to that of Germany during the Blitz, was for bombing to be “focused on the morale of the enemy civil population and in particular of the industrial workers.” The USAAF flew over 750,000 bomber sorties and dropped nearly a million and a half tons of bombs. Up to five hundred thousand German civilians were killed by allied bombing.



Figure: British Sherman “Firefly” tank in Namur on the Meuse River, December 1944

The Nazi armies were crumbling on both fronts. Hitler tried to turn the war in his favor in the west. The Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 and January 1945 was the largest and deadliest single battle fought by U.S. troops in the war. The desperate Germans failed to drive the Allies back from the Ardennes forests to the English Channel, but the delay cost the western-front Allies the winter. The invasion of Germany would have to wait, while the Soviet Union continued its relentless push from the east, ravaging German populations in retribution for German war crimes. German counterattacks failed to prevent the Soviet advance and 1945 dawned with the end of European war in sight.



Figure: The Big Three met at Yalta in February 1945 to discuss their joint occupation of Germany and plans for postwar Europe.

In February 1945, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met again at Yalta, located on the Crimean Peninsula in the Black Sea. Roosevelt and Churchill were anxious for Soviet help in defeating Japan; the atom bomb was months away from being tested and no one knew whether it would work. Stalin agreed to join the fight in Asia against Japan three months after peace was declared in Europe.

The three leaders discussed their own long-range strategic interests at Yalta. Stalin, whose country had sacrificed the most in the war, insisted on defending the Soviet Union from future invasion by occupying Eastern Europe. Remembering British and U.S. support of the White Russians in the Civil War he had fought in the 1920s, Stalin distrusted his temporary allies against Germany. Partly to destabilize the capitalist nations he distrusted, and partly because he was still a dedicated revolutionary, Stalin also wanted to continue to promote communism around the world.

Churchill, for his part, continued to believe that the colonial European empires in Africa and Asia should continue as before (the French also supported this position). Roosevelt's main interest was maintaining the economic boom that had pulled the United States out of the Great Depression through free international trade. The war had put people back to work and the nation was at near full employment. Since U.S. was not bombed, American industry was in a position to supply the world and American firms to dominate world markets. Although the three nations shared the victory in World War Two, in the long run, the United States "defeated" its allies. The European empires Churchill hoped to save were ended by the 1960s with the independence of Asian and African colonies and Stalin's Soviet Union and domination of Eastern Europe dramatically collapsed in 1989-1991. Roosevelt's position was the most successful in the long run. Free trade exists throughout the world, and is currently embraced by industrially-developing nations as a means for economic growth. However, nothing lasts forever: the United States is beginning to lose its position as the leader of the capitalist world—we will discuss this change in a later chapter.




Figure: In an arranged photo commemorating the meeting of the Soviet and American armies, 2nd Lt. William Robertson (U.S. Army) and Lt. Alexander Silvashko (Red Army) stand facing one another with hands clasped and arms around each other's shoulders.

Soviet troops reached Germany in January 1945, and the Americans crossed the Rhine in March. In late April, American and Soviet troops met at the Elbe River while the Soviets pushed relentlessly to reach Berlin first and took the capital city in May. A few days before their arrival, Hitler and his high command committed suicide in a city bunker. Germany was conquered and the European war was over.

A changed set of Allied leaders met again at Potsdam, Germany. Of the "Big Three" who had met at Yalta, only Stalin was at Potsdam for the whole conference. Roosevelt had died of natural causes in early April and Churchill was replaced by new Prime Minister Clement Atlee in the early days of the meeting when his Conservative Party was defeated at the polls by the Labour Party. The leaders agreed that Germany would be divided into pieces according to current Allied occupation, with Berlin likewise divided.

**Questions for Discussion**

- D-Day is an iconic moment for Americans. What do you think similar moments would be for Britain and the Soviet Union?
- Why did the U.S. and U.S.S.R. race to reach Berlin?

## The Holocaust

We have already seen the application of fascist ideology in murderous atrocities against "inferior people" by the Italians in Ethiopia and the Japanese in China in the early years of World War Two. Nazi anti-Semitism had revealed its violent aspects in *Kristallnacht* in 1938, but was even more viciously applied once German armies began conquering Eastern Europe. Ten percent of Poland's pre-war population was Jewish, about 3 million people, who had been subjected to discrimination by the authoritarian Polish government in the 1930s. However, under German occupation, Jews were forced into overcrowded ghettoes in certain Polish cities. The areas captured by the *Wehrmacht* in the western Soviet Union during Operation Barbarossa added millions of Jews to Nazi-occupied Europe. While Hitler and his government had briefly considered sending Jews to far-off exile outside of Europe, ultimately the *Führer* decided that their physical elimination was necessary—a "Final Solution" to the "Jewish Problem." Mass shootings by specialized troops called *Einsatzgruppen* accompanied the invasion of the Soviet Union. In October 1941, outside of the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, Jewish men were forced to dig mass pits in the Babi Yar ravine into which they and their families were herded naked and shot by *Einsatzgruppen* and Ukrainian collaborators. Babi Yar was among the largest mass shootings of the war.



Figure: Officer executes those who survived the initial shooting, October 1942.

During Operation Barbarossa, the Germans also captured millions of Soviet troops, who they herded into prisoner-of-war camps and basically starved to death. At least two million Soviet soldiers died this way. Non-Russians in these camps, Balts and Ukrainians, were given the option to join special guard units and collaborate with the Germans. As the mass shootings took their psychological toll on German soldiers and guardsmen, these non-Germans were called upon to murder Jewish civilians and patrol the ghettoes and concentration camps.

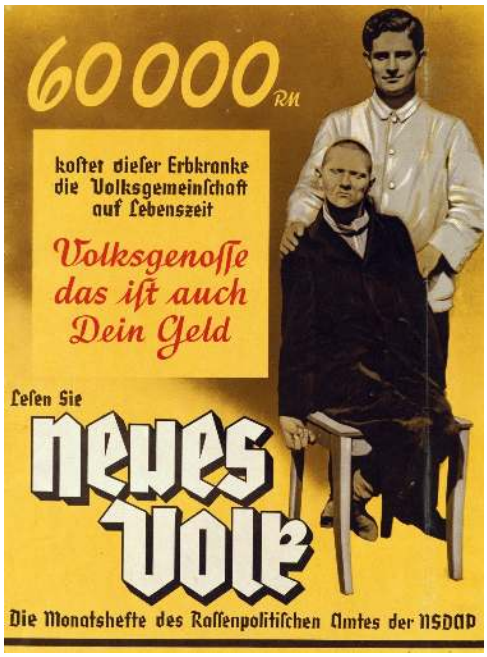



Figure: Poster published by Neues Volk (“New People”), a magazine published monthly by the Office of Racial Policy of the Nazi Party. The poster says: “60,000 RM is what this person suffering from hereditary illness costs the community in his lifetime. Fellow citizen, that is your money too.”

Even before the war began, “mercy killing” had become a Nazi policy in German psychiatric and mental institutions, where those with physical and mental disabilities were denied care and murdered. Shortly after defeating Poland, Hitler ordered the elimination of all “defectives”. The staffs of these hospitals experimented with mass killing through carbon monoxide being pumped into buses and discovered a new use for a rodent repellent called “Zyklon B.” These methods were soon applied at specially-built

extermination camps in the Eastern Europe, the first opening in early 1942. Jews were packed into railroad cattle-cars and taken to these camps, where they were told that they were going to “showers,” but instead were sealed in and gassed. “Work Jews” were assigned to cremate the remains, until they too were exterminated.



Figure: A page from Anne Frank’s first diary, 1942.

With the establishment of the extermination camps, the Germans began “relocating” Jews from France and other occupied areas in Western Europe by rail to the East. In all countries of occupied Europe, some Jews were saved by their Christian neighbors, hidden in attics, barns, and even in churches and monasteries until the end of the war. But even then, they were not always safe. The German-Jewish Frank family had moved to the Netherlands to escape the Nazi regime in late 1933. They had hoped that Holland would be a safe haven in a new European war since it had remained neutral in World War One. However, the Germans occupied the country along with Belgium and France in 1940, and by 1942, were sending Dutch Jews in transports to the East. The Frank family was able to hide in an annex with others, supplied with food and news of the war by a group of Dutch friends active in the underground resistance. However, they were discovered by German authorities in August 1944, and sent off to the camps. Young Anne Frank had kept a diary during their two years in hiding, and her father, who survived the war, published it in 1947. Although Anne Frank’s diary has become one of the most important records of the Holocaust, the Germans themselves were good at keeping records of their actions against Jews and others. New details emerge frequently of the extent and reach of the Holocaust, concentration camps, and slave labor. Despite the efforts of some to deny the Holocaust, there is no doubt: it really happened.

However, during the war itself, it was difficult for the Allies to believe rumors and reports they were receiving of atrocities, mass executions, and death camps in Nazi-occupied Europe. Polish resistance fighter Jan Karski was smuggled into the Warsaw ghetto and a transit camp in order to witness how the Jews were treated. He saw teenage Hitler Youth members walking into the ghetto to casually murder a Jew or two and Jewish families destined for extermination packed into rail cars. It was difficult for Roosevelt, Churchill and others to believe his report, given in-person in Washington and London. When Karski described what he had seen to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, a Jewish-American, Frankfurter replied, “I know you are telling the truth, but I don’t believe you”; expressing the world’s incredulity that the Germans could perpetrate such atrocities.



Figure: Fritz Klein, the camp doctor, standing in a mass grave at Bergen-Belsen after the camp's liberation by the British 11th Armoured Division, April 1945

As the Allies pushed into Germany and Poland, they uncovered the full extent of Hitler's genocidal policies. The Allies liberated elaborate camp systems set up for the imprisonment, forced labor, and extermination of the Jews and other "undesirables" including Roma ("gypsies"), political prisoners, members of the resistance, individuals from the LGBT community, and pacifists. Allied officers often forced German civilians to visit the camps in their towns and regions in order to witness the consequences of Nazi and fascist ideology that the "other" must be eliminated. Since then, Germany has been forced to come to terms with this history, and most Germans have tried to confront their past honestly. This effort has been unusual: not only have the Turks, Japanese, and others not addressed their actions, white treatment of non-white populations has often been passed over. Europeans intentionally mass murdering other Europeans, and using industrial methods, was unacceptable. The atrocities of Europeans against colonized peoples in Africa, Asia, and the American West seemed more acceptable, and were rarely addressed, due to a legacy of institutionalized racism. But the violence was very real to the Congolese, Native Americans, Indians, and U.S. Blacks.

The attempted elimination of the entire Jewish population in Europe has had other geopolitical effects. The Holocaust seemed to prove the Zionist thesis correct: that the Jews would never be safe unless they established their own homeland. This was achieved in Israel three years after the war ended in Europe; but not, as we shall see, without long-term consequences for the Palestinian Arabs and the rest of the Middle East. News of the death of six million Jews was especially difficult for Jewish-Americans, who suddenly realized that they were nearly the last surviving remnant of an ancient people after their relatives and loved ones were murdered in Hitler's camps. Previously Jewish life had been centered in Poland and the Ukraine; now it was in the United States and Israel.

Questions for Discussion

- Why was the German killing of 11 million people in the Holocaust so difficult for people to believe?
- What do you think motivates people who insist the Holocaust didn't happen?

## Pacific War




Figure: U.S. postage stamp, 1945 issue, commemorating the Battle of Iwo Jima.

As the Allies, especially the Americans, celebrated V-E (Victory in Europe) Day, they redirected their full attention to the still-raging Pacific War. In 1944 and 1945, the Japanese military continue to fight tenaciously in defeat after defeat. Few battles were as one-sided as the Battle of the Philippine Sea in June 1944, a Japanese counterattack that the Americans called the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot for the number of planes and vessels that they sank. At Iwo Jima, an eight-square-mile island of volcanic rock upon which the Americans wanted to build an airfield from which to attack Japan, seventeen thousand Japanese soldiers held the island against seventy thousand Marines for over a month. At the cost of nearly their entire force, they inflicted almost thirty thousand casualties before the island was lost in early 1945.

By that time, American heavy bombers were in range of the Japanese homeland. Bombers hit Japan's industrial facilities but suffered high casualties. To spare bomber crews from dangerous daylight raids and to achieve maximum effect against Japanese morale, American bombers began night raids, dropping incendiary weapons that created massive firestorms consuming the wood-and-paper houses of the residential neighborhoods. Over sixty Japanese cities were fire-bombed; one hundred thousand civilians in Tokyo died in a single attack in March 1945.



Figure: The Imperial Japanese Army mobilized 1,780 middle school boys aged 14–17 years into front-line-service. They were named Tekketsu Kinnōtai, “Iron and Blood Imperial Corps”.

In June 1945, after eighty days of fighting and tens of thousands of casualties, the Americans captured the island of Okinawa. The homeland of Japan was open before them. Okinawa was a viable base from which to launch a full invasion of the Japanese homeland and end the war. Estimates varied, but given the tenacity of Japanese soldiers fighting on islands far from their home, some officials expected that an invasion of the Japanese mainland could cost half a million American casualties and kill millions of Japanese civilians.

Historians debate the many motivations that drove the Americans to use atomic weapons against Japan and many American officials criticized the decision at the time. Government leaders and military officials cited the casualty estimates of an invasion to justify their use. Early in the war, fearing that German scientists might develop an atomic bomb, the German-Hungarian-American physicist Leó Szilárd had written a letter to Franklin Roosevelt which Albert Einstein signed, warning of a nuclear-armed Hitler. After some debate, other American physicists acknowledged the possibility. The U.S. government responded in 1942 with the Manhattan Project, a hugely expensive, ambitious program to create a single weapon capable of leveling an entire city. Three years later, the Americans successfully exploded the world’s first nuclear device, Trinity, in New Mexico in July 1945 while Allied leaders were meeting in Potsdam. Physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the director of the Los Alamos Laboratory where the bomb was designed, later recalled that the event reminded him of a line from Hindu scripture: “Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds.”

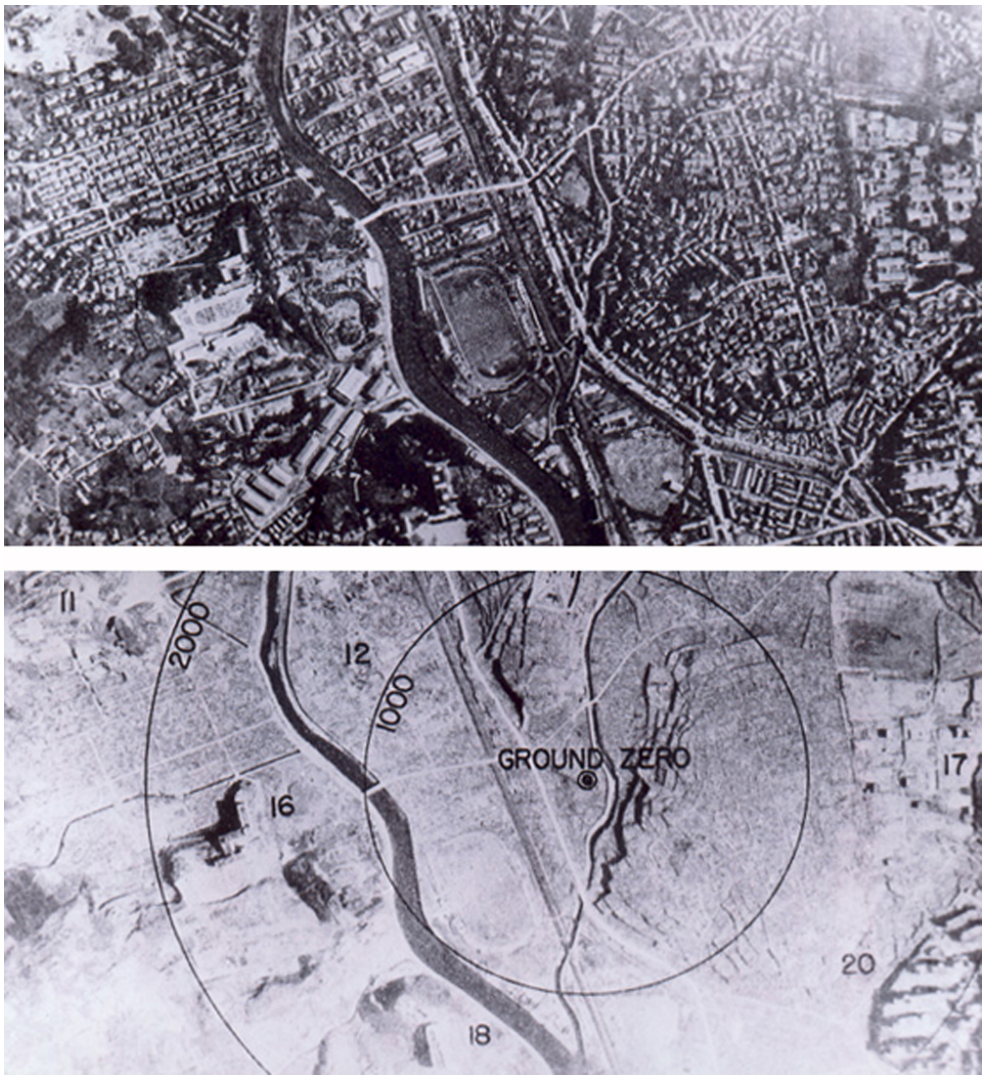



Figure: Nagasaki before and after the bombing and the fires.

Two more bombs, Little Boy and Fat Man, were quickly built and detonated over two Japanese cities in August. The Hiroshima bomb was dropped at 8:15 on the morning of August 6. Over one hundred thousand civilians were killed. On August 9, the second bomb, Fat Man, was scheduled to be dropped on the castle town of Kokura. But the town was obscured by clouds, so the mission proceeded to the secondary target, Nagasaki, an important port city on the southern island, Kyushu, with a population of about a quarter-million people. The Fat Man bomb detonated over the Mitsubishi munitions factory and the city arsenal. About eighty thousand civilians were killed.

In addition to the American atom bomb attacks, on August 9th, Soviet forces invaded Manchuria and overthrew the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo. On August 10th, Japanese cabinet ministers agreed to the Allied terms for surrender. Emperor Hirohito endorsed their decision on August 15 and announced the surrender of Japan. On September 2, aboard the battleship USS Missouri, delegates from the Japanese government formally signed their surrender. World War II was finally over.

### Questions for Discussion

- How was the Pacific war different from the European war?
- Was the U.S. justified in dropping atomic bombs on Japan?



Figure: Assembly plant of the Bell Aircraft Corporation at Wheatfield, New York (directly East of Niagara Falls).

Economies win wars as much as militaries. The war effort converted American factories to wartime production, restored America’s economy to full employment, armed the Allies and American forces, pulled America out of the Great Depression, and ushered in an era of unparalleled economic prosperity. Roosevelt’s New Deal had ameliorated the worst of the Depression, but the economy was still limping its way forward. When Europe fell into war, Americans were glad to sell the Allies arms and supplies. And then Pearl Harbor changed everything. The United States drafted the economy into war service. The “sleeping giant” mobilized its unrivaled economic capacity to wage worldwide war. Government agencies such as the War Production Board and the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion managed production for the war effort and economic output exploded. An economy that had been unable to provide work for a quarter of the workforce less than a decade earlier now struggled to fill vacant positions.

Although Franklin Roosevelt had already embraced the ideas of economist John Maynard Keynes on using deficit spending to jump-start the economy, the war wiped away any resistance among conservatives. Government spending during the four years of war doubled all federal spending in all of American history up to that point. The federal budget deficit soared, but, just as Keynes had predicted, the government’s massive intervention annihilated unemployment and propelled growth. The economy that came out of the war looked nothing like the one that had begun it.




Figure: An anti-hoarding, pro-rationing poster from the US Office of Price Administration in World War II.

Military production came at the expense of the civilian consumer economy. Appliance and automobile manufacturers converted their plants to produce weapons and vehicles. Consumer choice was sacrificed to patriotic duty. Every American received rationing cards and goods such as gasoline, coffee, meat, cheese, butter, processed food, firewood, and sugar could not be purchased without them. New house-building was shut down and cities became overcrowded. But the wartime economy boomed. The Roosevelt administration urged citizens to save their earnings or buy war bonds to prevent inflation. Bond drives headlined by Hollywood celebrities were hugely successful. They not only funded much of the war effort, they helped tame inflation as well. So too did high tax rates. The federal government raised income taxes and boosted the top marginal tax rate to 94 percent.

President Roosevelt and his administration encouraged all able-bodied American men *and* women to help the war effort. He considered the role of women in the war critical for American victory, and the public expected women to free men for active military service. While most women opted to remain at home or volunteer with charitable organizations, many went to work or put on a military uniform. World War II brought unprecedented labor opportunities for American women. Industrial labor, normally dominated by men, shifted to women for the duration of wartime mobilization. Women got jobs in new munitions factories. The image of Rosie the Riveter inscribed with the phrase “We Can Do It!” encouraged female factory labor during the war. And over a million administrative jobs at the local, state, and national levels were transferred from men to women for the duration of the war; often permanently.




Figure: “We Can Do It!” by J. Howard Miller was made as an inspirational image to boost worker morale.

For women who chose not to work in factories or government service, many volunteer opportunities presented themselves. The American Red Cross, the largest charitable organization in the nation, encouraged women to volunteer with local city chapters. Millions of women organized community social events for families, packed and shipped almost half a million tons of medical supplies, and prepared twenty-seven million care packages for American and other Allied prisoners of war. The American Red Cross required all female volunteers to certify as nurse’s aides, providing an extra benefit and work opportunity for hospital staffs that suffered severe personnel losses.




Figure: A recruiting poster of the SPARS during World War II

Military service was another option for women who wanted to join the war effort. Over 350,000 women served in several all-female units of the military branches. The Army and Navy Nurse Corps Reserves, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the Navy's Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, the Coast Guard's SPARs (named for the Coast Guard motto, Semper Paratus, "Always Ready"), and Marine Corps units gave women the opportunity to serve as either commissioned officers or enlisted members at military bases at home and abroad. The Nurse Corps Reserves commissioned 105,000 army and navy nurses recruited by the American Red Cross. Military nurses worked at base hospitals, mobile medical units, and onboard hospital ships.

However, despite all the wartime and postwar celebration of Rosie the Riveter, when the war ended men returned home and most women lost their jobs. Many former military women faced difficulty obtaining veteran's benefits during their transition to civilian life. The nation that called for assistance to millions of women during the four-year crisis seemed unprepared to accommodate their postwar needs and demands. But many women who had answered the call refused to step back into the shadows and pushed forward, igniting a struggle that eventually became the Women's Movement.



Figure: A. Phillip Randolph in 1942.

In early 1941, months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the largest black trade union in the nation, had made headlines by threatening President Roosevelt with a march on Washington, D.C. In this “crisis of democracy,” Randolph said, defense industries refused to hire African Americans and the armed forces remained segregated. In exchange for Randolph calling off the march, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, banning racial and religious discrimination in defense industries and establishing the Fair Employment Practice Committee to monitor defense industry hiring practices. While the armed forces remained segregated throughout the war, the order showed that the federal government could stand against discrimination. The black workforce in defense industries rose from 3 percent in 1942 to 9 percent in 1945.

More than one million African Americans fought in the war. Most blacks served in segregated, noncombat units led by white officers. Some gains were made, however. The number of black officers increased from five in 1940 to over seven thousand in 1945. And all-black fighter and bomber squadrons, known as the Tuskegee Airmen, completed more than 1,500 missions and earned several hundred merits and medals. Black pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group painted the tails of their P-47 Thunderbolts red and many bomber crews specifically requested the “Red Tail Angels” as escorts. Near the end of the war, the army and navy began integrating some of their units and facilities, before the U.S. government finally ordered the full integration of its armed forces in 1948.



Figure: Three African-American workers complete the pilot’s compartment of an aircraft, 1942.

While some black Americans served in the armed forces, others on the home front became riveters and welders, rationed food and gasoline, and bought victory bonds. Many black Americans saw the war as an opportunity not only to serve their country but to improve it. The Pittsburgh Courier, a leading black newspaper, spearheaded the “Double V” campaign. It called on African Americans to fight and win two wars: the war against Nazism and fascism abroad and the war against racial inequality at home. To achieve double victory and “real democracy,” the Courier encouraged its readers to enlist in the armed forces or volunteer on the home front, and fight against racial segregation and discrimination. During the war, membership in the NAACP jumped tenfold, from fifty thousand to five hundred thousand. The Congress of Racial Equality, formed in 1942, proposed nonviolent direct action to achieve desegregation. Between 1940 and 1950, 1.5 million southern blacks also demonstrated their opposition to racism and violence by migrating out of the Jim Crow South to the North. But transitions were not easy. Racial tensions erupted in 1943 in a series of riots in cities such as Mobile, Beaumont, and Harlem. The bloodiest race riot occurred in Detroit and resulted in the death of twenty-five blacks and nine whites. Still, the war ignited in African Americans an urgency for equality that they would carry with them into the subsequent years.

Questions for Discussion

- How were the experiences of women and African Americans during the war similar?
- How were they different?

Many Americans had to navigate American prejudice, and America's entry into the war left foreign nationals from the enemy nations in a precarious position. The Federal Bureau of Investigation targeted many on suspicions of disloyalty for detainment, hearings, and internment under the Alien Enemy Act. Those sentenced to internment were sent to government camps surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards. Early internments were based on determinations of probable cause. Then, on February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the removal of any persons from "exclusion zones" which ultimately covered nearly a third of the country at the discretion of military commanders.




Figure: 1942 propaganda cartoon in the New York newspaper PM by Dr. Seuss depicting Japanese Americans in California, Oregon, and Washington–states with the largest population of Japanese Americans–as prepared to conduct sabotage against the U.S.

Thirty thousand Japanese Americans fought for the United States in World War II, but wartime anti-Japanese sentiment built on long-standing prejudices. Under Roosevelt's order, both immigrants and American citizens of Japanese descent were rounded up and placed in prison camps under the custody of the War Relocation Authority. They lost their jobs and homes. Over ten thousand German nationals and a smaller number of Italian nationals were interned at various times in the United States during World War II, but American policies disproportionately targeted Japanese-descended populations, and individuals did not receive personalized reviews prior to their internment. This policy of mass exclusion and detention affected over 110,000 Japanese and Japanese-descended individuals. Seventy thousand were American citizens. In a 1982 report, a congressional commission concluded that the causes of Japanese internment had been "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." Although the exclusion orders were found to have been constitutionally permissible based on claims of national security, they were later judged unjust, even by the military and judicial leaders. In 1988, President Reagan signed an Act that formally apologized for internment and provided reparations to surviving internees.

But if actions taken during war would be regretted, so would inactions. As the Allies pushed into Germany and Poland, they uncovered the full extent of Hitler's genocidal policies. The Allies discovered massive camp systems set up for the imprisonment, forced labor, and extermination of all those *Untermenschen* (literally under-people) deemed racially, ideologically, or biologically "unfit" to live in a Nazi-ruled Europe. As Russian and American troops liberated concentration and death camps, they discovered the Holocaust, the Nazi state's systematic murder of eleven million civilians, including six million Jews. But, like the Rape of Nanjing, the Holocaust was not a secret from those who chose to face facts. By the end of the war it had been under way for years. How did America respond?

Initially, American officials had expressed little official concern for Nazi persecutions. As the first signs of trouble became clear in the late 1930s, the State Department and most U.S. embassies did little to aid European Jews. President Roosevelt publicly spoke out against persecution and even withdrew the U.S. ambassador to Germany after *Kristallnacht*, the pogrom against German Jews in 1938 that had caused even former German Kaiser Wilhelm II to say "For the first time, I am ashamed to be German." Roosevelt pushed for the 1938 Evian Conference in France, where international leaders discussed the Jewish refugee problem and worked to expand Jewish immigration quotas. But the conference came to nothing, and the United States turned away countless Jewish

refugees who requested asylum in the United States. In 1939, the German ship St. Louis, carrying over nine hundred Jewish refugees, could not find a country that would take them. Passengers were not granted visas under the U.S. quota system. The ship cabled Roosevelt for special permission, but the president said nothing. The St. Louis was forced to return to Europe. Hundreds of its passengers would perish in the Holocaust.

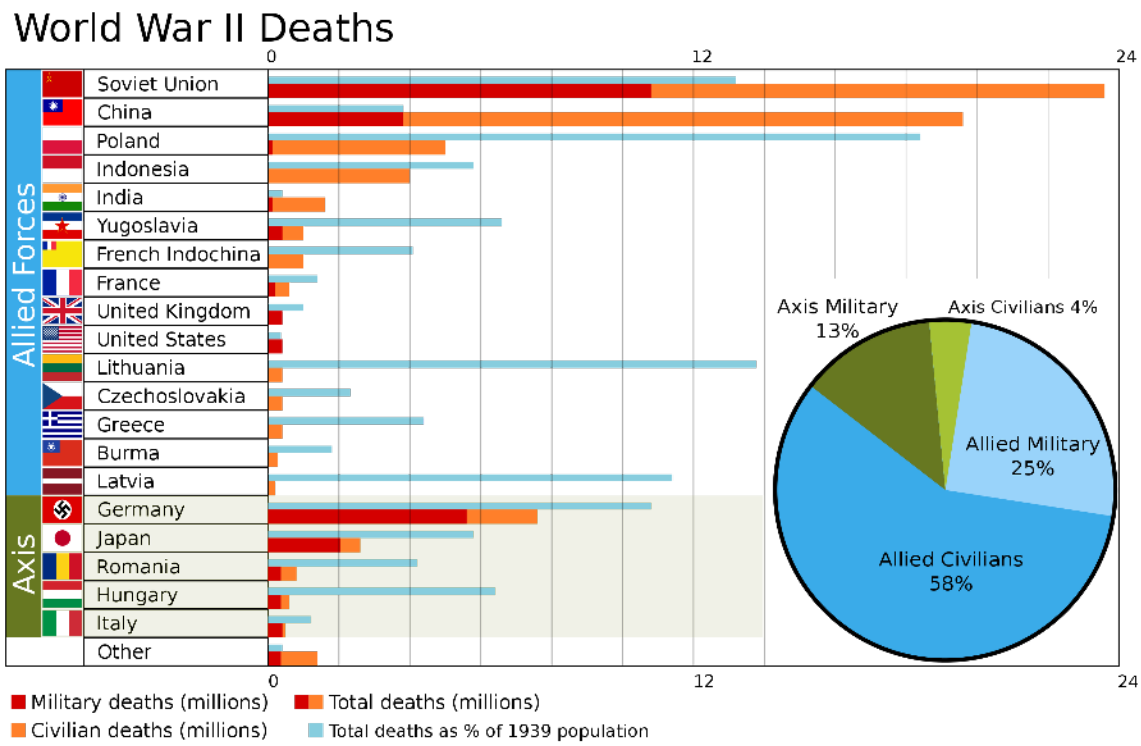


Figure: “Selection” of Hungarian Jews on the ramp at Auschwitz II-Birkenau in German-occupied Poland, around May 1944. Jews were sent either to work or to the gas chamber.

Anti-Semitism still permeated the United States. Even if Roosevelt wanted to do more, he decided the political price for increasing immigration quotas as too high. After *Kristallnacht*, in 1939, Congress debated a bill to allow twenty thousand German-Jewish children into the United States. First lady Eleanor Roosevelt endorsed the measure, but the president remained publicly silent. The bipartisan bill was introduced by a Democratic senator and a Republican representative and supported by religious and labor groups, but was opposed by nationalist organizations. It never came to a vote in the Senate because it was blocked by a North Carolina Democrat whose support Roosevelt needed on military spending bills. The president, anxious to protect the New Deal and his rearmament programs, was unwilling to expend political capital to save foreign children that even leaders of his own party had little interest in protecting.

**Question for Discussion**

How did racism and prejudice affect the U.S. response to the Jewish refugee problem and Japanese internment?




The US was lucky that none of the war was fought on American soil, but 419,400 US servicemen died in the conflict. World War II was the deadliest war in history. Military deaths were over 25 million, including 5 million prisoners of war who died in custody. The war also killed about 55 million civilians, including 28 million who died of war-related disease and famine. The number of wounded has not been accurately documented, but was probably similar to or greater than the death toll. More than half those casualties were in Russia and China. The Chinese death toll was at least 20 million. The Soviet Union lost 11,400,000 men in battle, 10 million civilians in war-related activities, and about 7 million through famine caused by the war, for a total of about 28 million. These losses amounted to about 14% of the U.S.S.R.'s 1940 population. Germany lost over 5 million soldiers and up to 3 million civilians.

Americans celebrated the end of the war after V-J Day in August 1945. At home and abroad, the United States wanted a postwar order that would guarantee global peace and domestic prosperity. Although the alliance of convenience with Stalin's Soviet Union would rapidly collapse, Americans nevertheless looked for the means to ensure postwar stability and economic security for returning veterans. The inability of the League of Nations to stop German, Italian, and Japanese aggressions caused many to question whether any global organization could effectively ensure world peace. Skeptics included Franklin Roosevelt, who, as Woodrow Wilson's undersecretary of the navy, had witnessed the rejection of The League's ideal of world governance by both the American people and the Senate.

In 1941, Roosevelt believed postwar security could best be maintained by an informal agreement between what he termed the Four Policemen: the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. But others, including Roosevelt's secretary of state Cordell Hull and British prime minister Winston Churchill, convinced the president to push for a new global organization. As the war ran its course, both Roosevelt and the American public came around to the idea of the United Nations. Pollster George Gallup noted a "profound change" in American attitudes. In 1937 only a third of Americans polled supported the idea of an international organization. But as war broke out in Europe, half of Americans did. America's entry into the war bolstered support, and by 1945, 81 percent of Americans favored the idea.




Figure: Eleanor Roosevelt with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1949.

And Franklin Roosevelt had always supported the ideals enshrined in the United Nations charter. In January 1941, he described Four Freedoms that all of the world's citizens should enjoy: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. Roosevelt signed the Atlantic Charter with Churchill, reinforcing those ideas and adding the right of self-determination and promising some sort of economic and political cooperation. Roosevelt first used the term united nations to describe the Allied powers, not the subsequent postwar organization. But the name stuck.

At Tehran in 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill convinced Stalin to send a Soviet delegation to a conference in August 1944, where they agreed on the basic structure of the new organization. It would have a Security Council consisting of the original Four Policemen and France, that would consult on how best to keep the peace and when to deploy the military power of the assembled nations. In a shift from the unarmed diplomacy of the League of Nations, the U.N. would have a military. The plan was a hybrid between Roosevelt's policemen idea and a global organization of equal representation. There would also be a General Assembly made up of all nations, an International Court of Justice, and a council for economic and social matters. The Soviets expressed concern over how the Security Council would work, but the powers agreed to meet again in San Francisco between April and June 1945 for further negotiations. There, on June 26, 1945, fifty nations signed the U.N. charter.

### Questions for Discussion

- Reflect on the death toll. Which nations paid the highest price? How might this affect their post-war attitudes in international negotiations?
- How did the United Nations attempt to be a more useful force for world peace?

Anticipating victory in World War II, American leaders not only planned the postwar global order, they planned for the returning servicemen. American politicians and business leaders wanted to avoid another economic depression by gradually easing returning veterans back into the civilian economy. The brainchild of William Atherton, the head of the American Legion, the G.I. Bill won support from progressives and conservatives alike. Passed in 1944, the G.I. Bill was a multibillion-dollar entitlement program that rewarded honorably-discharged veterans with a range of important benefits.

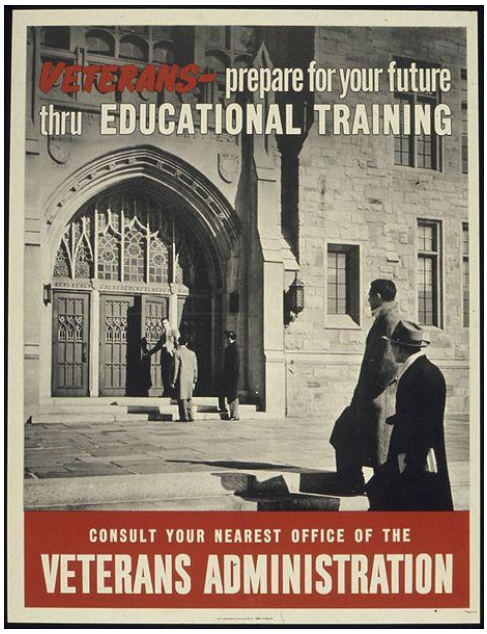


Figure: A government poster informing soldiers about the G.I. Bill

Faced with the prospect of over fifteen million members of the armed services (including approximately 350,000 women) suddenly returning to civilian life, the G.I. Bill offered a variety of incentives to slow their return to the civilian workforce as well as reward their service with public benefits. The legislation offered a year's worth of unemployment income for veterans unable to secure work. About half of American veterans (eight million) received a total of $4 billion in unemployment benefits over the life of the bill. The G.I. Bill also made a college education a reality for many. The Veterans Administration paid educational expenses including tuition, fees, supplies, and even stipends for living expenses, sparking a boom in higher education. Enrollments at accredited colleges, universities, technical, and professional schools spiked from 1.5 million in 1940 to 3.6 million in 1960. The VA disbursed over $14 billon in educational aid in just over a decade.

Furthermore, the G.I. Bill encouraged home ownership. Roughly 40 percent of Americans owned homes in 1945, but that figure climbed to 60 percent a decade after the close of the war. Because the bill did away with down payment requirements, veterans could obtain home loans for as little as $1 down. Close to four million veterans purchased homes through the G.I. Bill, sparking a construction bonanza that propelled postwar growth. In addition, the V.A. helped nearly two hundred thousand veterans buy farms and offered thousands more guaranteed financing for small businesses. The effects of the G.I. Bill were significant and long-lasting. It helped sustain the great postwar economic boom and established the hallmarks of American middle class life.

**Question for Discussion**

How much of a role do you think government assistance to veterans through the G.I. Bill played in the post-war era?

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# 1.11: Decolonization




Figure: Allied military personnel in Paris celebrating V-J Day on August 15, 1945

The defeat of Germany and Japan freed the people of the nations these two would-be empires had conquered, but it also caused people dominated by older empires to question the legitimacy of imperialism. In many of Europe's and the United States' imperial possessions, the struggle for independence had begun long before World War Two, however. As you'll recall from previous chapters, European and American justifications for empire included the claim that people such as Britain's subjects in India and the America's in the Philippines were unprepared to stand on their own as independent nations. This claim was undermined by the effectiveness of the Indians and Filipinos in World War II. Filipinos had proven their value as guerrilla fighters. The Japanese only managed to control twelve of the forty-eight provinces of the Philippines, and U.S. General Douglas MacArthur said, "Give me ten thousand Filipinos and I shall conquer the world!" And in imperial possessions like India, the "civilizing project" of empire for generations had including educating local administrators and training military and police forces. The leaders of national liberation often came out of these experiences reasoning that since they were already experienced at running their own nations as administrators for the empires, it was time for the imperialists to leave. Furthermore, the war was full of inspirational examples of Europeans and Asians who fought side by side against the fascist occupiers in their conquered nations. The process was accelerated by the strain of war on the European imperialists. France and the Netherlands had been conquered and themselves occupied as imperial subjects by the Germans, while the British were greatly weakened.



Figure: Winston Churchill waving the Victory sign to the crowd in Whitehall on the day he broadcast to the nation that the war with Germany had been won, 8 May 1945.

After the war, the nations that had been targeted by Germany (Britain, France, and the Netherlands) all attempted to separate their reaction to this attack from the response of colonial populations to their return. For instance, British leaders like Winston Churchill hoped and expected to expand their empire, which they now renamed a commonwealth, and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP) had no intention of giving back Iran's oil fields. This may seem a strange attitude for a nation that was having trouble feeding and housing its own population and leaned on U.S. aid like a crutch. But the British retained their sense of cultural superiority and convinced themselves that their help was still needed to "assist primitive peoples in their march to modernity."

The timing of national liberation was complicated by the growing conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, which was both a competition to dominate territory and control alliances as well as an ideological struggle between capitalism and communism. This conflict was known as the "Cold War," since the two countries never directly attacked one another. Instead they fought a series of proxy wars that occurred within the context of decolonization. Each superpower competed to recruit more new nations to their side, pouring military and economic aid into the new developing countries.




Figure: Propaganda poster depicting the Philippine resistance movement

Despite the Cold War, at times the process of independence was peacefully achieved through mutual agreement. In the Philippines, for example, the U.S. government handed over power to a local Filipino government within a year of ending the war with Japan. The Americans fully appreciated the sacrifices made by the Filipinos under Japanese occupation and the contributions they had made to their own liberation. President Harry Truman recognized the independence of the Philippines on July 4, 1946. In the days leading up to the announcement, the American and Filipino governments worked out arrangements allowing the U.S. to retain dozens of military bases and for American businesses to have preferential access to the raw materials and markets of the newly independent nation.

Sometimes, peaceful political pressure from organized movements also led to liberation. Indian independence, examined below, is the first and prime example of how non-violent protest, boycotts, and moral suasion could result in freedom. However, there are also many cases in which independence could only be achieved through a more violent guerrilla struggle, as European imperialists were unwilling to let go of their colonies despite the desires of the colonized.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why did leaders like Churchill believe they would be able to return to controlling their empires?
- Why did colonized people disagree?

## Independence and Partition in British India

One of the earliest examples of decolonization in the post-war era and one that affected an extremely large portion of the world's population was the British withdrawal from India. As mentioned earlier, India's long struggle for independence had been led by the India National Congress Party since the nineteenth century.



Figure: Indian infantrymen of the 7th Rajput Regiment about to go on patrol, 1944.

After 700,000 Indians fought for Britain in the Great war, over 2.5 million soldiers from India fought alongside the British in World War II. More than 87,000 of them were killed in action. The British Field Marshall in charge of the Indian Army from 1942 onward said Britain "couldn't have come through both wars [World War I and World War II] if they hadn't had the Indian Army." When Britain called Indians to arms a second time, the Muslim League supported the British recruitment. However, the Indian National Congress demanded independence before it would agree to help Britain again. When the Congress began a "Quit India" campaign in August 1942, the British imprisoned tens of thousands of leaders for the war's duration until June 1945. Mohandas Gandhi was among those jailed; he was released in May 1944 due to health concerns.



Figure: Bengal famine of 1943: Dead and dying children on a Calcutta street published in the Statesman, August 22, 1943.

British war strategy led to a major famine in Bengal in 1943 (modern-day Bangladesh, at the mouth of the Ganges River), and about 3 million people died of starvation. The Japanese invasion of Burma caused about a half million Indian Hindu refugees to flee to neighboring Bengal. At the same time, the British decided to adopt a "scorched-earth" policy in southern Bengal, burning thousands of boats and destroying rice crops so they would not fall into the hands of the Japanese, who they assumed would soon extend their invasion. Poor harvests and wartime inflation in late 1942-early 1943 sent internal rural refugees into Calcutta, the Bengali capital, exacerbating the crisis. The British War Cabinet stalled in sending needed grain to the starving Bengalis—perhaps as policy, perhaps because of the strain on wartime shipping. Very little sympathy was shown for the plight of the Bengalese by the leaders of Great Britain. When presented with evidence of the massive famine, Prime Minister Winston Churchill was incredulous, reportedly asking, "Why hasn't Gandhi died yet?"

Churchill was not only aware of Gandhi, he was aware of the importance to India to the British war effort. In addition to 2.5 million soldiers, the British government borrowed billions of pounds from India to finance the war. And India was no longer merely a site of famines, it was becoming a source of essential supplies. By the end of the war, India had become the world's fourth largest industrial power and its increased economic and military influence paved the way for independence from the British Empire in 1947.

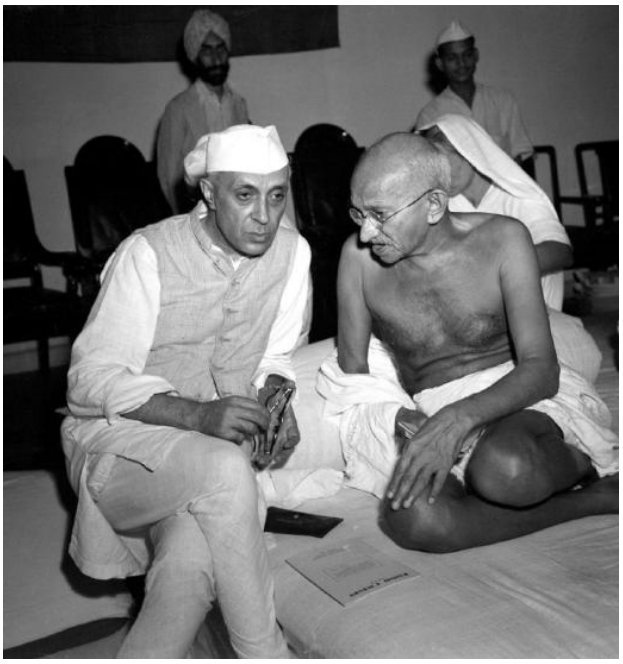


Figure: Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi in 1946

However, Indian independence was complicated by internal divisions, some exacerbated by the British themselves during many decades of imperial rule. In particular, the British had encouraged division between the majority Hindu and minority Muslim populations; sending Hindu troops to police the Muslims, and vice versa. Gandhi sought to eliminate the Hindu caste system which deprived the poorest Indians of hope. Castes were an integral part of Hinduism, but under British rule the system had been expanded and the number of divisions had been increased because the foreign rulers found it useful in their divide-and-conquer strategy.

Religious divisions seeped into the independence movement as well. While Gandhi simply wished for an independent, united India after the end of British rule, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League lobbied for the establishment of two states in the territory. Jinnah proposed the creation of a Hindu India and an Islamic "Pure Land" called Pakistan. Jinnah's position was embraced by Hindu nationalists who wanted to be rid of the Muslim minority. As independence was being negotiated after the war, escalating religious violence suggested that British withdrawal might result in a bloody civil war. Muslims and Hindus attacked each other in different towns and cities, so Congress Party leader Jawaharlal Nehru (who would become the first Prime Minister of India) accepted the partition of India from Pakistan. The new Muslim nation at the time included both the present territory of Pakistan in the west and the eastern region now called Bangladesh.

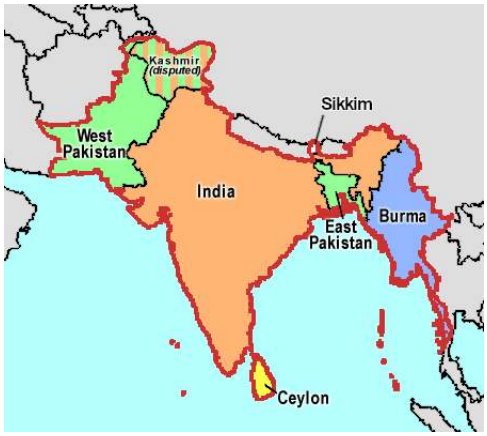



Figure: Four nations (India, Pakistan, Dominion of Ceylon, and Union of Burma) that gained independence in 1947 and 1948

After independence in August 1947, the partition created a central Hindu nation with two borders into Muslim Pakistan to the east and west. These new, arbitrarily-drawn borders resulted in the displacement of 12 million people, as the former British subjects fled

their homes to join the new nations that matched their religions. Millions died during the chaos of the migration and the refugee crises that followed. But even partition was not enough for some Hindu nationalists. Gandhi himself was assassinated by one such extremist shortly after he achieved his dream of independence, in January 1948.

Not only was partition an imperfect solution to religious differences the British empire had exacerbated, but the arbitrary borders were drawn hastily. The state of Kashmir in northern India is still disputed territory. In 1947, a local Hindu prince convinced the British that the majority-Muslim region should stay with India. The Government of Pakistan and many local Kashmiris continue to protest this, causing internal and external conflicts. Since both India and Pakistan are now nuclear nations, the ongoing Kashmir dispute is a legacy of imperialism that may still endanger regional or even global peace.

**Question for Discussion**

- In what ways were the British responsible for the antagonism between India and Pakistan since independence?

## Israel

India was not the only region of the world from which Britain walked away soon after World War Two. Another was Palestine. After World War I, Britain had been given a "mandate" to administer Palestine along with the oil-rich regions of Arabia and Iraq. Between the wars the British continued to allow Zionists, advocates of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, to purchase land and move into the region. Migration of Zionist Jews to the region had begun in the late nineteenth century. This "second wave" of Zionist settlers included dedicated socialists who created cooperative farms called *kibbutzim*, and urban Europeans who built cities like Tel Aviv—one of the prime examples of the *Bauhaus* architectural style popular in Germany in the 1920s. However, accelerating Zionist immigration increased tensions with the Palestinian Arabs who had lived in the region for centuries. Competition for land and water, as well as for political dominance, resulted in violent riots between Arabs and Zionists in 1921, and a longer Arab revolt in Palestine from 1936 to 1939.



Figure: Zina Dizengoff Circle in Tel Aviv in the 1940s.

As mentioned previously, the Nazi Holocaust seemed to prove the Zionist thesis: that Jews would never be safe in Europe and needed to establish their own homeland. The British considered a petition to allow 100,000 refugee survivors of the Nazi camps to resettle in Palestine, but hesitated due to opposition from Palestinian Arabs and the nearby Arab states. Zionist settlers had already formed a mutual defense force, the *Haganah*, in the 1920s. After the war, the *Haganah* turned to sabotage against the British occupation and organizing illicit arms shipments.



Figure: Israel's sixth prime minister, Menachem Begin, was Irgun leader at the time of the attack, though he claimed he was not present.

More radical terrorist organizations also formed, including the *Irgun*, which in 1946 bombed the British headquarters at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing 91 people. The *Irgun* also led a terror attack on the Palestinian town of Deir Hassin in 1948, in which over a hundred perished, including women and children. Despite apologies from more mainstream Zionist groups (and, later, the Israeli government), the Deir Hassin massacre has served as a rallying cry and a justification for terror attacks against Israelis by different Palestinian-related terrorist groups ever since.

In 1947, the British relinquished their "mandate" over Palestine to the new United Nations, which tried to develop a new map for a Jewish homeland—the new state of Israel—while taking into account the presence of the Arab Palestinians. The Zionists received more land than could be justified by their numbers at the time, as well as some of the more valuable agricultural and water resources. As the British withdrew in May 1948, Israel declared its independence based on the U.N. borders, which the both the local Arabs and the neighboring Arab countries had rejected. Israel's new neighbors immediately declared war, but the new nation had powerful allies and was willing to fight for its survival. Israel defended itself and actually extended its borders. The Israelis claimed they needed to have a wider defensive perimeter and that the Arab Palestinians had abandoned many of their towns anyway; which many had because they thought the Arabs would win a decisive victory. Israel eventually destroyed over 500 Arab villages and cleared out Arab neighborhoods in major cities, causing the over 800,000 "temporary" Muslim and Christian war refugees to seek more permanent shelter in neighboring Arab nations. A series of wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982 continued the conflict.




Figure: Israel expanding as Palestine shrinks, in an image produced by Palestinian activists.

With tenacity, superior organization, and a lot of aid from the United States and Europe, the Israelis held their own in these conflicts and embraced an ongoing expansion of the Israeli area of settlement in a policy of creating "facts on the ground." The Arab world, considering Israel an arbitrary creation of western powers, refused to recognize Israel as a legitimate state. Peace

processes with individual Arab nations have brought agreements and diplomatic recognition from Egypt in 1979, to whom Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula, taken in the 1967 war; and Jordan in 1994, which relinquished its claim to the Palestinian West Bank of the Jordan River.

Weariness with war and terror, and a desire to qualify for U.S. military and economic aid, have led the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Sudan to recognize Israel in 2020. But it is one thing to have recognition from a government, and another thing to be accepted as a nation by the "Arab Street". Ordinary Arab people are often tired of authoritarian rule in their own countries, and are more supportive of the Palestinian Arab cause than the governments ruling them.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Is it surprising that Palestinians resent Israel's existence?
- Do you think the major issue is anti-Semitism, when both Muslim *and* Christian Arabs have fought Israel?
- How might the extremely high level of financial and military Israel receives from the U.S. complicate Middle-eastern diplomacy for both the Israelis and the Americans?

## "British" Kenya

Although Great Britain had retreated relatively peacefully from India and had given up its control over Palestine voluntarily, this was not the universal pattern. Reluctance to abandon colonies was especially a problem in Africa, where there were British settlers rather than administrators. By the early twentieth century, 30,000 British settlers occupied all the best farmland in Kenya, which they had bought or had been assigned by the colonial government, leaving 5 million Kenyans without. The settlers were people something like the Dane Isek Dinesen, who wrote of her experiences in Kenya in her 1937 book *Out of Africa*, although most were generally less respectful and interested in the natives than she. More were like farmer Mike Blundell, a white man featured in a *Life* Magazine article who had arrived as an unskilled farm apprentice but because he was white had managed to get hold of 1200 acres of "virgin bush." Blundell despised the local Kikuyu tribes and believed the "Kukes" as he called them had only "come out of the trees" in the last 50 years, and probably as a result of contact with the whites. The attitude of British farmers in Kenya was much like the relationship two centuries earlier between English colonists in North America and the Native Americans.



Figure: Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta, 1966.

But this was the twentieth, not the eighteenth century. In Kenya, a resistance movement called Mau Mau began in 1952 when natives restricted to reservations in their own country revolted. After World War II, 1.25 million Kikuyu had 2,000 square miles of marginal farmland to feed themselves while 30,000 British settlers had 12,000 square miles in the fertile hills of the Central and Rift Valleys, where they grew cash crops like coffee using native labor. The Mau Mau uprising protested this injustice and the British colonial government responded. Declaring a state of emergency, the British moved about 450,000 Kikuyu to concentration camps and another million were restricted to "enclosed villages". Prisoners suspected of being Mau Mau fighters were often tortured by British troops (typically they were flogged to death, burned alive, or castrated). In June 1957 the British attorney general of the colony wrote to the governor that the mistreatment of captives was "distressingly reminiscent of conditions in Nazi Germany or Communist Russia." He reminded the governor, "if we are going to sin, we must sin quietly."

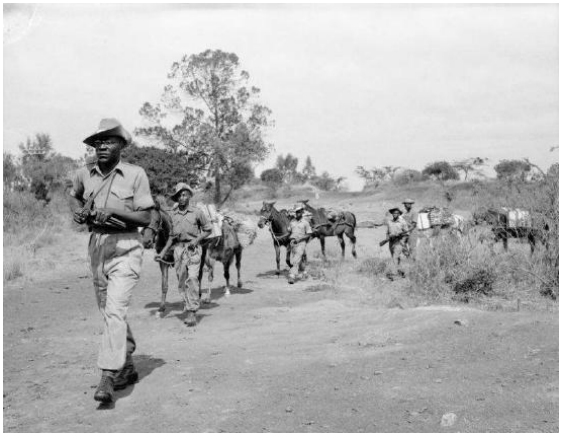


Figure: Troops of the King's African Rifles, supporting the white settler government during the Mau Mau Uprising, ca. 1953.

The uprising lasted until 1963, partly because white settlers could not easily abandon their property and go back to Britain. Power in Kenya eventually shifted from the British colonial government to a native government, initially made up of many members of the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) that had led the resistance. Its leader, Jomo Kenyatta, became Kenya's first indigenous Prime Minister from 1963 to 1964 and was President of Kenya and led the KANU party until his death in 1978. Kenyatta, like other leaders such as Gandhi and Ho Chi Minh, had travelled internationally. He attended the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Moscow as well as University College in London and the London School of Economics, although when the press mentioned him, they typically observed he had "studied in Russia". Kenyatta was imprisoned from 1954 to 1961 for allegedly leading the rebellion, and became leader of the party and the nation when released. Kenyatta initially tried to heal the nation by downplaying the atrocity of the recent war, and he welcomed the multinational corporations that dominated the Kenyan economy. The government helped African farmers buy out white landowners and expanded education and social support programs. Kenyatta was often accused of being a socialist, but he was also hated by the British settlers for being married to a white woman. His economic policies balanced capitalism and social welfare. Kenyatta was regarded by many Africans as a strong Pan-Africanist and was hailed as the Hero of the Kikuyu. The current (2020) president of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, is his son.

**Question for Discussion**

- Why might it be significant that revolutionaries like Kenyatta, Ho, and Gandhi were world travelers?

## "French" Algeria

The British were not the only Europeans to lose their colonial empires. Although France had been conquered and occupied by Germany, after the war the French fully expected to regain their colonial possessions in Africa and Asia and resume where they had left off. Their subject peoples in the colonies had different ideas. In Algeria, revolutionaries had been organizing to resist French imperialism since before the war. An Algerian People's Manifesto was published in 1943. On the morning of May 8, 1945, (the day that Nazi Germany surrendered, or VE Day), a parade of about 5,000 Muslim Algerians celebrating the war's end was met by armed French police. Marchers and police exchanged gunfire and during the battle people on both sides were shot. A few days later a smaller, peaceful protest by the Algerian People's Party was violently repressed by police. Rural Algerians responded by attacking ethnic French settlers, called *pieds noirs*, killing 102 Europeans. The French retaliated, killing between 6,000 and 30,000 Algerians.

A video element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can watch it online here: https://mlpp.pressbooks.pub/modernworldhistory/?p=79

The Algerians did not forget this massacre and nearly a decade later, on November 1, 1954, Algerian guerrilla forces attacked civilian and military targets throughout the country. The National Liberation Front (FLN), encouraged by the fact France had just lost their colony of French Indochina, called on Muslims in Algeria to join in the struggle for independence. The FLN applied guerrilla "hit and run" tactics as well as terrorism and torture of both French *pieds noirs* and Africans suspected of supporting the regime. The French were equally brutal, and by 1956 there were more than 400,000 French troops in Algeria.



Figure: Barricades in Algiers, January 1960. The banner reads, “Long live Massu” (Vive Massu).

The war lasted eight years and killed over a million people. The French military lost 25,000 troops and about 3,000 European civilians were killed. French officials estimated the Algerian death toll at 350,000, but other French and Algerian estimates range from 960,000 to 1.5 million. The United States recognized Algeria’s independence in September 1962 and the country became the 109th member of the U.N. in October.

**Question for Discussion**

- How might the scope of European retaliation, killing about ten Africans for every European killed, have effected world public opinion?

## “French” Indochina



Figure: Hồ Chí Minh also known as Nguyễn Ái Quốc, about 1947.

France had also expected to return to power in its colonies in French Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia), but the people living there also had other ideas. Revolutionaries were led by Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969), who as a young man had worked as a kitchen helper on a steamship from Saigon to Marseille in 1911. Ho actually applied to the French Colonial Administrative School in Marseille, but his application was rejected and he returned to working on ships and traveling the world for another five years (it’s interesting to imagine how history would have been different if he had been accepted). He visited the U.S. several times in his travels and later claimed to have met Black nationalist Marcus Garvey. Ho worked in England and France between 1913 and 1919. He joined a group of Vietnamese nationalists in Paris, and at the end of World War I, the group petitioned at the Versailles peace talks for recognition of the civil rights of Vietnamese people, citing Woodrow Wilson’s statements about self-determination in the famous “14 Points” speech. Ho wrote a letter to Wilson, but the American President ignored him.

Rebuffed, Ho continued living in France in the early 1920s, meeting socialists and becoming a founding member of the French Communist Party. Ho began to write articles that were noticed in Moscow and he was invited to visit the Soviet Union. In 1923, Ho studied at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Moscow before moving to Guangzhou China in 1924. When

Chiang Kai-shek cracked down on communists in China, Ho returned to Moscow and then moved on to Thailand. In late 1929 he moved through India to Shanghai and Hong Kong. By this time, he was becoming well-known in revolutionary circles. Ho was arrested in Hong Kong in 1931 but escaped and returned to Russia.



Figure: Hồ Chí Minh (third from left, standing) with the OSS in 1945.

In 1938 Ho returned to China as an advisor to the Chinese Communist army. In 1941 he returned to Vietnam to lead the independence movement there. The Japanese invasion created an opportunity for the patriots, who were aided in their resistance of the Japanese and Vichy French by the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the predecessor of the CIA. At the end of World War II, Ho wrote a declaration of independence for Vietnam based on the US Declaration from 1776. Ho repeatedly petitioned President Harry S. Truman to recognize Vietnam, citing the Atlantic Charter, but Truman never responded. Meanwhile, British and Chinese troops occupied the country in support of France. Vietnamese rioted and killed a hundred or so French citizens, and in retaliation French troops armed Japanese prisoners of war and massacred over 6,000 Vietnamese. This was the same pattern of asymmetrical force used by empires against their subjects throughout the colonial period. However, the story of Vietnam is only half over; we will return to it in the next chapter when we discuss the Cold War.

Kenya, Algeria, and Vietnam were not the only places where the imperial powers and their international allies responded violently to movements of national liberation among the colonized. For example, the French killed 80,000 in Madagascar in 1947 when the people of that island supported independence. The Indonesian War of Independence raged from the former Dutch East Indies declaration of independence in 1945 and The Netherlands' recognition of their claims in 1949. About 8,000 Dutch troops and their allies were killed, and about 100,000 Indonesians. And growing fears of international communism pushed the United States government into supporting some of these actions. Although the Americans had peacefully let go of the Philippines, the U.S. military helped Korean militias massacre about 60,000 members of a peasant insurgency. The Korean Peninsula had been divided at the end of World War Two, like Germany, into Soviet and U.S. occupation zones. Unsurprisingly, the two rivals backed communist and non-communist leaders in North and South Korea. The resulting conflict, the Korean War (1950-1953), will be examined in more detail in the next chapter on the Cold War.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Is it significant that Ho Chi Minh worked with the OSS during World War II when he was opposing Japan?
- How many chances were there in Ho's story, where history could have turned out differently?

## New Nations and Development

The newly-founded countries in Africa and Asia all faced the challenges of establishing borders, forming new governments, building economic self-reliance, controlling natural resources, and working toward a more just and equitable society. In previous chapters, we have seen how the new nations in Latin America had confronted similar issues since the early nineteenth century. Other older but less-industrialized countries, like Iran, also addressed questions of development and national sovereignty.



Figure: Pahalgam Valley, Kashmir.

One of the major challenges faced by these new nations was the problem of borders. The administrative boundaries drawn by the European imperial powers did not always follow any logic that served the colonized peoples. We have seen that disagreements over Kashmir continue to cause tensions between India and its neighbor Pakistan, which are further complicated by the fact that both India and Pakistan are now nuclear powers (India since 1974 and Pakistan since 1999). India also supported the independence of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in the early 1970s, a conflict which brought famine and death to hundreds of thousands in the same region that had been starved out thirty years before during World War II.



Figure: French journalist Gilles Caron photographs the starving children of Biafra during the Nigerian Civil War, 1969.

Sub-Saharan Africa's division by the European powers had also haphazardly thrown together peoples who wanted separate nations. Violent conflicts based on tribal loyalties have caused civil wars and political instability. For instance, when the Igbo people tried to form a separate nation in Nigeria in 1965, the three-year civil war that followed killed thousands before Biafra was defeated. The disputed region is petroleum-rich (Nigeria leads Africa in oil production); so that even today, Igbo separatists harass the Nigerian government, resentful that their oil wealth seems to benefit the rest of the country more than it serves them.

Such conflicts do not only result in separatist civil wars. Although no tribe advocates establishing their own independent state in Kenya, conflicting tribal loyalties often spill over into political competition. Kenyan leader Jomo Kenyatta tended to favor his Kikuyu people, who were a plurality but not a majority in Kenya, during his long presidency. Resentment by the Luo and Kalenjin people led to realignments of political parties, which caused widespread violence after a contested election in 2008, with the death of hundreds.

Nearly all of the new nations embraced democratic constitutions. But it is one thing to write a constitution, and quite another to actually follow it. Like the older republics in Latin America, many new nations suffered through periods of authoritarian rule. Often, the military would step in and overthrow a democratically-elected government in times of perceived or actual economic or

political chaos. The colonial powers had trained militaries as well as educating local administrators; army officers often felt that they were in a better position to rule their countries than incompetent and corrupt politicians, even if they had been elected democratically. Similar arguments had been made by fascists and authoritarians in interwar Europe; the mistakes of the imperialists were often repeated in their former colonies. The Cold War complicated this situation, as fear of communist-led "wars of national liberation" frequently caused the United States and other Western "democracies" to support repressive military dictatorships.



Figure: Indira Gandhi with her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, and her sons Rajiv Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi. Nehru, Indira, and Rajiv were Prime Ministers, Sanjay was a Congress Party Member of Parliament until he died in a private plane crash in 1980.

Again, the example of India and Pakistan illustrates the problem of political stability in the new nations. India successfully embraced democracy and remains today the largest democracy by population. One reason for this was the popularity of the Congress Party, which dominated Indian politics until the 1990s. Another is the prominence of the Nehru family: after Indian Prime Minster Jawaharlal Nehru died of natural causes in 1964, he was succeeded by his daughter Indira Gandhi (no relation to Mahatma Gandhi) for twenty years, and she was followed by her son Rajiv Gandhi. Their dedication to democratic traditions brought a degree of political stability, although India was not free of problems that beset other new nations. Sikhs advocating for more power in Hindu India murdered Indira Gandhi in 1984 and ethnic Tamil separatists assassinated her son Rajiv in 1991. Despite these shocks, elections continued, and even opposition parties have taken the reins of government peacefully from the Congress Party since the 1990s; including current Prime Minister Narendra Modi, elected in 2014.

On the other hand, Pakistan has been ruled by their military more often than not since independence. Unlike in Nehru's India, Pakistan did not benefit from an initial long premiership by its founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who died barely a year after independence of tuberculosis and lung cancer. Internal and international crises led to repeated interventions by the Pakistani military into national government. The 2013 Pakistani elections were the first time one democratically elected government peacefully replaced another. But even today the military plays an independent, often secretive role in Pakistan, especially in foreign policy.

All of the new nations were faced with the question of how to develop their economies. Some governments were inspired by the apparent rapid industrial growth in the Soviet Union under Stalin's Five-Year Plans, while others embraced the role of providing natural resources to the mature industrial economies of the West. Independent economic self-reliance was often difficult to achieve when industries and public utilities remained foreign-owned. Some new governments nationalized these businesses, so that the nation owned and operated them in the name of the people rather than for the profits of foreign shareholders. In India, for example, Nehru's government nationalized the railroads, electric utilities, and communication systems. Seeing the results of India's actions, many new African and Asian countries did the same.

Critics of nationalized industries argued that like the collectivized agriculture and industry of the Soviet Union, these businesses faced no competition. Their objections were taken seriously, partly because Stalin's lies about the success of the Five Year Plans were finally discovered, and partly because nationalized industries often became inefficient as positions in a railroad or a telephone company transformed into political plums: no-show jobs awarded to loyal supporters. The foreign businesses that had been pushed out supported this view, and a reaction to nationalization, privatization, began in the 1980s. In India the push for privatization was

led by Rajiv Gandhi, the grandson of the leader who had led nationalization efforts. In privatization, government-run industries were sold back to the private sector, which on occasion included, once again, foreign investors. Newly-privatized industries often initially embraced cost-cutting efficiencies and more competent management, repairing broken-down electrical grids and rail lines. However, as profits were once again exported abroad or held by a tiny local elite, there has been a push back against privatization, as some leaders once again seek more benefits for the entire nation.

### Questions for Discussion

- How did Stalin's lies about the success of the Five Year Plans affect the decisions of newly decolonized nations?
- In what ways did the problems of borders and religious differences continue to plague the new nations?



Figure: The Mount Washington Hotel, in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire.

In recent decades, a leader in the political push for privatization has been the International Monetary Fund (IMF), first established at the July 1944 conference at the Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire mentioned earlier. Even before the war ended, forty-four allied nations sent 730 delegates to establish what would become a global system for regulating international balances of commercial payments and securing what they hoped would be financial stability for the post-war world. Initially, they were mainly thinking of creating institutions and policies that would both rebuild war-torn Europe and Asia and prevent the hyperinflation and Great Depression that led to so much instability between the wars.



Figure: Harry Dexter White (left) and John Maynard Keynes (right) at Bretton Woods, 1944.

There were two architects of the meeting and the global financial plan that came from it. John Maynard Keynes was the British economist who had pioneered the "demand-side" economic theory that people like U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt had adopted to confront the Great Depression. Keynes' claim was that by spending money, the federal government could jump-start the

economy, create jobs, and put the money in people's pockets that would enable them to buy consumer products. This plan was temporarily derailed by war production and rationing, so it is unclear to many economists that Keynes was right and that deficit spending and government borrowing was the key to ending the Depression. At the time of the Bretton Woods Conference, Keynes was the chief advisor to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Britain. The American, Harry Dexter White, worked closely with Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. White dominated the conference and although he considered himself a Keynesian, he vetoed Keynes's proposal for the International Clearing Union (ICU), a central bank with its own currency, the "bancor". White opposed the ICU and instead proposed an International Stabilization Fund that would help debtor nations maintain their balance of trade. This grew into the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IRBD), which became the World Bank. The U.S.'s goal was to promote international development but also to help establish markets for American manufactures, now that the war effort had greatly increased U.S. manufacturing capacity.

Another reason the U.S. rejected the ICU and the "bancor" was to protect the leading position of the dollar in the world economy. Since the U.S. had the strongest economy in the world at the end of the World War II, they also dictated the trade provisions agreed to at the conference. The major provisions of the agreement were a foreign exchange system with the U.S. Dollar as its base currency, along with a pledge by members to convert their currency to gold for trade-related demands. Countries were required to adopt the gold standard and were not allowed to alter their currency's exchange rate by more than 10%. This would prevent debtor nations from escaping their obligations to creditors by simply inflating their currencies. Finally, all members had to pitch in to the new bank's assets, although the U.S. put up most of the money.

Bretton Woods also drafted a set of trade-related recommendations and an International Trade Organization (ITO) was proposed, with a goal of reducing tariffs. The United States Senate, however, was not interested in ceding its authority over tariffs to a new international organization, and did not ratify the ITO's charter. The less aggressive General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was adopted in its place. We will discuss it when we cover Globalization.




Bretton Woods created the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which lends money to distressed economies suffering from hyperinflation or other financial chaos and, as a condition for credit, stipulates how a borrower country should reorganize government spending and finance. The IMF was designed to oversee the international monetary and financial systems and to monitor member nations. The U.S. undermined this mission when it went off the gold standard in 1971. Inflationary government spending on both the war in Viet Nam and the War on Poverty begun by Lyndon Johnson, and a worsening balance of trade led the Nixon administration to fear that foreign holders of dollars would demand conversion to gold, which would rapidly wipe out the U.S. gold reserves, held in Federal Bullion Depositories such as Fort Knox. Nixon's unilateral decision was ratified by Congress in 1978. By the end of the 1970s, no major currency was convertible for gold. Although the dollar is no longer redeemable in gold, the United States continues to maintain a gold reserve of over 8.1 metric tons , more than half of it stored at Fort Knox in Kentucky. The next largest national gold reserve, roughly 3.3 metric tons, belongs to Germany

Losing their original reasons for existence, the IMF and World Bank were forced to adapt. Rather than enforcing convertibility, the IMF began using its ability to loan interest-free development money to debtor nations as a way to intervene in and direct the economic policies of the borrowers. The IMF's stated aim was to avoid or mitigate financial crises, using the "conditionality" of

their loans. The IMF now analyses nations' economic policies and offers "advice" which must be taken in order to receive IMF loans.

The changes the IMF and the World Bank require are called Structural Adjustment Programs. They typically include deregulation, privatization, and removal of trade barriers. All of these measures have been criticized by debtor nations as being more beneficial for the lenders in developed industrialized nations rather than for borrowers in the developing world. Other structural adjustments can include reducing trade deficits through currency devaluation, austerity programs to decrease budget deficits, eliminating social welfare programs, cutting public services, focusing economic output on resource extraction, and attracting foreign direct investment. This current bundle of structural adjustment programs is known as the Washington Consensus and is associated with neoliberalism or market fundamentalism, which we will discuss in a later chapter. Even in its more modest formulation, IMF policy is designed to liberalize trade, deregulate and privatize industries, and protect property rights above all other concerns.

**Questions for Discussion**

- What do you think the response of the communist U.S.S.R. may have been to the Bretton Woods Conference and the IMF?
- Is it possible to interpret the IMF's role as global lender as a continuation of a new, economic form of imperialism?

## The Green Revolution

The explosive improvement of agricultural yields throughout the world known as the Green Revolution began in the 1960s in a research station on the edge of the Mexican desert. The scientist most associated with these advances is Norman Borlaug, an agronomist who developed a disease-resistant strain or dwarf wheat that increased yields of the grain worldwide, especially in developing nations facing high population growth and threat of famine. Borlaug (1914-2009) grew up on a 106-acre Iowa farm and attended the University of Minnesota in the 1930s. Borlaug's education included a stint in the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. He later remembered that seeing the effect of hunger on people in America "left scars" on him and motivated him to try to solve the problems of supplying food to a growing world population. Borlaug continued at the U of M after graduation, eventually earning a Ph.D. in plant pathology and genetics in 1942. Borlaug then went to work as a microbiologist at DuPont. After a couple of years with DuPont, he joined the Cooperative Wheat Research Production Program, a joint venture of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture.



Figure: Borlaug's hybrid wheat.

Borlaug found that local Mexican farmers resisted planting wheat because a fungus called stem rust reduced their yields so much they couldn't make a living. A related problem with wheat farming in Mexico was that the plants grew too tall when heavily fertilized and then "lodged" or fell over prior to harvest. Borlaug and his team bred a new strain of dwarf wheat that would not grow too tall when fertilized and that also resisted rust. The process took ten years and over 6,000 cross-breeding experiments between different types of wheat. The new wheat had the additional advantage of being able to be planted twice per year. Although it took Borlaug a while to convince local farmers to try his new hybrid, they could see his fields and were finally convinced. Between 1950 and 2000, Mexican wheat yields increased between 400% and 500%.

In the 1960s, as the program was becoming successful in Mexico, it was exported to India, which was facing famine. American farmers shipped a fifth of their wheat production to India in 1966 and 1967. The Indian situation seemed dire, especially since India's population crossed the 500-million mark in 1966 and was expected to grow by another 200 million by 1980. The prediction was accurate: India crossed 700 million in the early months of 1981, on its way to a current level of 1.38 billion. India imported 18,000 tons of Borlaug's seed wheat in 1966. Wheat yields increased from 12.3 million tons in 1965 to 20.1 million tons in 1970. By 1974 India was self-sufficient in all cereal grains and the USAID (US Agency for International Development) began calling Borlaug's work a Green Revolution. Since the 1960s India's food production has increased faster than population growth. By 2000 India was producing 76.4 million tons of wheat.

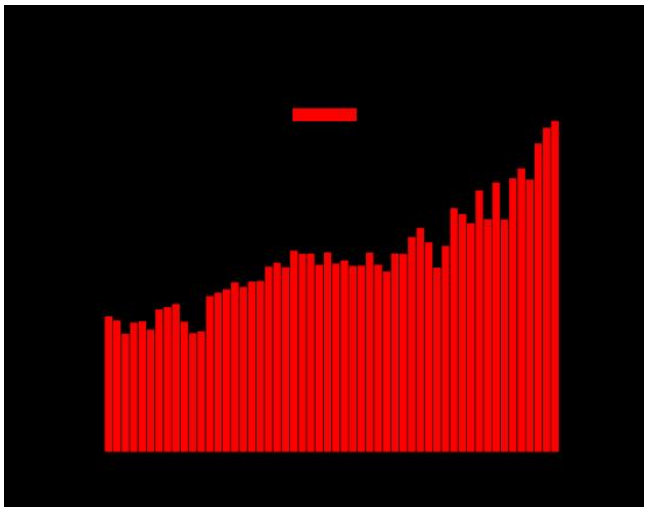


Figure: Wheat yields have more than doubled in the least developed countries since 1961.

India's improved crop yields, driven by Borlaug's improved wheat, have made it a net exported of wheat. India began exporting wheat regularly in the 1970s and since 1980 has exported wheat every year except three. The nation's exceptional agricultural turnaround was made possible by Borlaug's new wheat, but also by extensive use of fertilizer, irrigation, and machinery. The improved crop and techniques have prevented up to 100 million acres of virgin land from being converted to farmland. This savings amounts to 13.6% of India's land, or about the area of California. Borlaug predicted that as world population continued to rise, only new crops and improved farming techniques would save the world's remaining forests and uncultivated lands.



Figure: Dr. Vandana Shiva

Although the Green Revolution has undoubtedly saved lives and allowed populations in India to increase dramatically, Borlaug and the Green Revolution have been criticized for bringing capital- and energy-intensive western agricultural techniques to regions of the world that had once relied on subsistence farming. Western-style farming tends to reward large-scale operators and often provides even greater rewards to manufacturers of agrochemicals and machinery. Widening social inequality and expanding farmer debt has led to issues like the suicide crisis of India, where hundreds of thousands of indebted farmers have killed themselves after becoming dependent on hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and the machinery needed to produce crops at the scale required by the new economics of agriculture. Activists like Vandana Shiva have argued that 80% of the world's population is actually fed by the produce of subsistence farmers rather than the industrialized agriculture highlighted in the Green Revolution. If this is true, then maybe the claims of the "revolution" are overblown.

Shiva also claims that the data she has compiled show that the number one factor in the rapid improvement of yields in India has been increased ***water use***, not fertilizers or Borlaug's "miracle seed". Shiva says this increased irrigation is unsustainable, and cites studies showing a rapidly sinking water table across much of India. She further charges that by using language like "miracle seed", the Green Revolution has become more a mythology than a scientific, data-driven reality.



Figure: President George W. Bush along with House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi congratulate Borlaug during the Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony on July 17, 2007.

Shiva is also an important activist against Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) who appears regularly on stage giving speeches and TED talks, or on television as an anti-GMO spokesperson. Although Borlaug's dwarf wheat was not produced by the types of genetic manipulations currently used to produce GMO crops, some people still resent it as a human intrusion on nature's processes. Borlaug, for his part, has stubbornly refused to believe there is a rational argument against the "miracle" he helped bring about. He received a Nobel Peace Prize, a Congressional Gold Medal, and a Presidential Medal of Freedom. Toward the end of his life he criticized people who questioned the Green Revolution as elitists who had never gone hungry, but he also admitted that although his contribution had helped save many lives, it had not created a Utopia.

**Question for Discussion**

- What were the pros and cons of the Green Revolution?

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# 1.12: Cold War

When we think of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, we typically imagine the thousands of nuclear missiles each nation pointed toward the other and of a clash of ideologies as communism and capitalism battled for world supremacy. A defining element of the Cold War was that it did not become a hot war. Neither the U.S. not the U.S.S.R. launched attacks on the territories of the other. Instead, the superpowers supported or intervened in the conflicts of nations in their spheres of influence. To a great extent, the Cold War was a struggle by each superpower to extend its sphere of influence and block the other from doing the same. The Soviets and the Americans justified their actions in a variety of ways. Creating a buffer-zone to protect the homeland. Defending like-minded governments against a different political or economic philosophy. One side said it was protecting the world from the threat of totalitarian communist imperialism and the other said it was protecting the world from imperialist capitalism. Interestingly, both accused their antagonist of being an empire.

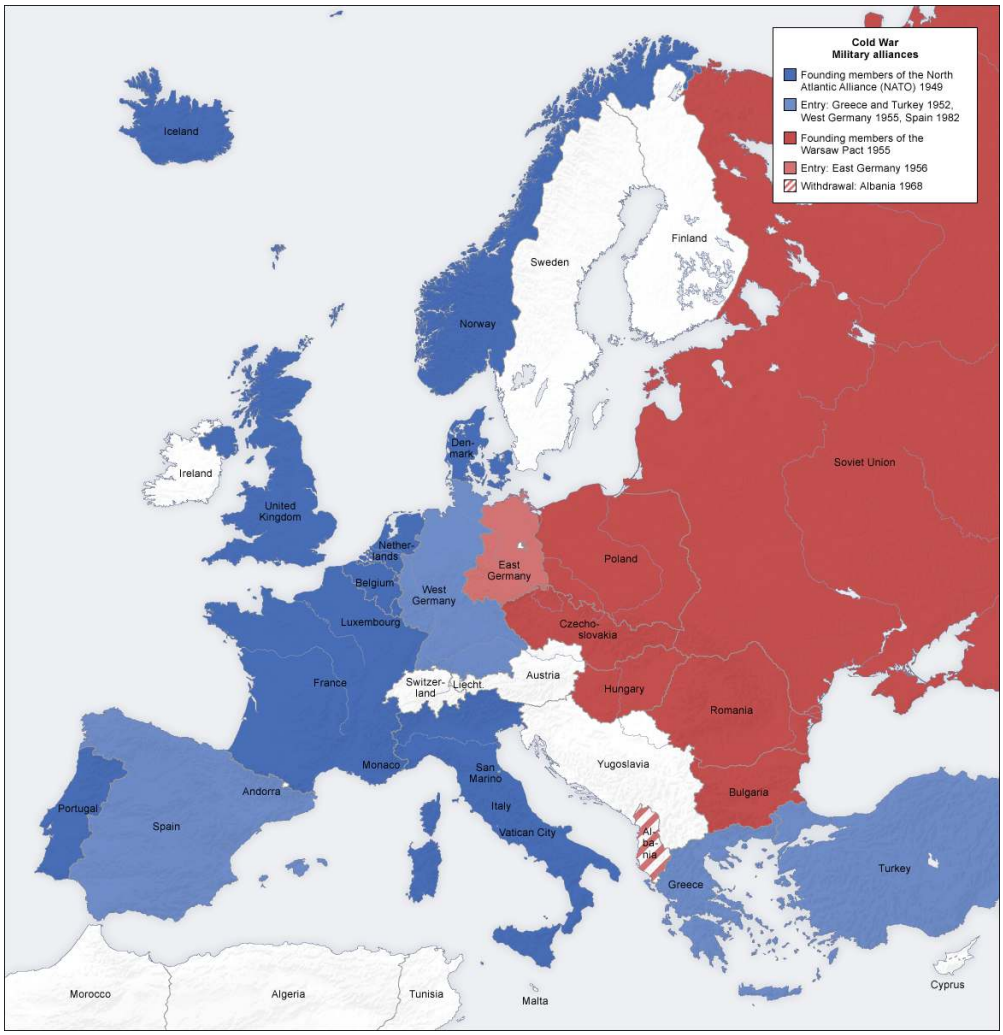



Figure: European military alliances during the Cold War

World War Two in Europe was nearly over when Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill met at Yalta in February 1945, but the war in the Pacific was still ongoing. This fact weighed heavily on the British and Americans, who were hoping for Soviet help in defeating Japan. Stalin had signed a Non-Agression Pact with the Japanese in 1941, which both sides maintained during the conflict; at Yalta, he pledged to declare war on Japan three months after the German surrender. In exchange, Roosevelt and Churchill essentially agreed to the Soviet military occupation of Eastern Europe. It would turn out that this would be the beginning of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, which would not be fought directly between the two superpowers, but rather through proxy wars in the developing world over most of the next five decades.

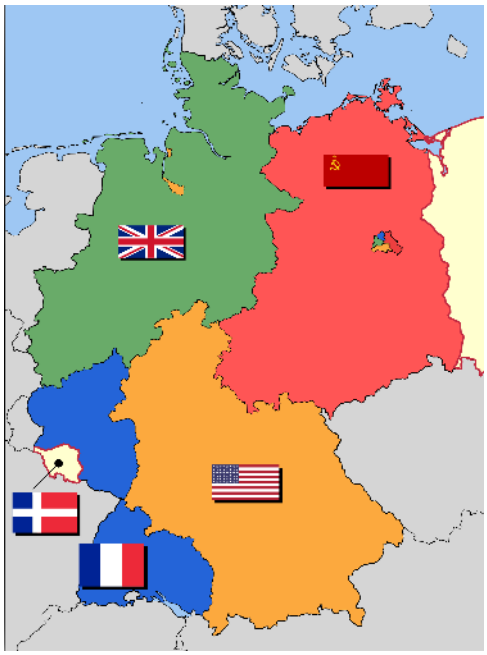


Figure: Occupation zone borders in Germany, and the four zones of Berlin, 1947.

World War II in Europe was nearly over when Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill met at Yalta in February 1945, but the war in the Pacific was still unresolved. Stalin had signed a Non-Aggression Pact with Japan in 1941 which both sides had maintained during the conflict. Roosevelt and Churchill urged Stalin to join them in defeating Germany's final Axis partner. Stalin agreed to declare war on Japan three months after the German surrender. In exchange, Roosevelt and Churchill essentially agreed to accept the Soviet military occupation of eastern Europe. The Allies were interested in winning the Second World War, but were all aware that they were not natural allies in the long run. After the war's end, Eastern Europe and Asia would both be areas of contention between the U.S.S.R. and the "West".

Despite promised democratic elections, by 1949 the Soviets had set up one-party communist states mirroring their own in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. Stalin's desire to dominate eastern Europe as a buffer zone against attacks from the West was understandable, given the history of European wars and the tremendous sacrifices of blood and treasure by the Soviets during the war that had just ended. Stalin also decided to retain the Polish territory first taken by his armies in 1939 when he had been Hitler's ally and advocated pushing the borders of Poland farther west and south into what had been Germany in 1939. And the Baltic states the Red Army had conquered in 1939-1940 while Hitler was attacking France also remained part of the Soviet Union.

The first Cold War challenge to post-war peace occurred in Greece, where communist and non-communist anti-Nazi partisans began fighting for control shortly after the Germans withdrew from their country in late 1944. When the war ended, this conflict soon turned into a full-blown civil war. However, Greece was outside of the Stalin's sphere of influence. The British and Americans began supporting the beleaguered parliamentary monarchy against the communists, who were defeated in 1947. The conflict in Greece showcased the new "Truman Doctrine" of containment, under which the U.S. was willing to concede to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, but would "contain" the spread of communist regimes in any other country.



In 1946, former Prime Mi[redacted]issouri and made a speech at Westminster College. C[redacted]tain" separating East from West. It was an apt descri[redacted]vel between the two sides. The division of. Europe into East and West was complicated by the Allied agreement to occupy defeated Germany in four sectors: U.S., British, French, and Soviet. The German capital Berlin was also divided into quarters by the four former allies, even though it was surrounded by Soviet-occupied East Germany. The division of Germany was completed when the western portion uniting in a federal republic, the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (GDR), in October 1949, complete with elections and multiple political parties. At the same time, East Germany became the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR), a one-party communist satellite state of the Soviet Union. I remember as a child being confused when I listened to the news, why America was enemies with a nation that had Democratic in its name.

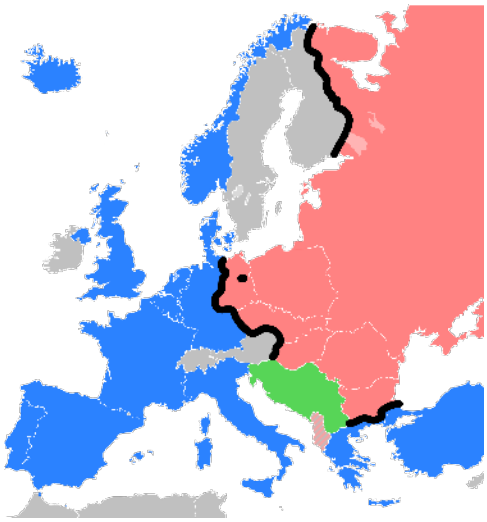


Figure: The Iron Curtain in black, with a black dot representing West Berlin. Warsaw Pact countries in red, NATO members in blue. Militarily neutral countries in gray. Yugoslavia, member country of the Non-Aligned Movement, in green. Communist Albania broke off contacts with the Soviet Union in the early 1960s, aligning itself with China after the Sino-Soviet split; it appears stripe-hatched with grey.

Although the United States and the Soviet Union had been allies in World War II, the relationship did not last long after the defeat of Germany and Japan. In February 1946, less than a year after the end of the war, the head of the U.S. embassy in Moscow, George Kennan, sent a message that became known as the long telegram to the State Department denouncing the Soviet Union. Although Kennan's main point was that the Soviet Union was interested in expanding its worldwide power, he made his argument in the form of an attack on communism which became a regular element of Cold War rhetoric. "World communism is like a malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue," Kennan wrote, and "the steady advance of uneasy Russian nationalism . . . is more dangerous and insidious than ever before."

Kennan argued that Russian imperialism had not ended with the Russian empire and under the Soviets would advance under what he called the "new guise of international Marxism", although the U.S.S.R. was being ruled not as a communist democracy but as a totalitarian dictatorship under Josef Stalin. Marx's ideal of a "dictatorship of the proletariat", where workers would live together in such harmony that police and armies would be unnecessary, never arrived for the Russian people. There could be no cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union, Kennan wrote. Instead, the Soviets had to be "contained." As the Russians had advanced toward Germany in the final years of World War II, they had not only retaken Russian territory but had held onto the lands Stalin had conquered when he was Hitler's ally and expanded their control over Eastern Europe. In the years after the war the U.S.S.R. controlled not only East Germany but newly formed People's Republics of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania. In the alarm caused by the creation of these satellite states, often ruled by Soviet-installed dictators, anti-Soviet sentiment seized the American government and soon the American people.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why were Western leaders so concerned about the threat of Communism?
- What do you think motivated the Soviets to try to expand their sphere of influence?
- Was the West's motivation different?




Figure: During the winter of 1947, thousands protest in West Germany against the disastrous food situation. The sign says, "We want coal, we want bread."

To try to prevent a drift toward socialism in nations struggling with food shortages and rebuilding from the destruction of the war, the United States launched the Marshall Plan in 1948 to rebuild western Europe. The Soviets responded to the $15 billion aid program with an order that their satellite nations reject it, because the financial assistance came with the condition of economic cooperation that Stalin worried would make small nations like Yugoslavia dependent on western corporations. The United States was anxious to rebuild Europe as quickly as possible, no only to reopen markets for U.S. goods, but also to counter the influence of growing communist parties in Italy, France, and other Western European countries. U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall shipped food and other material aid, and provided financial support to any European country who requested it. The result was the largely capitalist rebuilding of Western Europe and West Germany, while Eastern Europe began industrializing by following Soviet-inspired Five-Year Plans.



European nations entered new military alliances along East-West lines as well. In April 1949, Great Britain, France, and other Western European Allies united with the U.S. and Canada in a military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), pledging to defend one another in case of attack. NATO became alarmingly relevant later that summer when the Soviets detonated their first atomic bomb, breaking the U.S. monopoly on nuclear weapons. In the ensuing decades, both superpowers would develop advanced missiles, air forces, and submarines to deliver an overwhelming nuclear attack on the other side's homeland in case of war. The superpowers adopted a policy of "mutually assured destruction" as a means of preventing a conflict which would almost certainly have destroyed most of the humans and probably much of life on the planet. Britain was next to join the nuclear club in 1952, followed by France in 1960, China in 1964, India in 1974, Pakistan in 1998, and North Korea in 2006. Israel developed weapons in secret in the 1960s, and South Africa developed a couple of weapons in the 1970s but scrapped them and joined the non-proliferation movement by 1991, at the same time the De Klerk government was freeing Nelson Mandela and beginning to end apartheid. Also in 1991 Kazakhstan left the Soviet Union and inherited a nuclear arsenal larger than that of Britain and France, but became the first nation to scrap its nuclear arsenal. We will return to both these events later in the chapter.



Figure: Operation Castle series of U.S. tests of thermonuclear weapons (H-bombs) in the Marshall Islands.

1949 ended with a new challenge in East Asia, when communist forces led by Mao Zedong defeated the Nationalist armies of Chiang Kai-Shek and established the People's Republic of China, which we will turn to shortly.




Figure: Nikita Khrushchev, Time Magazine's Man of the Year for 1957

Stalin died in 1953 and after a power struggle in the Politburo a new Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, took power in Moscow. Khrushchev distanced himself from what he called Stalin's "cult of personality" and revealed the extent of Stalin's atrocities against perceived political enemies, which had led to the deaths of millions in purges, forced labor, and famine in the previous decades.

Khrushchev announced a new Soviet foreign policy of "peaceful coexistence" with the West, pledging not to extend communism by invading other countries but creating a military alliance, the Warsaw Pact, within the Soviet Bloc in Europe to counterbalance NATO. Khrushchev wanted Soviet communism to provide a higher standard of living for workers. Achieving this was difficult if the military budget was too large, so he sought to lessen tensions with the U.S. and its allies. But there were limits to Khrushchev's "liberalism". In 1956, democratic reforms in Hungary led to a possibility of spreading anti-Soviet dissent in neighboring communist countries under Moscow's control. The Soviets and their Warsaw Pact satellite countries sent troops and tanks to repress any political changes in Hungary and Eastern Europe.

Questions for Discussion

- Do you think mutual assured destruction was a reasonable strategy?
- When you review the list of members of the “nuclear club”, are there any countries on it you weren’t expecting to see?

## The Cold War in Asia



Figure: Emperor Hirohito and General MacArthur, who led the occupation, at their first meeting at the U.S. Embassy, Tokyo, September, 1945

Although the U.S.S.R. had helped end the Pacific War by invading Manchuria in August 1945, the subsequent reconstruction of Japan was strictly a U.S. affair. By the time the military occupation ended in 1955, Japan had returned to rule by a democratically-elected parliamentary monarchy under the same Emperor, Hirohito. The U.S. guaranteed Japan’s security through a treaty and a military base in Okinawa, and provided financial assistance and preferential access to U.S. markets to rebuild the Japanese economy. This was partly an attempt to counter the perceived communist threat in Asia, and Japan developed a highly successful public-private economic model, ultimately producing electronics and automobiles that would dominate their sectors worldwide.

After World War II, the Nationalists and Communists restarted their civil war, which had been interrupted in 1937 by the Japanese invasion. Mao’s armies were victorious over the corrupt and incompetent Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-Shek. By the end, entire divisions of the Nationalist army were going over to the Communists, and Chiang fled to the island of Taiwan, which had been relinquished to China after being a part of the Japanese Empire for fifty years. There, the Kuomintang continued the Republic of China, which was formally recognized as “China” by the United Nations and the U.S. until the 1970s. Cold War politics was the reason for this diplomatic decision, but even after its end Taiwan’s autonomy from mainland China is still guaranteed by the U.S.

As previously mentioned, war broke out on China’s border a year after the establishment of the People’s Republic. The Korean Peninsula had been divided like Germany at the end of the war with the Soviets administering the north while the south was controlled by the United States. The U.S.S.R. helped establish a communist regime under Kim Il-sung, while the Americans supported an authoritarian “nationalist”, Syngman Rhee. >In June 1950, Kim ordered the invasion of the south in an attempt to unite the peninsula. As Kim’s forces quickly took most of the south, the United Nations Security Council ordered a military response, led by the United States. The Soviet Union abstained instead of using its veto power in the Security Council, casting doubt on the western suspicion that Stalin had okayed Kim’s invasion of the south.



Figure: Combat in the streets of Seoul, 1950.

>By October, U.S.-led United Nations forces had pushed the communist North Korean forces out of the south and had taken the northern capital, Pyongyang. U.N. armies continued to advance northward toward the Chinese border at the Yalu River, which brought China into the war on the North Korean side. On October 25, U.N. troops were surprised by a counterattack by millions of soldiers from China, as Mao defended Chinese territory from foreign invasion and his own new communist government, established only a year before. U.S. commander Douglas MacArthur, a hero of the Pacific War in World War II and leader of the occupation of Japan, talked about his ambition to expand the conflict in Korea to a full-on war with China and contemplated using nuclear weapons. Since the USSR also had nuclear weapons and had signed a mutual-defense treaty with Mao's new government, a war with China was likely to escalate into World War III. When the general refused to back down and criticized the president's judgment, Harry Truman fired MacArthur.

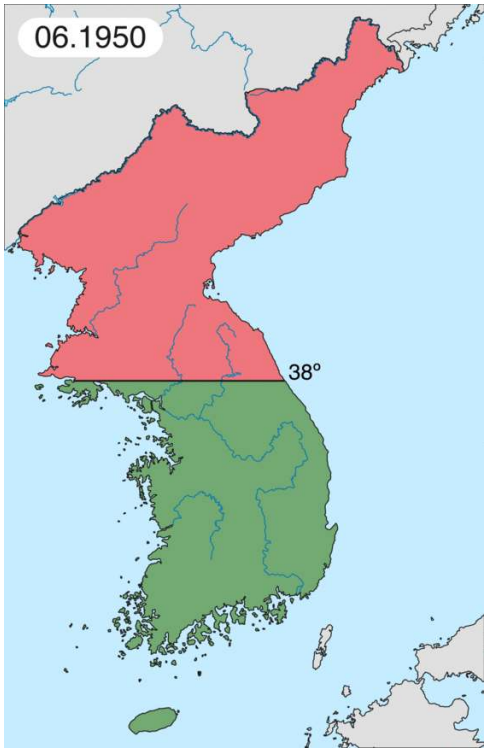



Figure: Territory often changed hands early in the war, until the front stabilized.

>After three years of fighting and nearly 3 million Korean deaths (and 54,000 U.S. GIs), the two sides agreed to a cease-fire, but a peace treaty was never concluded and the area has remained a flashpoint. North Korea has become a totalitarian closed society,

largely isolated after the fall of the Soviet Union and China's embrace of capitalism in the 1980s. The Kim family has remained in power despite famine and mismanagement, while defending their regime by developing nuclear weapons. South Korea was ruled by Rhee and the military until a transition to democracy in the 1990s, when it became a successful industrial power following the Japanese development model. > The US continues to maintain a military presence in South Korea, and currently there are 28,500 troops stationed near the capital of Seoul. > The border between North and South is considered the most heavily militarized zone in the world.

The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 led to continuing diplomatic conflict over the status of Taiwan and war on the Korean Peninsula. An additional hotspot is Tibet, a Himalayan region historically dominated by the Chinese Empire that became an independent nation run by Buddhist monks during the chaotic early years of the Chinese Republic in the 1920s. Mao Zedong decided to reclaim Tibet for his new People's Republic, and sent in troops in 1951. Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama from that time is still the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet, and the "Free Tibet" movement is very active around the world.



Figure: Looking across the square at Jokhang temple, Lhasa Tibet.

>Internally, Mao's own totalitarian style had disastrous consequences for the Chinese. The communists had already begun land reform around 1946 in the parts of China they controlled, well before their final victory; the policy had gained them widespread support among the vast peasant population. With the nationalists out of the way, Mao's policy became more aggressive. He called for the elimination of the landlord class of peasants and redistribution of the land more evenly. Unfortunately, when Mao said elimination, he meant it. Class-motivated mass killings of landlords continued for the next 30 years and estimates of the death tolls range from 14 million to 28 million.

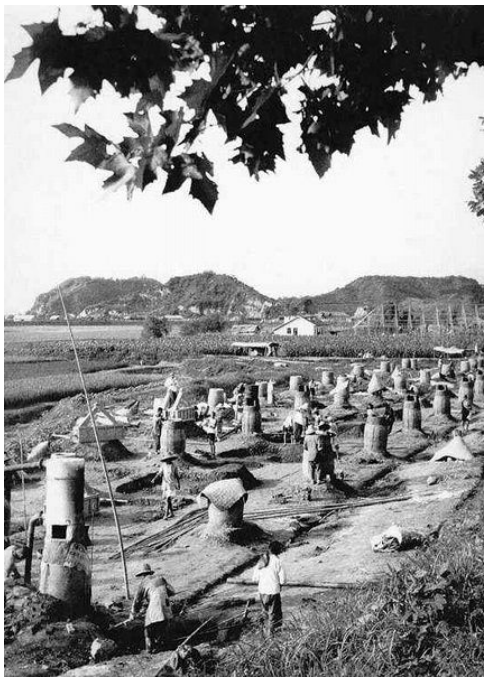


Figure: Backyard furnaces in China during the Great Leap Forward era produced very poor steel and a lot of pollution.

The purge of landlords was followed by the Great Leap Forward, an economic and social plan from 1958 to 1962 that collectivized agriculture and promoted industry. Mao set up 25,000 “people’s communes” of 5,000 families each, which would be responsible for not only feeding themselves and their fellow Chinese citizens, but for providing surpluses to export. Mao insisted on keeping grain exports high in spite of poor harvests. The famine that resulted, known as the Great Chinese Famine, killed 55 million people, although a few million were apparently beaten to death and millions more committed suicide. In some regions of China, people resorted to cannibalism.

>This disaster caused some prominent communist party members to question Mao’s leadership, but he maintained support in the army and blamed the famine on a lack of socialist commitment among the Chinese. Mao initiated his Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966, leading the military to recruit young people to reinforce Maoist ideology and purge remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society. Schools and universities were closed, and Red Guard troops were encouraged to harass and even murder intellectuals. Educated people were beaten, terrorized, and banished to the countryside to be “reeducated” by the peasants. The death toll of the cultural revolution is debated, but estimates range from 3 to 10 million. > It delayed Chinese industrialization and modernization, and a generation of Chinese were deprived of an education.

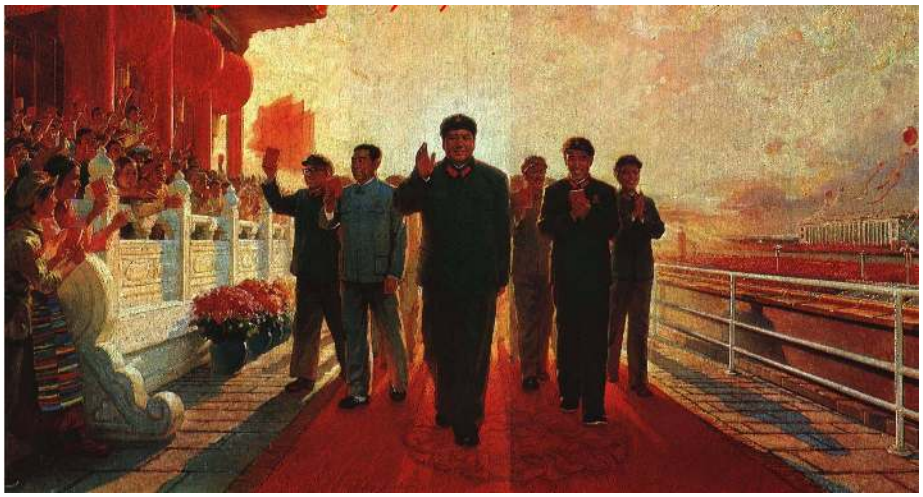


Figure: Propaganda oil painting of Mao and students holding up his “Little Red Book” during the Cultural Revolution, 1967.

### Questions for Discussion

- Could the Korean War have been avoided?
- Was Mao Zedong an effective leader of China?

As seen in the last chapter, efforts by the Vietnamese to liberate themselves from the French after World War II were initially thwarted. This changed in 1954 when Ho Chi Minh's anti-colonial forces defeated the French in northern Vietnam at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. The French decided to abandon their colony of Indochina, preferring to focus their efforts on maintaining their empire closer to home in Algeria (which we have seen was also unsuccessful). Ignoring the example of the Korean War, the French left Vietnam divided between a communist north and a non-communist south; with the vague promise of an eventual referendum in the south to determine whether or not the country would be reunited.

The vote would never take place. The United States began sending military advisers to South Vietnam almost as soon as the French withdrew. >President Dwight Eisenhower, elected in 1952, invoked the "domino theory" to help the unpopular regime in South Vietnam prevent elections which would have made the extremely popular Ho Chi Minh leader of a unified nation. This theory posited that every country the "fell" to communism represented one more step world domination by America's enemies, although after the "Sino-Soviet Split" of 1956, it was unclear which communist nation was the threat in Vietnam, then Laos, then Cambodia, Burma, India, etc. The U.S. also sent military and economic aid to neighboring Laos, also newly independent from France, in an attempt to prop up a monarchy that was in conflict with Soviet-supported Pathet Lao guerrillas.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the CIA and U.S. military advisors supported the South Vietnamese government. By the 1960s, the issue of Vietnam would enormously affect domestic politics in the United States, especially after President Lyndon Johnson began sending hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers to defend South Vietnam in 1965. In 1969 and 1970, Richard Nixon bombed and invaded Cambodia, but could not defeat the Viet Cong guerillas. The U.S. finally withdrew in 1973, after 58,000 U.S. troops and over a million Vietnamese had been killed. Without U.S. support, the government of the South lost the war and Vietnam was unified in 1975. Ho Chi Minh did not live to see it – he died in 1969 at age 79.



Figure: A US Marine moves an old man suspected of being Viet Cong during a search and clear operation 15 miles west of Da Nang Air Base, 1965.

### Question for Discussion

- Could the Vietnam War have been avoided?

## Cold War in the Middle East

In the last chapter, we examined how the establishment of Israel in 1948 immediately led to a series of conflicts with its Arab neighbors. The defeat of Arab forces by Israel in 1949 led to a surge of Arab nationalism, led by Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser, who became head of state in 1954 after a military coup that ended the Egyptian monarchy. Nasser's popularity was cemented when he took control of the Suez Canal, surrounded by Egypt but administered by the British and French, in 1956. In this crisis, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. forced Great Britain, France, and Israel to accept Egyptian control of the canal to avoid a larger conflict. Nasser became a hero for the Arab world, standing up to both the old colonial powers and what the Arabs saw as their creation, the new state of Israel.



Nasser greeted by crowds in Alexandria one day after his announcement of the British withdrawal and a failed assassination attempt against him, October 1954.

Nasser's ruling model became an inspiration for many Arabs. Like Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey in the 1920s, Nasser established a secular state dedicated to improving the lives of ordinary people. He largely separated religion and politics, supported government intervention in the economy to prevent foreign control, and provided more and better social services. Nasser, a former army colonel, also relied on the military as the most reliable and disciplined institution to maintain unity and order. This "Nasserism" became the ideology of the Ba'ath Party, formed in Syria and later in Iraq in the 1950s among military officers.

The Egyptian leader skillfully took advantage of Cold War politics, playing the United States and the Soviet Union against each other in order to gain military and economic aid. The Soviets in particular supported the construction of the massive Aswan Dam, completed in stages by 1970 to control the flooding of the Nile while providing hydroelectric power to Egypt.

Nasser preached pan-Arabism, the goal that all Arabs should be united in one federated nation. Egypt and Syria briefly united under this model in the early 1960s, while after Nasser's death, Libya, Syria, and Iraq federated for a time in the 1970s. The liberation of Algeria from France in 1962 was a moment of inspiration; another was the unification of Palestinians in the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964, led by Yasser Arafat and his Fatah Party. Hatred and resentment for Israel was (and remains) a powerful unifying factor in the region. Arab resistance and Cold War considerations led the U.S. to continue its support of Israel, which was supported by Jewish Americans, but also by Christian fundamentalist evangelicals, many of whom consider the reestablishment of the Israel as the beginning of the apocalyptical End Times and the return of the Messiah. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union sought allies in the Middle East, which was much closer to its borders than to America. Russia still maintains its only naval base on the Mediterranean in Syria, dating from the time it began supporting the Ba'athi Assad family in that country in the late 1970s.



Figure: Nasser (center) mediating an agreement between Yasser Arafat and Jordanian King Hussein, during the emergency Arab League summit, September 1970.

Textbooks often describe the Islamic resurgence that began in the 1970s, but usually consider this only as a religious movement. Some critics of Islam claim the Muslim world has never recovered from the First Crusade, when Christian armies captured Jerusalem in 1099 CE and over the course of a few days murdered almost the entire Muslim population of the city. There may be some truth in this statement, but we don't have to look back several centuries to find reasons why populations that happen to be Muslim resent populations that happen to be Christian. And if globalization, which we will cover in more detail in the next chapter, is primarily an economic development that has overtaken world politics, then resistance to globalization should be considered in economic and political terms.



Figure: Prime Minister Mosaddegh with US President Truman in 1951

The places Muslims and Christians most often find themselves in conflict are often where western Europeans and Americans have been very active in extracting natural resources from territories occupied by Muslims. Western oil companies in the Persian Gulf, for example, have had a decisive role in the relationships between the governments of Britain and the US and the people and governments of the region. For example, when the Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh, decided to nationalize the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP), Winston Churchill convinced Harry S. Truman that Mosaddegh had to go. Britain's MI-6 and the CIA organized a coup against the elected government of Iran and installed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi as ruler of Iran in 1953 to insure a steady flow of oil out of Iran.

Oil production in Iran rose quickly from less than a million barrels per day in the 1950s to 6 million barrels daily in the mid-1970s. However, the oil boom of the 1970s widened the gap between the rich and poor in Iran. In 1971, the 2,500th anniversary

celebration of the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great in the sixth century BCE was attended by jet-setters from around the world while Iranians were excluded and their poverty was ignored. The Shah began a policy of embracing western culture and westernizing Iran; conservative Muslims objected. The new consumer goods and cultural changes were generally available only to the richest Iranians, and were not accompanied by political liberalization. The Shah's secret police force, SAVAK, terrorized the population and routinely assassinated the Shah's critics. In 1977, SAVAK killed several Islamic leaders including Mostafa Khomeini, son of the ayatollah.



Figure: Armed protesters in front of a banner that says, "Long live anti-imperialism and democratic forces".

The outbreak of the Iranian Revolution caught the Shah by surprise. When the Muslim clergy announced an open-air prayer meeting on the annual holiday marking the end of Ramadan, the Shah panicked and declared martial law. 5,000 protesters took to the streets of Tehran. The army fired into the crowd, killing 64 people. The ayatollah Khomeini claimed 4,000 people had been killed and workers at Tehran's oil refineries and government workers declared a general strike that brought the economy to a standstill. By early December, more than 10% of the Iranian people were marching in anti-Shah demonstrations. The U.S. Government was hated for helping to install the Shah, and also for statements by President Jimmy Carter supporting the Iranian Government and the "special relationship" the Shah had with the U.S. The ailing Shah abandoned Iran, eventually arriving for treatment in the United States, while Khomeini proclaimed a new Islamic Republic.



Figure: Iranian students storming the US Embassy in Tehran, November 1979.

A group of Islamist students stormed the American Embassy in Tehran in November 1979 and took the staff as hostages. 52 Americans were held for 444 days, until the inauguration of Ronald Reagan in January 1981. The ayatollah, who was an astute politician as well as a religious leader, supported keeping the hostages on purely political grounds. He told reporters, "This action has many benefits…This has united our people. Our opponents do not dare act against us. We can put the constitution to the people's vote without difficulty."

However, the new Iranian regime also confronted resistance from the Arab world, especially from Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. Not only were the Iranians Persian, rather than Arab, most were also followers of Shia Islam, rather than the more common Sunni branch which is prevalent in the Arab world and among all Muslims. Although Shi'ites and Sunnis had lived in peace for centuries, Iran's new clerical state was deemed a threat by its Arab neighbors, especially by the conservative Sunni regime in Saudi Arabia.

Iraq, however, had its own particularities: not only were the specifically Shia holy sites located in Saddam Hussein's country, but a majority of the Iraqis were Shi'ite Arabs as well. Hussein, meanwhile, was a Ba'athist, promoting Arab nationalism in a secular state ruled by his military. style="text-align:initial;font-size:14pt;">In September 1980 he sent his armies into Iran in an attempt to take advantage of what they supposed would be political chaos. Hussein claimed that he was protecting Arabs living in the Iranian border region, although conveniently, these areas also had vast oil deposits. The Iran-Iraq War lasted 8 years and, like the hostage crisis, helped consolidate the power of the Khomeini regime. The US, USSR, France, and many Arab countries provided support for Iraq, which used chemical weapons against Iranian military and civilian targets. The death toll has been estimated as 800,000 Iranians and up to 500,000 Iraqis. style="text-align:initial;font-size:14pt;">



Figure: An Iranian soldier wearing a gas mask during the Iran–Iraq War.

Hussein had gained nothing in the war but debt and demands for autonomy by non-Arab ethnic Kurds in northern Iraq; he responded with chemical attacks on civilian Kurdish populations. In 1990, the Iraqi dictator then decided to incorporate Kuwait into his nation, claiming that it had historically been part of Mesopotamia (which was plausible, given the absurd way the British had drawn national boundaries after World War I). The United Nations, led by the U.S. pushed Hussein out of Kuwait. Not even the Saudis wanted the Iraqi dictator to take the tiny kingdom, which despite its size had as much oil as Iraq. However, although it decimated Hussein's retreating army on the infamous "Highway of Death", the coalition stopped short of toppling Hussein himself, which would have consequences over the next two decades.

**Questions for Discussion**

- Was the Pan-Arab movement a positive or negative development?
- How do you think the history of U.S.-Iranian relations affects the nations' current relationship?

## Latin America and the Cold War

The twentieth century began in Latin America with the Mexican Revolution, when Pancho Villa in northern Mexico and Emiliano Zapata in southern Mexico created an opportunity for new liberal forces led by Alvaro Obregon. After defeating Villa on the battlefield, Obregon held a constitutional convention in 1917 which produced a document that embraced agrarian reform, an eight-hour work day and the right to organize labor unions; and a declaration that the subsoil belongs to the state in the name of the

people. The was a return to the tradition of the Spanish Empire that subsurface minerals belonged to the people or to the state, rather than to individuals or companies. These ideas were inspirational for the rest of Latin America and even other parts of the world: the Mexican Revolution predated the Bolshevik Revolution by several months.




Figure: Logo of Petróleos Mexicanos, the state-owned oil company established by Cárdenas. The motto means, “For the rescue of sovereignty”.

It took a generation for Mexico to realize this goal, but in the 1930s, under President Lázaro Cárdenas, land reform was implemented that brought back indigenous communal landholdings, broken up during the Diaz period. And in 1938, Cárdenas nationalized Mexican oil, taking over leases given to U.S. and British oil companies. The American president, Franklin Roosevelt, who had begun a “Good Neighbor Policy” toward Latin America when he took office, to emphasize trade and cooperation rather than military force, did not intervene when oil companies objected. Britain acquiesced in order to assure Mexican support in what everyone understood would soon be the next world war.

Cárdenas was part of a wave of populist heads of state in Latin America, charismatic leaders who tried to address the needs of “the people,” which by the 1930s and 1940s included rural peasants as well as the urban working class. Latin American Populism also attracted a rising professional middle class, shut out of political power by traditional oligarchies. In Argentina, this new middle class included first-generation immigrants from Europe who supported a new Radical Party in the first decades of the twentieth century. Argentina was second only to the United States as an immigration choice for impoverished Europeans, particularly Italians, Germans, and Eastern European Jews. In other cases, army officers who had received professional training either at home or abroad by European military missions felt that the oligarchs were insufficiently patriotic and needed to be replaced.

The populists also supported nationalist economic measures, including policies of import substitution industrialization, land reform, and efforts to reduce dependency on international markets for their mining or agricultural goods. The crisis of the Great Depression emphasized the importance of building independent domestic economies and instituting education, housing, and infrastructure improvements for all of the people. The global war against fascism inspired many to embrace democracy and overthrow long-standing military regimes, like in Guatemala, Venezuela, and Cuba; although these attempts at democratic practices were frequently short-lived.



Figure: Brazilian President Getúlio Vargas (left) and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt (right) in 1936

Two of the most notable populist leaders are also examples of civilian and military versions of populism: Getúlio Vargas of Brazil and Juan Perón of Argentina. Vargas was an opposition candidate who lost in a fraudulent election to an oligarchy-backed candidate in 1930; a brief uprising made him president. He skillfully faced down a separatist revolt in the wealthy coffee state of Sao Paulo, but after embracing a degree of liberal democracy, in 1937 Vargas established an authoritarian state in order to prevent communist-supported leftists being elected. However, he also rooted out a new fascist movement and disbanded it as well, setting himself up to

accept U.S. aid and support the Allies in World War II. Brazil was the only nation in Latin America to send troops to fight alongside the Allies in Europe. Vargas stepped down in 1945, but ran again for president in 1950 and was reelected.

Perón, on the other hand, was an army officer who had served as a military attache in Italy in the 1930s, witnessing up close the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini. Argentina at the time was governed by politicians elected through fraud that suppressed calls for reform by the Radical Party. In 1943, in the midst of World War II, the military overthrew the corrupt regime, instituting a government that they felt was more dignified and responded more directly to the people. Juan Perón, a key player in the coup, chose to become the Minister of Labor. By guaranteeing labor law and favoring the workers in negotiations, he became popular among the urban masses in Buenos Aires. Although the military regime grew nervous about his growing popularity and had Perón arrested, the workers came to his aid. He was released and was elected president of Argentina in 1946.

Perón benefited from a postwar economic boom in Argentina. He could promise and deliver on higher wages, better living and working conditions, and vacations for workers as tax revenues rolled in because of high international prices for Argentine wheat and beef. In the context of the Cold War, Perón proclaimed that he represented a “third way” between unfettered capitalism and totalitarian communism. Perón claimed that his government improved the lives of Argentinians without having to take sides in the superpower conflict. This made him particularly annoying to the United States, which often had to face Argentine opposition at regional conferences.



Figure: President Juan Perón and his wife, “Evita”, arrive in Madrid.

Perón bet on never-ending good times, especially when it seemed that the Korean War might lead to a World War III in which Argentina would benefit. However, shortly after he was reelected in 1952, Perón’s popular wife, Eva Duarte, died of ovarian cancer at age 33. Hundreds of thousands attended her funeral and a cult of “Santa Evita” quickly took hold. The Argentine economy began to suffer as the world recovered from World War II and Argentina faced competition for its wheat and beef in the international market. Like Vargas, Perón also faced inflation and political scandals. A bitter fight with the Catholic Church led to Perón’s ouster by the military in 1955 and the suppression of the Peronist movement until Peron was invited back from exile to be reelected president in 1973.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why might Populism have appealed to the people of Latin American nations?
- Was Mexico justified in nationalizing the country’s oil industry.

Although the United States congratulated itself that it had replaced blatant military intervention and “dollar diplomacy” with a “Good Neighbor Policy” under Franklin Roosevelt, nations like Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras were still thoroughly

dominated by the United Fruit Company (UFC); still Banana Republics. After World War II, the Dulles brothers became leaders in developing U.S. foreign policy in Latin America. John Foster Dulles was a corporate lawyer who had helped negotiate huge land giveaways to UFC by the governments of Guatemala and Honduras. After serving as a Senator from New York, Dulles was appointed secretary of State by Dwight Eisenhower in 1953. His brother Allen Dulles was on UFC's board of directors before he served as President Eisenhower's CIA Director.

In 1954 the democratically-elected government of Guatemala began talking about seizing some of the vast tracts of land the United Fruit Company had acquired but was not using. The government planned to buy back the land from UFC and redistribute it to the poor. The Dulles brothers accused the Guatemalan government of having close ties with the Soviets and sent in the CIA to overthrow it in a military coup. Guatemalans resisted the new regime and the country fell into a civil war that lasted from 1960 to 1996 and killed up to 200,000 people.



Figure: President Dwight Eisenhower with John Foster Dulles, 1956.

One of the key elements of Latin America's relationship with the outside world seems to be the question of revolution and the threat nations like the U.S. claimed to fear, of socialist, anti-capitalist movements in the Western Hemisphere. In many cases the anti-capitalism expressed by Latin Americans was actually resistance to what they perceived as economic imperialism by nations like the U.S., which regularly defended American-based corporations that operated freely in their nations and often intervened in their politics. Latin American nationalist leaders like Getúlio Vargas in Brazil (President from 1930-45 and 1951-54), Juan Perón in Argentina (President from 1946-55 and 1973-4), or Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico (President from 1934-40), who nationalized the Mexican oil industry, were not Marxists, or even particularly socialist in their orientation or policies. Import Substitution Industrialization was a *capitalist approach* to reducing dependency, and even when nations like Mexico nationalized natural resource extraction, they usually compensated foreign companies for the assets they were expropriating and then they ran the extractive industries as businesses in the world economy. Even when the government's goal was something like land reform, they usually tried to compensate the former owners. The conflict over land reform in Guatemala was misrepresented by the Dulles brothers. The Guatemalan government offered UFC a price for the lands it took back based on the values claimed in the corporation's tax filings. It may have been an open secret that UFC was defrauding the Guatemalan government, but the government was well within its rights to call that bluff. A truly communist government determined to eliminate capitalism in Guatemala might simply have claimed UFC had acquired the lands illegally and taken them with no offer of compensation.



Figure: Guevara (right) with Alberto Granado (left) in June 1952 on the Amazon River aboard their wooden raft, which was a gift from the lepers whom they had treated during their motorcycle journey.

Many idealists in Latin America and elsewhere were radicalized by the violence nations such as the United States approved or initiated to protect the interests of corporations but justified as defenses of democracy. An example of this was the experience Ernesto "Che" Guevara, who witnessed the Bolivian Revolution of 1952 before moving on to Guatemala in 1954. Bolivia's struggle began when the candidate of the *Movimiento Nationalista Revolucionario*(MNR) won the presidential election of 1951 but was prevented by the military from taking office. Victor Paz Estenssoro armed civilians and the MNR took power after 3 days and 600 casualties. He served his first term from 1952 to 1956, and accepted US financial aid in return for compensating the tin mines he nationalized. Estenssoro softened the revolution's approach to rewriting the mineral and petroleum laws, but he did redistribute land. Bolivians approved of his leadership and Estenssoro was re-elected in 1960, 1964, and 1985.

Peasants on the *altiplano*, the high Andean plateau around the city of Cochabamba, seeing the changes in the mining codes, began seizing haciendas and dividing the land up amongst themselves. The government passed an Agrarian Reform Decree in 1953 to capture the campesinos' support and control the process a bit. Before the revolution, less than 1% of the richest landowners in Bolivia owned half of the country's land and 6% owned 92% of Bolivia. Under the reform, 185,000 peasant families, about half of all rural families, got titles to an average of about 20 hectares each. National agricultural output fell by about 10% after the land distribution, but probably because people were growing and keeping more produce for home use and trading it informally rather than taking it to commercial or export markets. Some cities saw food shortages, but these were offset by imports and some foreign aid.

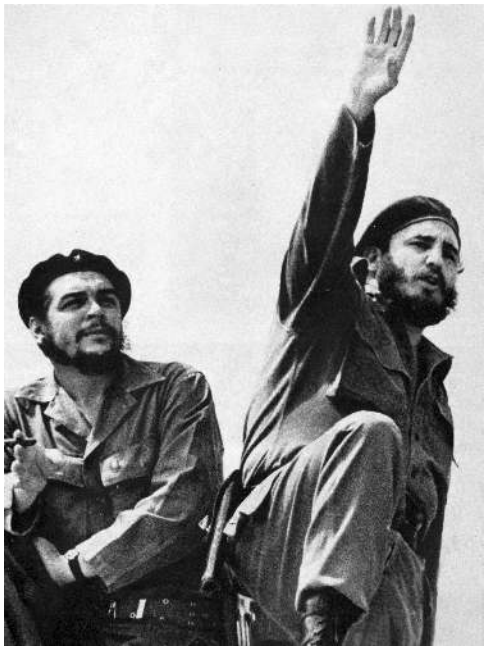


Figure: Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, 1961.

After witnessing this revolutionary change in Bolivia, Guevara went to Guatemala and watched a similar attempt crushed by imperialist armies operating to protect corporate profits. This experience and his romance with a Peruvian Marxist economist

named Hilda Gadea Acosta, who he married in 1955, radicalized Che. When he was placed on an enemies list by the new Guatemalan regime, Guevara escaped to Mexico where he met Raúl and Fidel Castro, who were in exile there following a failed revolutionary coup in Cuba. Guevara became an ally of the Castros in June 1955 and joined the revolution. About 80 revolutionaries arrived in late November 1956 on the eastern tip of Cuba, but their numbers were reduced to about 20 in their first skirmish with Fulgencio Battista's army. The survivors fled into the Sierra Maestra mountains and enlisted peasants into a guerilla army that harried the Cuban army for the next two years. In 1958, Guevara explained the guerillas' success:

> "The enemy soldier in the Cuban example which at present concerns us, is the junior partner of the dictator; he is the man who gets the last crumb left by a long line of profiteers that begins in Wall Street and ends with him. He is disposed to defend his privileges, but he is disposed to defend them only to the degree that they are important to him. His salary and his pension are worth some suffering and some dangers, but they are never worth his life. If the price of maintaining them will cost it, he is better off giving them up; that is to say, withdrawing from the face of the guerrilla danger."

The cold war was played out mostly through proxy wars: regional conflicts like the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Russia-Afghanistan War where the combatants were provisioned, supported, and sometimes joined by troops from the superpowers. Occasionally, the heat level increased and the U.S. and U.S.S.R. barely avoided direct conflict. One of those times was during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The U.S.S.R. became a trading partner of Cuba after Marxist revolutionaries Fidel and Raul Castro and Che Guevara overthrew the American-backed Battista government in 1959 and replaced it with a revolutionary socialist state. President Kennedy supported a CIA-sponsored plan to invade Cuba using anti-Castro Cubans in 1961, but the Bay of Pigs invasion was a fiasco. In October 1962 the U.S. discovered that the U.S.S.R. had deployed nuclear missiles in Cuba, less than 100 miles from the continental U.S. Castro had not initially been looking for a close alliance with the Soviets, but he seems to have believed that the U.S. was going to continue its attacks (recently declassified CIA documents describing several more coup and assassination plans proved Castro's fears were well-founded).

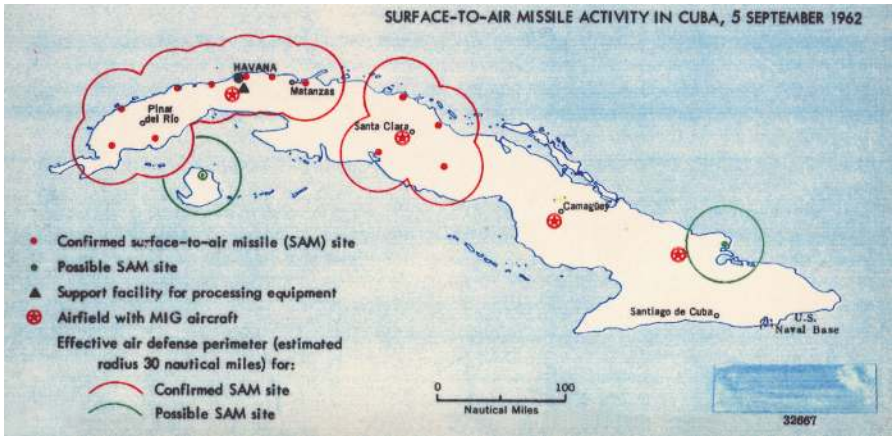



Figure: CIA map showing Surface-to-Air Missile activity in Cuba, September 1962.

The 13-day standoff ended with the Soviet Union withdrawing its missiles in return for American promises not to try again to overthrow Castro. Che Guevara announced "Our revolution is endangering all American possessions in Latin America. We are telling these countries to make their own revolution." Che headed the Cuban delegation to the United Nations in 1964, where he made a speech criticizing apartheid in South Africa and said of the U.S., "Those who kill their own children and discriminate daily against them because of the color of their skin; those who let the murderers of blacks remain free, protecting them, and furthermore punishing the black population because they demand their legitimate rights as free men—how can those who do this consider themselves guardians of freedom?" Guevara increasingly believed that the global north (the northern hemisphere nations) was guilty of oppressing the global south. He even criticized the U.S.S.R. for not doing enough to end imperialism, accusing Russia of forgetting Marx. Che supported the independence movements of indigenous peoples and left Cuba to try to encourage these revolutions, first in the Congo and then in Bolivia, where he was captured by CIA-assisted Bolivian government forces in 1967 and summarily executed. Fidel Castro continued as Cuban president until 2008 when his brother Raul became President. Fidel died in 2016 and Raul handed over the Presidency in 2018, although he remains the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba until a planned retirement in 2021.



Figure: Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez relied on oil revenue to run programs for the poor, but failed to diversify his economy.

Twentieth-century cold-war conflicts involving Oil have not been limited to the Persian Gulf. Development of Venezuela's oil resources, thought to be at least a fifth of known global reserves, began in the 1910s when the country's president granted concessions to his friends to explore, drill, and refine oil. These concessions were quickly sold to foreign oil companies. In 1941 a reform government gained power and passed the Hydrocarbons Law of 1943 under which the government would receive 50% of the profits of the oil industry. The outbreak of World War II had increased demand for oil, and the Venezuelan government granted a series of new concessions that were snapped up in spite of the 50% tax. The postwar explosion of automobile ownership in the U.S. continued to drive demand, and Venezuelan production increased. Venezuela bought the Cities Service company and CITGO gas became a key export of Venezuela. In 1976, the government nationalized the oil industry. Oil was a mixed blessing for Venezuela, providing high levels of revenue to support government programs benefitting the people; but also preventing Venezuelan industry from diversifying. However, the CITGO sign became a welcome sight for many New Englanders, as the company has donated millions of gallons of home heating oil to help hundreds of thousands of families in the Northeastern United States over several decades.

### Questions for Discussion

- What were the ulterior motives of Americans behind their choices to intervene in Latin America to fight communism?
- What did Ernesto Guevara mean when he described the differences between his soldiers and the government troops?

During the 1950s and 1960s colonialism mostly ended in Africa, although not without occasional atrocities such as the British oppression of the Kikuyu in Kenya in a conflict the British still lost, despite having overwhelming force on their side. In South Africa, the white government of F. W. De Klerk, who became president in 1989, finally began to dismantle the apartheid system that had oppressed the black majority for generations. Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) was a member of a royal native family of the Xhosa people who became a lawyer in Johannesburg and became active in politics after the white government began instituting apartheid policies in the 1940s. Apartheid was a system of racial segregation that completely separated the black majority from the white rulers and deprived them of political and civil rights. Mandela became president of the African National Congress (ANC), an organization established in 1912 to defend the rights of native Africans and mixed-race people in South Africa. He was arrested in 1956 for sedition and treason. Despite a commitment to non-violence, Mandela began leading acts of sabotage against government properties in 1961 and was convicted in 1962 and sentenced to life in prison.



Figure: Frederik de Klerk and Nelson Mandela shake hands at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in 1992.

De Klerk visited Nelson Mandela in prison a few months after becoming President and spoke with him for 3 hours. In 1990, De Klerk called for a new Constitution and shut down South Africa's nuclear weapons program. Then he freed Mandela after 27 years as a political prisoner and lifted the ban on the ANC operating as a political party. After losing the presidential election to him in 1994, De Klerk served as one of Mandela's Deputy Presidents from 1994-6. Mandela served as president for a single term and then stepped down. He focused on reconciliation while in office and in his retirement devoted himself to combatting poverty and AIDS.

## Cold War in the US

Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy burst onto the American political scene during a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, in February 1950. Waving a sheet of paper in the air, McCarthy falsely announced that he was holding a list of 205 names "that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping [U.S.] policy." Since McCarthy had no actual list, the number quickly changed to fifty-seven, then eighty-one. Finally, he promised to disclose the name of just one communist, the nation's "top Soviet agent." The shifting numbers brought ridicule, but it didn't matter: McCarthy's lies won him fame and fueled a new "red scare."

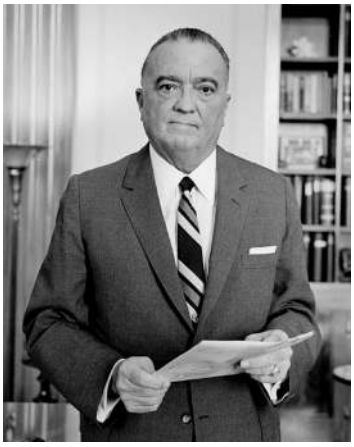


Figure: J. Edgar Hoover, head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1961.

McCarthyism was part of a widespread anticommunist propaganda campaign directed at Cold War America by the U.S. government. Only two years after World War II, President Truman issued Executive Order 9835, establishing loyalty reviews for federal employees. The FBI conducted close examinations of all potential "security risks" among Foreign Service officers. When the Korean War began, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover unsuccessfully petitioned Truman to suspend *habeus corpus* and detain 12,000 Americans suspected of disloyalty. Hoover grew increasingly frustrated with what he saw as the President's and Supreme Court's obstruction of his ability to prosecute people for their political opinions. In 1956, Hoover began a counterintelligence program, COINTELPRO, to disrupt the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA). The scope of Hoover's suspicions and COINTELPRO's targets grew to include civil rights groups, feminists, environmentalists, Native American activists, and anti-war protestors before the program's dissolution in 1971. The program's domestic espionage and psychological warfare tactics were

widely criticized. Many believed the FBI had greatly overstepped its authority; some even accused COINTELPRO of planning the assassinations of some of the program's targets.

In Congress, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations held over a hundred investigations and hearings on communist influence in American society between 1949 and 1954. The Internal Security Act, passed by Congress in September 1950, required all "communist organizations" to register with the government, gave the government greater powers to investigate sedition, and made it possible to prevent suspected individuals from gaining or keeping their citizenship. In the first year, the new law turned away over 50,000 immigrants from Germany and over 10,000 displaced Russians. There were, of course, American communists in the United States. The CPUSA enjoyed most of its influence as labor organizers and as strong opponents of Jim Crow segregation. But even at the height of the Depression, communism never attracted many American. McCarthy's and Hoover's witch-hunts hurled accusations and ruined careers less on people's communist sentiments and more on their opposition to civil rights and anti-war protestors.

The arms race was not only about nuclear technology, but also a contest to improve the distance and accuracy of missiles which could carry a nuclear load. The missile race indirectly led to the space race, as both the U.S. and the Soviets initiated programs for space exploration. As Germany collapsed at the close of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union had raced toward Berlin, hoping not only to be first to occupy the capital but to acquire elements of the Nazi V-2 missile program and jet propulsion project. In the last months of the war, the Nazis had developed a "vengeance weapon" to terrorize England, even though Germany had no hope of winning. The V-2 was the world's first guided ballistic missile, capable of carrying an explosive payload up to six hundred miles. Both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. hoped to capture scientists, designs, and manufacturing equipment to build their own rockets. Germany's top rocket scientist, Wernher von Braun, surrendered to U.S. troops and eventually became the leader of the American space program. About 1,600 German scientists and engineers found their way into the American program. The Soviet Union's program was managed by Red Army colonel Sergei Korolev, although the Soviet program also had about 2,000 Germans. Both engineering teams worked to adapt German rocket technology to create an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that could carry the new nuclear weapons.



Figure: F-86s of the 4th Fighter-interceptor wing, Korean War.

Jet technology developed even more rapidly. By the time of the Korean War, jet fighters supported both sides, using identical German technology acquired after World War Two. Commercial jetliners were introduced in the 1950s, replacing ocean liners by the 1970s as passenger transport.



Figure: The Apollo 11 Saturn V rocket lifts off, July 16, 1969.

The Soviets achieved success in the missile race first. They even used the ICBM launch vehicle in October 1957, to send Sputnik, the world's first human-made satellite, into orbit. It was a decisive technological victory, and the Soviet propaganda ministry took full advantage of the opportunity to begin a space race while at the same time warning the U.S. that it could deliver nuclear weapons to American targets.

In response, the U.S. government rushed to perfect its own ICBM technology and in 1958 established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to launch satellites and astronauts into space. Initial American attempts to launch a satellite into orbit suffered spectacular failures, heightening fears of Soviet domination in space. While the American space program struggled, the Soviet Union's Luna 2 capsule became the first human-made object to touch the moon in September 1959. Then the U.S.S.R. successfully launched a pair of dogs (Belka and Strelka) into orbit and returned them to Earth alive in August 1960 while the American Mercury program languished behind schedule (the first dog the Soviets sent to orbit, Laika, died during the trip). Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin was launched into orbit on April 12, 1961. American astronaut Alan Shepard accomplished a suborbital flight in the Freedom 7 capsule on May 5. The United States had been embarrassed, and John Kennedy used America's frustration over early losses in the "space race" to bolster funding for a manned moon landing, which succeeded on July 20, 1969.

### Questions for Discussion

- How did anxiety about communism injure civil rights in America?
- Why was the United States so motivated to beat the U.S.S.R. in the space race?

The Cold War ended with the 80s. Between 1989 and 1991, the Soviet system collapsed and Russia lost control of its Eastern European satellites. Soviet leaders Yuri Andropov and Mikhail Gorbachev began relaxing the strict controls the state had been exercising on satellite states. Andropov prevented the U.S.S.R. from invading Poland in 1981 to crush the Solidarity movement, as they had done during the Prague Spring in 1968. By 1989, Solidarity was included in multiparty elections in Poland and the movement's leader, Lech Walesa, was elected President (1990-95). Andropov's successor, Gorbachev began a process of perestroika, restructuring the economy, in 1986 and introduced glasnost, a policy of increased openness in politics and support for individual rights including freedom of speech. The freedom of speech Gorbachev granted included freedom to criticize the government, which he would be unable to control.

In October 1989, East Germany's longtime leader resigned. Erich Honecker had been instrumental in building the Berlin Wall in 1961. Honecker had then ruled the communist nation from 1971 until 1989, and had ordered East German troops to fire on people trying to escape to West Berlin. Over a thousand people were killed over the years. The wall only lasted three weeks after Honecker's removal from office. He fled first to Russia and then to Chile to evade prosecution over giving the order to fire on people fleeing from East Germany, but by this time he was suffering from advanced liver cancer. Germany didn't fight too hard to extradite Honecker and he died in 1994 in Santiago.



Figure: Germans stand on top of the Wall in front of Brandenburg Gate in the last days before the Wall was torn down

Honecker had honestly believed the Berlin Wall was unavoidable and that by building it he had prevented a "third world war with millions dead." Tearing down the wall and reunifying Germany in 1990 were milestones in the end of the Cold War. In 1991, Gorbachev agreed to allow the Baltic Republics (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) to secede from the U.S.S.R., and hard-liners in the Kremlin tried to overthrow him in a coup. The president of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, supported Gorbachev and thwarted the coup. Although Gorbachev had been returned to the Kremlin, Yeltsin began gaining power for himself and Russia at the expense of the Gorbachev and the U.S.S.R. In late 1991, Yeltsin flew the Russian flag over the Kremlin alongside the Soviet flag. On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev resigned as President of the USSR in a televised speech, and handed over the Soviet nuclear codes to Yeltsin. The following day, the U.S.S.R. was dissolved and Yeltsin moved into Gorbachev's office at the Kremlin.

The collapse of the Soviet Union left the US as the world's only superpower. This was not welcome news to some of the officials of the old U.S.S.R. We'll look at how these people consolidated their power in the new Russia when we discuss Globalization in the next chapter.

**Question for Discussion**

- Do you think Mikhail Gorbachev intended to end the U.S.S.R.?

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# 1.13: Neoliberal Globalization

The term Globalization has a modern sound to it, and an air of inevitability. But what does it really mean? What are the consequences of political and economic decisions made by governments and transnational business corporations? And what does Neoliberal refer to? What's new about the agenda described by this adjective, and what's liberal?




Figure: Panamax container ship SHENZHEN BAY transiting the Panama canal.

At its most basic, globalization refers to business activities and the actions of governments beginning to be conducted on a worldwide scale. As we've seen, this has been happening throughout the modern period we've been covering, if not before. The voyages of Zheng He, the European colonial project in the Americas, the Atlantic Slave Trade, and the activities of the British East India Company in India and China were all conducted at a worldwide scale, and all had commercial elements. Conflicts such as the Seven Years War, the War of 1812, and World Wars I and II have also involved multiple continents. And events like the Columbian Exchange, which made American staple crops available to feed growing world populations, and the "Spanish Flu" pandemic which killed up to 500 million people throughout the world, also had global consequences.




As we begin to look at the most recent wave of economic and political globalization, big commodities like petroleum become prominent again. Twentieth-century economic colonialism involving oil was not limited to the Persian Gulf. As we have seen, before Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia became leading producers, Mexico was a heavy supplier of oil to the US in the 1920s. In 1938, Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas invoked the new, 1917 Mexican Constitution to nationalize all oil production in Mexico.

The constitution, which had been written during the Mexican Revolution, stated that the nation owned all the subsoil assets of Mexico, and Cárdenas formed the government-owned oil company PEMEX to extract and refine Mexican petroleum resources. Although the corporations (particularly Royal Dutch Shell and Standard Oil) objected loudly, Franklin Roosevelt's administration, which was busy implementing the New Deal at home to ease the impact of the Great Depression on the American people, acknowledged the right of the Mexican people to control their own resources. Soon, the advent of World War II encouraged the

Allied nations to put anti-fascist solidarity before the losses of a couple of U.S. corporations. PEMEX prospered and became Latin America's second largest corporation in 2009 (after Petrobras, the Brazilian national oil company).



Figure: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on a visit to Brazil in 2003.

As I've mentioned earlier, development of Venezuela's oil resources (thought to be at least 1/5th of known global reserves) began in the 1910s, when the country's president granted concessions to his friends to explore, drill, and refine oil – and these concessions were quickly sold to foreign oil companies. In 1941 a reform government gained power which quickly passed the Hydrocarbons Law of 1943 which allowed the government to claim 50% of the profits of the oil industry. The outbreak of World War II increased demand for oil to such an extent that the government was able to grant several new concessions in spite of the 50% tax. The postwar explosion of automobile ownership in the U.S. continued to drive demand and push oil prices higher, and Venezuelan production increased. Venezuela bought the Cities Service company and CITGO gas became a key export of Venezuela. In 1976, the government nationalized the oil industry. Oil was a mixed blessing for Venezuela, providing high levels of revenue for the government but also preventing Venezuelan industry from diversifying. In recent decades, Venezuela used its oil revenue to pay for a wide range of social welfare programs for its people. The U.S. criticized these policies as socialist, but they were rarely done without widespread popular support in Venezuela. Hugo Chávez, who was president from 1998 to his death in 2013, criticized the U.S. government vehemently but also continued the Venezuelan policy of giving free heating oil to hundreds of thousands of poor people in the US and Europe.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why did President Franklin Roosevelt decide not to intervene on behalf of foreign oil companies in Mexico?
- What was Venezuela's motivation for nationalizing its oil and then giving some away to poor people in the U.S.?

After increasing during the Arab oil embargo of the 1970s and then peaking during Russia's invasion of Afghanistan in the early 1980s, oil prices languished in the late 80s, exacerbating the Soviet Union's economic problems. In the early 1990s after the Soviet breakup, Russia began exporting millions of barrels daily into the world market. The dissolution of the U.S.S.R. and the Warsaw Pact accelerated the globalization of commerce. Globalization in this new phase is characterized by increased foreign investment by transnational corporations, privatization of state enterprises, free movement of capital across national borders, and a reduction of tariffs that impede the movement of products. A wave of deregulation accompanied these changes, as nations competed to attract businesses that were suddenly free to locate themselves anywhere resources, labor, and environmental costs were lowest.



Figure: President Boris Yeltsin handing the Presidential Emblem to Vladimir Putin.

This free movement of capital across national borders was heralded by western pundits as the final, decisive victory of the free market over socialism and communist totalitarianism. In Russia, people who had been members of the political elite were suddenly in position to buy up state-owned assets the government was selling at fire-sale prices. These opportunities were especially lucrative during Vladimir Putin's administration, which began in 1999 when Putin became Prime Minister while Yeltsin was still president. The new Prime Minister had previously been a K.G.B. counter-intelligence officer in East Germany, who had become Director of the F.S.B. (the successor to the K.G.B.) in 1998. Putin's friends and allies did extremely well in the sell-off of Soviet state industries. With the spike in oil prices in the early 2000s these men made vast fortunes and became some of the billionaire oligarchs we now see running the Russian economy for their own benefit. The change to capitalism in Russia did much less than it might have to benefit the general population because the oligarchs captured so much of the profit. The man who captured the most profit seems to have been Vladimir Putin himself. Putin's net worth in 2018 was estimated around $200 billion, or about twice the wealth of Jeff Bezos and four times that of Bill Gates, the two men who then topped the Forbes list of the world's richest people.

**Question for Discussion**

- Why might a leader such as Alexander Putin wish to hide his wealth?

One of the important forces driving globalization has been the removal of protectionist trade policies around the world. This trend began in 1947 with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), a free-trade agreement of 23 noncommunist nations. Over time, GATT reduced average tariff levels between member nations from 22% in 1947 to just 5% in 1999. The World Trade Organization (WTO) that followed GATT is a more permanent agreement that covers trade in services and intellectual property as well as physical products. The WTO, headquartered in Geneva, has 164 member states including, recently, China. Although the WTO's charter calls on it to "ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably, and freely as possible" throughout the world, critics argue it favors rich nations over poor nations; especially in its binding arbitration processes that function like an international trade court, whose decisions take precedence over local or even national court judgments. Global corporations that can deploy teams of lawyers (or even station them permanently in Geneva) to argue in their interest seem to have a disproportionate influence on WTO decisions. The process is designed to take a year (or 15 months with appeals) and the WTO says that since 1995, over 500 disputes have been brought and 350 rulings have been issued. Most of these rulings have benefitted the transnational corporations, often at the expense of workers, consumers, and the environment.

*Fortune* Global 500 list of 2020

| Rank | Company | Country | Industry | Revenue in USD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Walmart | United States | Retail | $524 billion |
| 2 | Sinopec Group | China | Petroleum | $407 billion |
| 3 | State Grid | China | Energy | $384 billion |
| 4 | China National Petroleum | China | Petroleum | $379 billion |
| 5 | Royal Dutch Shell | Netherlands | Petroleum | $352 billion |
| 6 | Saudi Aramco | Saudi Arabia | Energy | $330 billion |
| 7 | Volkswagen | Germany | Automobiles | $283 billion |
| 8 | BP | United Kingdom | Petroleum | $283 billion |
| 9 | Amazon.com | United States | Internet Services and Retailing | $281 billion |
| 10 | Toyota Motor | Japan | Automobiles | $275 billion |

Figure: The 2020 Fortune Global 500 Top 10 corporations.

Transnational corporations are uniquely suited to take advantage of this new world economy. Technically there are about 50,000 global corporations, but the number of corporations that are as important as states in the world economy is a bit smaller. Last year's (2020) Fortune Magazine Global 500 was topped by Walmart, Sinopec Group (a Beijing-based oil and gas company), State Grid (the Chinese national electric company), China National Petroleum (another Beijing-based oil and gas company), and Royal Dutch Shell Toyota. The next five on the list are Saudi Aramco (oil company), Volkswagen, BP, Amazon, and Toyota. Placement on this list is based on revenues, which is similar to the GDP used to measure the size of national economies. If Walmart was a nation, it would be larger than all but 23 of the 211 members of the United Nations.

### Questions for Discussion

- What are the implications of the top global corporations being larger than all but the largest nations?
- How might a greater shift toward China in the "Top 500" list affect the world balance of political power?

Free trade and "laissez faire" capitalism are typically believed to be a "conservative" value, so some people have been surprised to see the recent Republican (Trump) administration opposing agreements like NAFTA and TPP and the Democrats (Clinton, Obama, Biden) supporting them. Globalist trade policies have often been called "neoliberal," but this is another confusing term. The elements that make this ideology "Neo" are in many ways the opposite of liberalism. Since the Enlightenment in social and political thinking that preceded the American Revolution, "liberal" has referred to a focus on expanding the rights and liberties of regular people, often against the power of governments. Today the liberties being protected by neoliberalism are often those of corporations, which in many cases have gained so much power over the lives of regular people that they are a more immediate threat than governments.



Figure: President Bill Clinton watching V.P. Al Gore debate Ross Perot about NAFTA.

NAFTA was an example of neoliberal policy that increased the liberty of corporations at the expense of people. In a 1992 presidential debate, billionaire Reform Party candidate Ross Perot argued:

> "We have got to stop sending jobs overseas. It's pretty simple: If you're paying $12, $13, $14 an hour for factory workers and you can move your factory south of the border, pay a dollar an hour for labor,…have no health care—that's the most expensive single element in making a car—have no environmental controls, no pollution controls and no retirement, and you don't care about anything but making money, there will be a giant sucking sound going south."

Perot went on to explain that although in the long run and from a global perspective, globalization makes economic sense, it was not necessarily good for America. He said,"when [Mexico's] jobs come up from a dollar an hour to six dollars an hour, and ours go down to six dollars an hour, and then it's leveled again. But in the meantime, you've wrecked the country with these kinds of deals." Perot ultimately lost the election, and the winner, Bill Clinton, supported the North American Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect on January 1, 1994.



The aim of NAFTA was to create a free-trade zone in North America and eliminate tariff barriers that made American exports more expensive in Mexico and Mexican exports more expensive in the U.S. Among the results, Mexico has risen to the second largest market for U.S. agricultural products, especially meat. Mexico has also become a large consumer of U.S. corn which receives extensive subsidies from the U.S. government. Cheap American corn has impacted the ability of Mexican farmers to compete and has also impacted the biodiversity of maize, which you'll remember was originally developed in Mexico. Indigenous varieties are threatened by the monoculture of U.S.-developed hybrids – and since corn is wind-pollenated, the indigenous varieties are in actual danger of being lost. The danger of losing the genetic diversity of Mexican maize is that monocultures are vulnerable – remember the Irish potato famine? A pest or disease that wiped out Monsanto's GMO corn would be bad for the company, but it would become a global disaster if scientists had no other varieties they could use to produce a new, resistant hybrid. Corn is the leading staple crop in the world. Do we really want to put all our eggs in one basket?

Although the proponents of NAFTA claimed and predicted that the trade agreement would benefit all three nations, about eleven months after the agreement went into effect, the Mexican economy melted down. In late 1994, after Mexican investors decided to put their now-mobile capital in more stable investments abroad, the Mexican government was forced to devalue its currency and implement painful deflationary and austerity programs in order to get a bailout from the IMF. The experts and pundits all agreed that NAFTA was not to blame, and for the most part, the press either ignored or misrepresented the Mexican financial crisis, which it nicknamed the Tequila Crisis.



Perhaps the greatest effect of NAFTA on Mexico has been the rise of Mexican factories called *maquialadoras* which were located just south of the border and made products for the US market. In the five years after NAFTA's 1994 implementation, *maquila* employment nearly doubled. These factories in border towns adjacent to the U.S. manufacture goods using supplies shipped to them duty-free, which they then ship back north. By 2004, *maquiladoras* accounted for 54% of Mexico's exports to the U.S., and U.S. exports had grown to 90% of Mexico's total exports. The advantages for U.S. manufacturers were lower wages than the U.S. (in 2015 the Mexican hourly wage averaged $0.55) and fewer environmental and worker-safety regulations. Although Mexico has fairly strict labor laws, *maquiladoras* are immune and the majority of workers are young women who are less likely to organize. As low as the pay is, after the Mexican recession of the 1990s these jobs sometimes pay better than other available work for poor Mexicans. However, the gains in Mexican employment have been matched by losses in the U.S. As Perot had predicted, until wages for factory workers in Mexico rise substantially, workers in the United States will not be able to compete for these jobs. Despite the U.S. recession in the early 2000s and competition from other even lower-wage areas like Asia, there are still over 3,000 *maquiladoras* along the US-Mexican border.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why did NAFTA receive so much bipartisan support in the U.S. before its passage?
- Were the overall affects of NAFTA positive or negative for the U.S.?
- Who benefitted the most? Who suffered most?

TPP, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, was designed to be NAFTA on steroids. TPP was established in 2016 to create a common market for countries bordering the Pacific. It sought to eliminate tariff and regulatory barriers to trade between most of the nations on the Pacific rim, to create a common market between Asia and the west coasts of North and South America. TPP would also to establish an Investor-state dispute system that would allow global corporations to sue countries for practices they deem to be discriminatory. This means that if a national government tries to set a national minimum wage, mandate worker rights or safety regulations, or protect the environment, corporations can sue to have the laws changed or can demand compensation for their "losses".

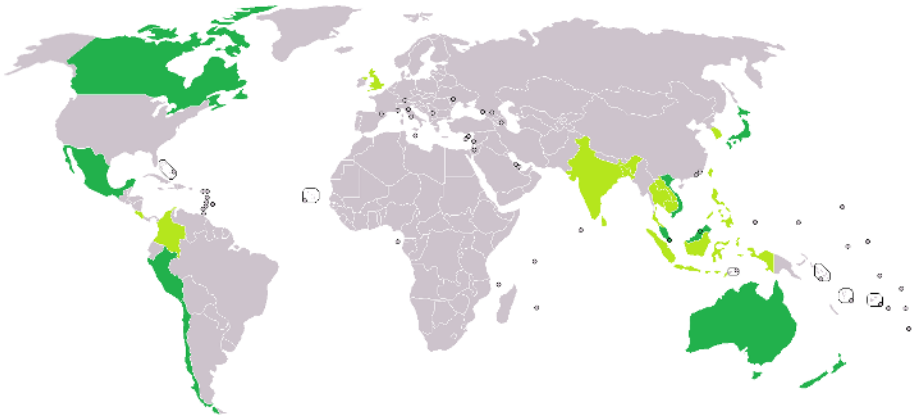


Figure: Map of TPP. Dark green are members; light green nations interested in joining.

Critics argue this raises the status of corporations to make them equal or even superior to sovereign nations, allowing them to sue in an "Investor Court" that would favor their interests over the rights of citizens passing laws to safeguard workers' rights, the environment, or other local concerns that impact the global corporation's profits. This is another way neoliberal policies subvert the democratic institutions created by the original liberalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ironically, NAFTA already includes an investor-state court system for the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, but since most of the companies that would use this system are U.S.-based, it is not seen as being an issue for Americans. TPP would be a much bigger source of lawsuits from transnational corporations not originally based in America and the U.S., which has higher minimum wages, worker safety standards, and environmental regulations, would probably be a target of many.




Figure: Banner from the 1999 WTO protest in Seattle.

In 1999, protestors picketed meetings of the WTO in Seattle and in 2011 Occupy Wall Street protested wealth inequality in New York. President Trump's move in January 2017 to withdraw the U.S. from TPP was applauded by Progressives like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. In rare agreement with Trump, Sanders said, "For the last 30 years, we have had a series of trade deals… which have cost us millions of decent-paying jobs and caused a 'race to the bottom' which has lowered wages for American workers." On the other hand, mainstream Republicans like Senator John McCain criticized what he called "a troubling signal of American disengagement in the Asia-Pacific region at a time when we can least afford it." McCain's concerns may have been genuine, but in the last five years of his life, McCain's campaign committee and PAC raised and spent about $17 million dollars, mainly from corporations like General Electric and Pinnacle West Capital that had an interest in the success of TPP. The support shown by "centrists" of both political parties in the U.S., and the opposition of populists on the left and right wings of both parties, suggests a growing sense among regular people that both parties are under the control of their political donors, and no longer governing for the people.

### Questions for Discussion

- In what ways might TPP be more challenging for the U.S. than NAFTA?
- What do you make of the agreement of "Populists" on the left and the right over U.S. trade policy?

An important element of the shift away from a U.S.-centered globalization is the growing economic power of Asia. Japan's economy was jump-started after WWII by U.S. aid including a $2 billion direct investment and letting Japan off the hook for war

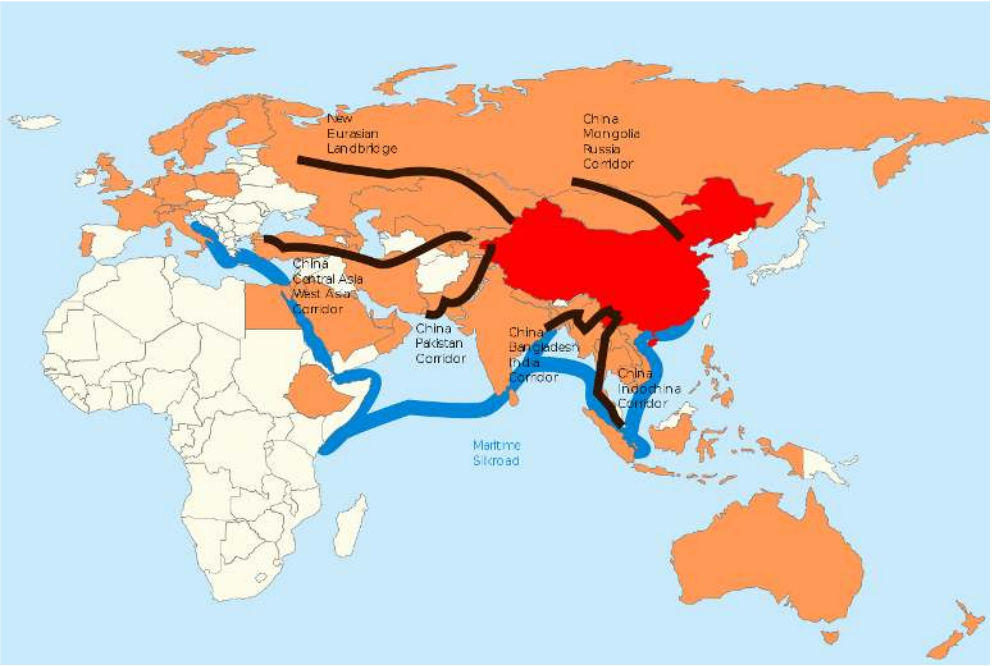
reparations. Japanese goods were also given preferential access to U.S. consumer markets, so the Japanese economy focused on low-wage industries producing products for export to America. The United States no longer considered Japan a threat, but rather as a potential ally against communist China. The Japanese people, already quite accustomed to austerity, complied with their government's new industrial policy and Japan reinvested its earnings and rapidly grew from a producer of cheap knock-off copies of American products to an innovator in high technology.



Figure: Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping with US President Jimmy Carter in 1979.

Other Asian nations like Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan followed in Japan's footsteps in the 1960s and 70s, often also with aid from the U.S. designed to slow the spread of communism during the Cold War. After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, Deng Xiaoping gained power in 1978 and China began shifting toward a market economy in which the government would direct development with incentives rather than decrees and directives. In addition to a plentiful supply of cheap labor, China had high savings rates and Deng's devaluation of the nation's currency allowed Chinese savings and foreign exchange surpluses to be invested in securities like American government bonds. This made China the world's bank, as nations like the U.S. fell deeper into debt. Finally, a rising standard of living in China has created a new middle class and a huge consumer market.

In 2002, ninety percent of the Chinese population lived in poverty, with seven percent listed as middle class, two percent upper-middle class, and one percent considered affluent by world standards. By 2012, the number of poor in China has been reduced to twenty-nine percent. Two thirds of the poor (nearly a billion people) have improved standards of living, in one of the most momentous shifts in world history. Fifty-four percent of Chinese in 2012 were considered middle class, and that fifty-four percent is expected to rise to upper-middle class status by 2022, with another twenty-two percent moving from poverty into the middle class, leaving only sixteen percent of Chinese people in poverty. This is nearly the same income demographic we see in nations like the U.S., which has a ten percent poverty rate. China is becoming a dominant force in the world economy once again, and the increased spending power of the Chinese people will soon drive the global market. Chinese demand for items like automobiles is expected to outpace the rest of the world for the foreseeable future. Companies like Foxconn, which began as a contract manufacturer of low-tech items like computer cases, has become a nearly $5 billion manufacturer of the highest tech items like Apple iPhones and computers. Lenovo, which began as a Hong Kong PC clone company in 1984, has been the world's largest personal computer maker since 2013. Lenovo acquired IBM's PC division in 2005, and the famous IBM ThinkPad became a Chinese product. Lenovo does about $45 billion in annual revenue and was the world's largest cell-phone maker until 2016 when it was overtaken by Apple and Samsung.




As Chinese purchasing power increases, world industry is will be challenged with producing consumer goods without exhausting finite resources or destroying the environment. Chinese cities have been known for their pollution, especially for their poor air quality. An increasingly affluent population may become less willing to tolerate environmental destruction, which might be a positive change. Hopefully, Chinese interest in projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative, which seeks to connect China with the rest of Asia, Europe, and Africa in a "New Silk Road", will include a commitment to the environments of the places China finds its natural resources and markets for consumer goods, rather than the approach to hinterlands taken by earlier world economic powers, in which out of sight often meant out of mind.

### Questions for Discussion

- In what ways was the U.S. instrumental in creating the "Asian Tiger" economies?
- How did Mao Zedung's death change Chinese economic and trade policy?




Figure: Growth of the European Economic Community/European Union.

The European Union grew out of a 1957 trade agreement that expanded on GATT to form the European Economic Community (EEC) including France, Belgium, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Like NAFTA, the EEC reduced tariffs and other barriers to trade. In 1993, the European Union was formed including the original EEC members as well as Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. In 1999, 16 member nations adopted a single

currency, the Euro, although Sweden and the UK retained the Krone and the Pound Sterling. The English financial district called the City of London has always been a center of European banking and finance, and the British were desperate to protect the Pound against the German Deutschmark and the growing power of the Frankfurt-based European Central Bank. In the early 2000s several Eastern European nations joined, bringing membership up to 28 nations. Most of these new members adopted the Euro as well, and after the global financial crisis of 2007-8, the Eurozone established emergency loan procedures that allowed richer members to bail out the economies of poorer members in exchange for what the lenders termed economic reforms. Borrowers often viewed these reforms as a takeover of their economies and harsh austerity programs.

In June 2016 the United Kingdom held a referendum and in a shocking nationalist vote the majority decided to leave the European Union. Brexit is scheduled to go into effect at the end of March 2019. The residents of Scotland and Northern Ireland both voted to remain in the EU, but their votes were outweighed by the English and they will be forced to leave along with the rest of the UK. The Republic of Ireland will remain an EU member, which will complicate the situation on the border between Ireland and British Northern Ireland. The economic impact on Britain is difficult to calculate, but EU nations seem disinclined to allow Britain to retain the favored trade status it currently enjoys. And although many British people and politicians wished to reverse the decision to leave, the EU was unwilling to pretend the Brexit decision never happened. During 2020, an eleven-month transition period was agreed upon, to allow negotiators to establish post-Brexit policies. At the end of 2020, an agreement seems to have been reached that will allow the UK and the EU to continue trading without tariffs in 2021.




**Question for Discussion**

- What were the arguments for and against “Brexit”? Which do you find more compelling?

In addition to the increase in international trade, global culture has been permanently changed by communications technology. Computer networks and cell phones continued a process begun with the printing press, the telegraph, radio, and television. Each of these technologies has been used to spread ideas to wider audiences, often against the wishes of those in power. More recent inventions like fax machines, data communication via modems, the internet, and most recently smart phones and social networks have been used to spread news of events like the Tiananmen Square protests, the Arab Spring, and the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. In spite of the efforts of some nations like China and Saudi Arabia to censor media and limit internet access, it is increasingly difficult to firewall societies from the global media culture.

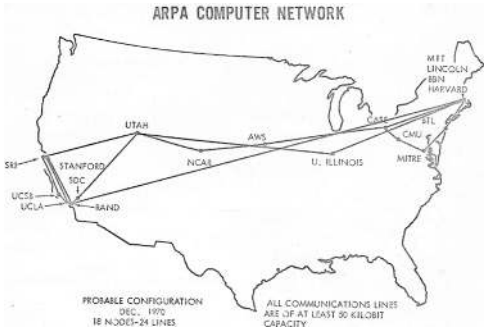
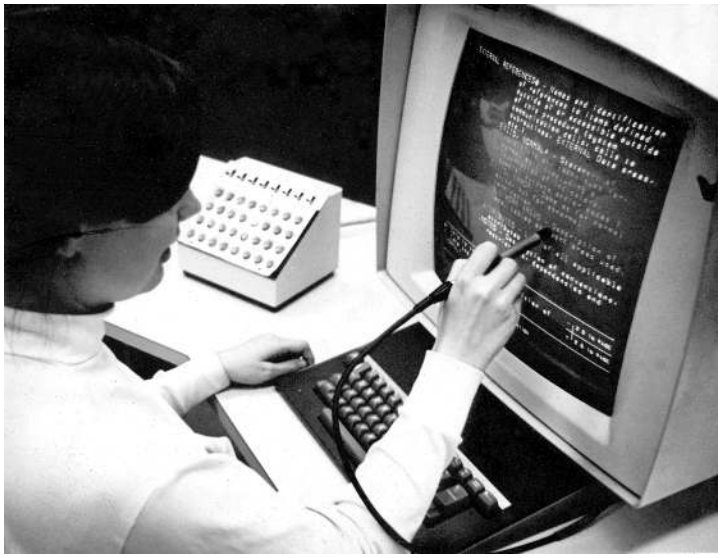


Figure: ARPANET in 1970

Because the virtual world is becoming as important to the global economy as the physical world of “bricks and mortar” commerce and communication, let’s take a moment to review the technological, government, and business changes that enabled it. One of the first computer networks was the semi-automatic business research environment (SABRE) launched by IBM in 1960, which initially connected two mainframe systems and grew into an airline reservation system. In 1963, American psychologist and computer scientist JCR Licklider proposed a concept he called the “Intergalactic Computer Network” when he became the first director of the Pentagon’s Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA). Licklider described it as “an electronic commons open to all, the main and essential medium of informational interaction for governments, institutions, corporations, and individuals.”

ARPANET, begun in 1969, was a network of networks, joining government facilities and research universities on a system dedicated to official communications. It was permissible for researchers and users to occasionally communicate personally with each other using email. Commercial and political communications, however, were strictly forbidden. A computer scientist named Ted Nelson developed the basic ideas that became hypertext and the web between 1965 and 1972. Nelson’s version of hypertext was based on the idea that there would be a “master” record of any document on the network. Exact copies of that document (which Nelson called transclusions in his 1980 book, *Literary Machines*) would point back to the original. Ideally, rather than just referring to the original, they would actually call up the original document wherever possible, eliminating the proliferation of copies.


Figure: Photo of the Hypertext Editing System (HES) console in use at Brown University, circa October 1969.

This ideal was never really achieved, because even though storage was expensive, bandwidth was even scarcer. This is unfortunate, because the existence of bi-directional links would have allowed the owner of a document to know where and when it was used, and to have received compensation for its use. Two-way linkage was much more difficult to implement than a one-way hyperlink that launched the user to a new place on the web. Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak compared the two in a speech about Nelson in the 1990s, saying one-way linking was a cool hack, while two-way linking required computer science.

Questions for Discussion

- How do computers and communication networks affect world culture and politics?
- What do you think the internet would be like now, if it had not originally been a scientific/government network?

After the introduction of Apple Macintosh and IBM Personal Computers in the 1980s and the growth of online communication and file-sharing using services such as Compuserve and Prodigy in the early 1990s, in 1992, an online game provider called Quantum Link that had renamed itself America Online offered a Windows version of its free access software. AOL free trial CDs became ubiquitous; CEO Steve Case claimed that at one point in the 90s half the CDs produced worldwide had an AOL logo. By the mid-1990s, AOL had passed both Prodigy and CompuServe, and in 1997 more than half of all U.S. homes with internet access got it through AOL. The economic power of the online access was becoming apparent: in 1998 AOL acquired Netscape, in 1999 MapQuest, and in 2000 AOL merged with Time Warner.



Figure: Tim Berners-Lee's NeXT computer, the world's first web server.

The commercial nature of subscriptions like AOL stood in sharp contrast, for a while, to the early internet. The inventor of the World Wide Web, Tim Berners-Lee, was a scientist at CERN in Switzerland when he wrote "Information Management: A Proposal" in March 1989. Somebody jotted on the front page of the paper, "Vague but exciting", and Tim was given time to work out the details on a NeXT computer in his lab. By October 1990, Berners-Lee had written the three basic technologies of the web: HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), the formatting language of the web; URI (Uniform Resource Identifier, AKA URL), which contains the protocol (http, ftp, etc.), the domain name (example.com), and folder and file names (like /blogs/index); and HPPT (Hypertext Transfer Protocol), which allows retrieval of linked resources.

Being a government-funded research facility, CERN decided to make the protocols freely available, but it was the development of the MOSAIC browser by graduate student Marc Andreessen in 1993 that made Berners-Lee's inventions the solid basis of the web. Andreessen graduated, moved to California and met Jim Clark, who had recently left Silicon Graphics. They formed Netscape and made their browser, called Navigator, available for free to non-commercial users. Netscape Navigator was destroyed by Microsoft's decision to bundle its own browser, Internet Explorer, with Windows 95. Microsoft made it very difficult for PC manufacturers or even users to uninstall IE and use Netscape and Java, which led to an antitrust case in Feb 2001, in which the court ruled that Microsoft had abused its monopoly powers. Netscape never recovered from losing the "first browser war" however, and was acquired by AOL in 1999.

From 1991 (when there was only one at CERN) to 1994, when Yahoo launched, the number of websites rose to 2,738. The following year, when Altavista, Amazon, and AuctionWeb began, the number of websites had increased nearly tenfold to 23,500. In 1998, when Google launched, the number of websites had jumped tenfold again, to 2,410,000. The early years of the web, known as Web 1.0, were a period when people with modest skills could acquire a domain and build a website. One of the first powerful and intuitive apps for building websites and pages was Microsoft's Frontpage. It was a Windows app that provided a WSIWYG design interface and output usable HTML code. Millions of people used the program to build personal and small commercial websites. Discontinued in 2003, Frontpage was not replaced by anything with similar power and ease of use. Partly this is because in Web 2.0 the do-it-yourself (DIY) element of the web has largely disappeared.

In 1999, a new generation of the web called Web 2.0 was announced, which claimed to focus on participation by users rather than people simply viewing content passively. One example of this participatory nature of the new web is the proliferation of social media. Another is people posting videos on YouTube. The web has also become a site of commerce though, so the most important

instance of “participation” by web users is as consumers buying stuff – either web content like Netflix videos or iTunes music, or real-world goods on e-commerce sites like Amazon.

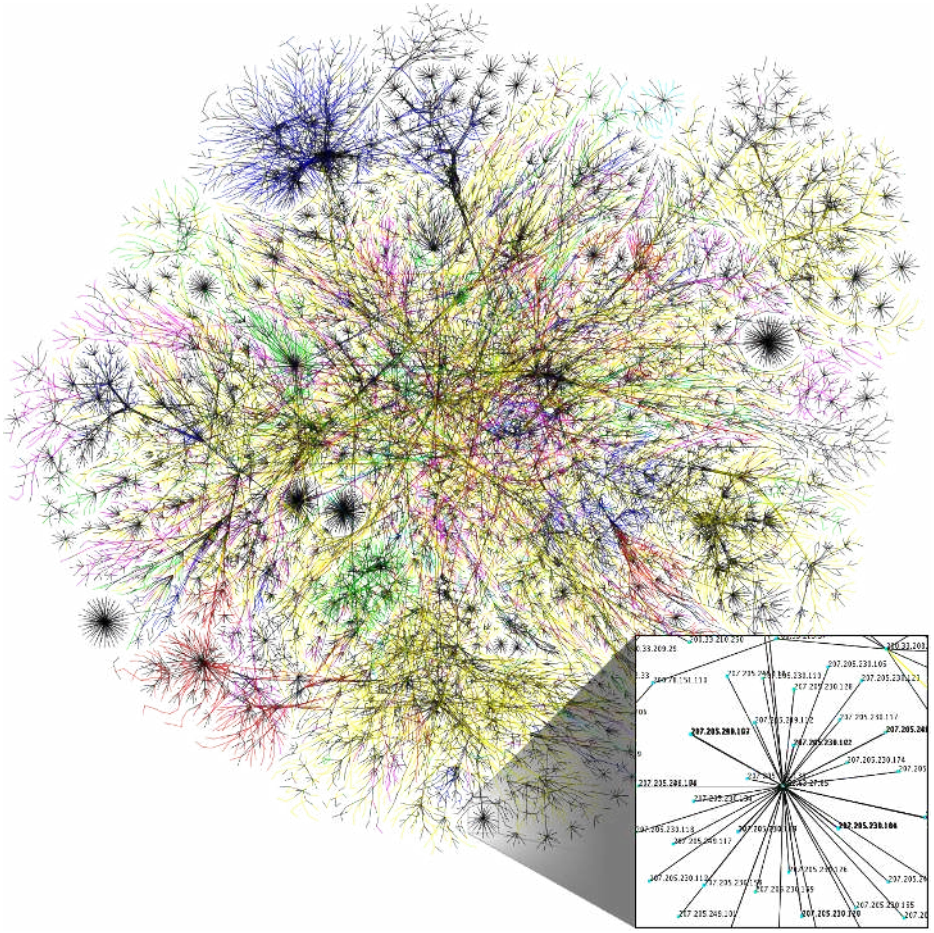


Figure: Map of the internet about 2005.

By 2001, when Wikipedia began, there were over a half billion internet users and over 29 million websites. There were a billion users in 2005, when YouTube and Reddit began, but growth had slowed to only 64,780,000 websites and a much larger percentage of them were commercial rather than personal. By 2010, when Pinterest and Instagram launched, there were 2 billion web users and the number of websites had actually declined from the previous year for the first time, to about 207,000.

In the 2010s the rest of the world caught up to the US in web use and website building. By 2015 there were well over 3 billion people using the web and by 2017 there were 1.7 billion websites. Since then the number of websites has decreased, dropping by nearly 10% per year. And about three quarters of these new websites aren’t active, but are parked domains or redirects. The actual number of sites in active use is probably closer to 200,000.

For people who wanted a presence on the web but didn’t have the skills or interest to own a domain or code a website, what some have called web 2.5 saw the beginning of social networking sites. The biggest of these from 2003 to 2008 was called Myspace. People could create a profile page, post images and multimedia, and see what their friends were up to. It was much less structured than what we’re used to today, allowing users a lot of flexibility to personalize their pages. Myspace was overtaken by a service, Facebook, that provided even more ease of use and uniformity. Facebook is extremely easy to use, which may be why it has recently become the place for grandparents to stalk millennials.

### Questions for Discussion

Most of the hardware and software you use was developed during your lifetime. Do you think this has implications for a “generation gap” between your generation and your parents’ generation?

The final element in the story of computing and networks involves the battle between free, open resources and commerce, which we've already seen in the growth of the web. Operating systems in early mainframes and personal computers were tightly controlled by manufacturers like IBM, Digital Equipment Company, or Hewlett Packard, software businesses like Microsoft (DOS and Windows), and a number of workstation companies like Sun Microsystems and Silicon Graphics, which each owned a proprietary version of an operating system that had originally been developed by researchers at AT&T Bell Labs (which was prevented by an anti-trust ruling to get into computers) and the University of California, Berkeley. The Uniplexed Information and Computing Service, called UNIX, had originally been more or less open, but had become commercialized when AT&T sold its rights to a network software company, Novell, which later sold those rights to Santa Cruz Operation (SCO). In time, other organizations released versions which only ran on their hardware (and often cost thousands of dollars), including IBM (AIX), Microsoft (Xenix), Sun Microsystems (Solaris), SGI (IRIX) – all proprietary distributions with similar functionality.



Figure: Linus Torvalds in 2002

In 1991, Finnish graduate student Linus Torvalds became frustrated with the high cost of UNIX. He wrote an operating system kernel in C, which he planned on calling Freax. Instead, early users called it Linux. The open-source operating system rapidly gained popularity among hackers due to its free distribution and its easy configurability. A programmer could configure the Linux kernel with just the features desired, which led to an explosion of both OS distributions (Red Hat, Debian, Ubuntu, Darwin, Android) as well as uses in embedded systems which were becoming popular. PC manufacturers like IBM and Dell adopted Linux as an option to reduce the cost of their systems and break Microsoft's monopoly on the OS. Linux became especially popular for running file servers and internet routers, replacing expensive proprietary systems like IRIX, Microsoft NT, and Cisco. And organizations like NASA discovered that clusters of networked off-the-shelf PCs running Linux could rival the computing power of proprietary supercomputers. Companies like Sun and SGI found the markets for their workstations and servers disappearing overnight. Currently all the systems on the Top-500 supercomputer list run Linux.

**Question for Discussion**

How did the development of open source operating systems like Linus change the economics of high tech?

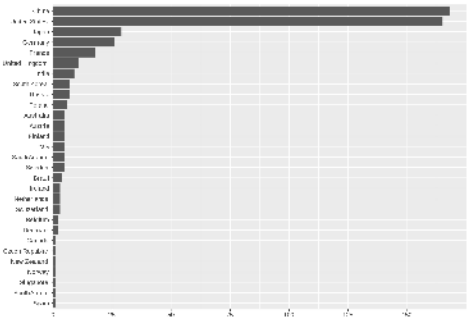


Figure: Top 500 Supercomputers by country.

Fifteen years ago, China had no computers on the Top-500 list. Today it owns the top two spots. The #2 machine, which was the world's fastest supercomputer from 2013 to 2016, uses Intel Xeon CPUs. But in 2015, the U.S. government banned the sale of these processors to China. The official reason for the ban was national security concerns, but many suspected a desire to recover the status as the world's fastest computer for America may have been a strong motivation as well. China responded by very rapidly shifting to using its own Sunway CPUs, based on a new architecture and instruction set completed in 2016. The Sunway processors reportedly have 260 cores and the "Taihulight" supercomputer built from them runs at up to 125.44 petaflops (1 petaflop = one thousand million million floating point operations per second), a lead the US and Japan are unlikely to be able to catch up with anytime soon.

As computing power enables increasingly complex artificial intelligence (AI) systems that can control financial trading systems, power grids, and scientific research, the challenges of national technology competitions become apparent. But even the new web technology has its dark side. Social media has been implicated in helping cause the genocide in Myanmar against the minority Rohinga population. Russian meddling and manipulation of Facebook data by a company called Cambridge Analytica may have influenced the 2016 Brexit vote. Foreign hacking and social media manipulation were both alleged during the 2016 and 2020 US presidential election, although it's unclear whether the intervention changed the outcome. In the course of investigating charges of Russian interference, details have come to light of just how compromised social media sites like Facebook have become and how much of their users' data they hold. And in 2013 American whistleblower Edward Snowden released information to journalists showing that intelligence agencies such as the NSA and British GCHQ are systematically invading the privacy of citizens in a number of illegal ways. As a result of these disclosures, Snowden has been forced to live in exile in Russia. It is not clear, however, whether the practices have been discontinued.


The Washington Post

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2013

Edward Snowden: 'I already won'

'Barrel bombs' batter Aleppo

INTENSE AIR RAIDS AHEAD OF TALKS

U.S., Britain protest Syrian civilian deaths

His leaks have fundamentally altered the U.S. government's relationship with its citizens, the rest of the world

Months of disclosures

**Question for Discussion**

Which do you think is a greater threat to the future: foreign domination of high performance computing or the government's invasion of citizen privacy? Why?

Finally, even when there's not an adversary regime like Russia spreading disinformation, Social Media algorithms create "filter bubbles" in which people only see information that doesn't threaten their world-views. In an attempt to generate greater advertising revenues, social media platforms and search engines routinely direct users to information that will attract and hold their attention for the longest time possible. The objective of the algorithms is not necessarily to promote a certain worldview, but simply to keep the user engaged as long as possible so that more ads can be placed and sold. However, as a result, users are directed to information that conforms with their "profile" of beliefs and biases. When information that does not conform to the user's preconceptions is presented, it is often presented in an adversarial way, to generate anger (which is another way to insure engagement). News and information are tailored either to conform to audiences' beliefs and prejudices, or to outrage. As time goes on, people on different sides of issues can literally find themselves living in different worlds, basing their beliefs on different data, and believing the other side is irrational and evil.



Some have argued that global media access disproportionately benefits nations like the U.S. which has a multi-billion-dollar content-creation industry, and that it spreads values some societies disapprove of, including consumerism and pornography. Even in the U.S. and the developed world, the internet is changing from the democratic, peer-to-peer sharing institution it was designed to be, into a platform for commerce and media consumption. In the early days of the internet, communication was text-based because bandwidths were low. The advent of fiber optic network backbones in the 1990s and the worldwide web created the opportunity to communicate using images and ultimately streaming video. 4G and 5G cellular networks allow media to be streamed to smartphones and tablets. This rapidly expanding bandwidth created an opportunity for the internet to replace broadcast television just as it had replaced the analog, landline telephone network. But access may not be universally available for long.




As technology exploded, many people expected a renaissance of DIY content-creation, and the explosion of websites, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, Instas, snapchats and YouTube channels has definitely expanded the ability of regular people to be heard. Five billion YouTube videos are watched daily and 300 hours of video are uploaded every minute. On the other hand, more content is produced for the web by global corporations daily, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has begun to eliminate net neutrality so corporations can buy "fast-lane" access that will turn the web into just another platform for corporate media. The promise of the early internet was that even though corporations participated, it was basically a peer-to-peer platform. Eliminating net neutrality could potentially kill that, unless hackers can come up with a new disruptive technology that allows the people to stay ahead of the corporations. If corporations can pay to have certain types of data or media fast-tracked, they can also pay to have other types of information slow-tracked or even suppressed. Imagine if a group with deep pockets and a political agenda could start editing what you can see on the internet. Oh wait. Don't imagine it. It's already happening.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why are "filter bubbles" a problem?
- Do you think technology has led to cultural imperialism?
- What is the danger of a loss of network neutrality?

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# 1.14: Limits to Growth?

Are human societies able to continue growing forever, or are there limits to the Earth's carrying capacity?

One of the most basic but often overlooked aspects of human interactions with the environment that has come to the attention of historians and more recently the public is the impact of population growth and resource scarcity. There are a number of reasons society prefers to avoid thinking about the danger of having too many humans around. We like people. Especially those who are close to us. And historically, the growth of our own particular group has been important for our survival and therefore has been desirable. In the past, people haven't always been too concerned if the success of their particular community came at the expense of their neighbors. But recently that neighborhood has expanded to cover the whole globe.



Figure: Thomas Robert Malthus, one of the first philosophers to concern himself with the question of overpopulation

There's an economic concept called the zero sum game which says that in many situations, for every winner there has to be a loser. Especially when societies face scarcity, attention focuses on how a shrinking or too-small pie is divided up. Since the industrial revolution though, Westerners have been able to live outside of the constrictions of zero sum logic. To a great extent, this abundance and sense that the pie was growing was based first on the increase in staple foods made available throughout the world by the Columbian Exchange and the Green Revolution, and also by the harnessing of fossil fuels such as coal and oil. But that doesn't mean Westerners have been unaware of the question. At the very beginning of the modern age, an English economist named Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) published a short book called An Essay on the Principle of Population. Malthus's theory, published in 1798, became instantly controversial on both sides of the Atlantic. Thomas Jefferson sent a copy of the book to his favorite economist (Jean-Baptiste Say) and asked for an opinion.

Malthus stated his basic idea like this: "The increase in population is necessarily limited by the means of subsistence…the population does invariably increase when the means of subsistence increase, and …the superior power of population is repressed and the actual population is kept equal to the means of subsistence only by misery and vice." Another way of saying that is, population grows as long as there is food and water to support it, and when these resources run out, population is brought back down through famine, disease, and war. These three causes of depopulation are often termed "Malthusian disasters."

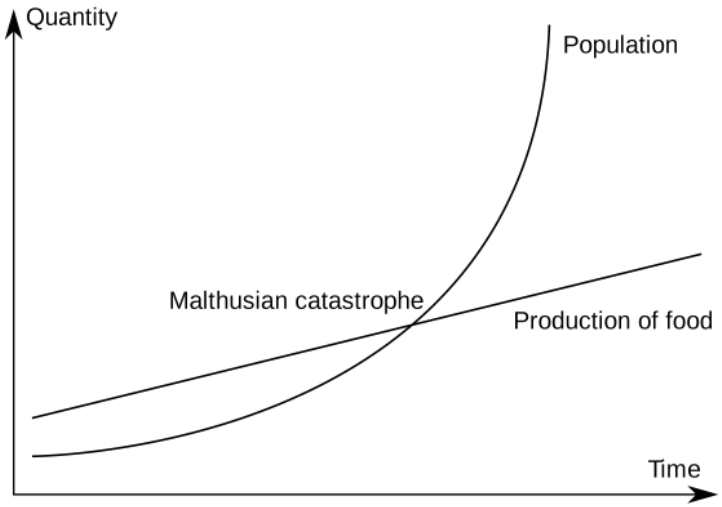
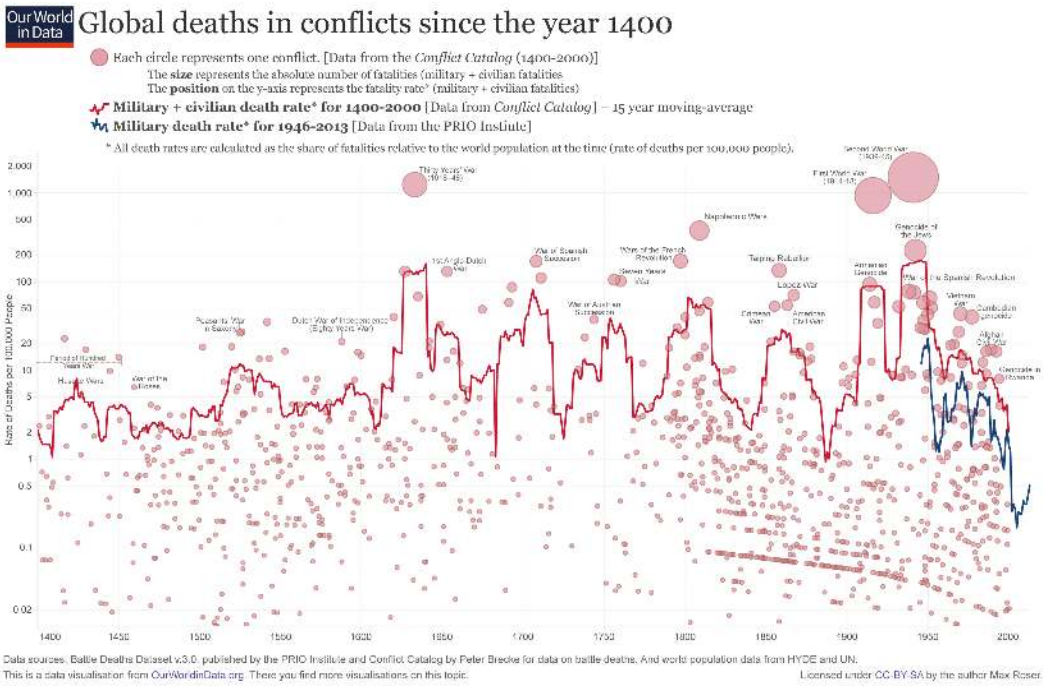



Figure: The Malthusian catastrophe simplistically illustrated

Malthus went on to observe that populations tend to increase geometrically: two people become four, four become eight, eight become sixteen, etc. In contrast, he said, food supplies at best increase only arithmetically: two bushels of wheat become four, which become six, which become eight. By this logic it is easy to see that a society can easily outrun its ability to feed itself if the population is not kept down by reducing births or increasing deaths, and to understand why early modern Europeans were so obsessed with acquiring new territories to improve their food production abilities.

The famines, diseases, and wars of European history gave Malthus the examples he needed of the types of crises that tended to reduce populations. If society was going to avoid these periodic disasters, he argued, then it would need to find some way of limiting the birthrate to avoid starving. The Malthusian theory, as it is called, was intensely controversial right from the start. One of the reasons was that it advocated birth control. Malthus himself only called for what he termed “moral restraint” to help reduce the birth rate, but many Malthusians had more active contraceptive measures in mind. The idea of limiting reproduction was seen by most religious people as a violation of the injunction to “be fruitful and multiply,” and eliminating the risk of pregnancy was seen as an encouragement of vice and an invitation to sin. Over two centuries later, we have not left these arguments behind.



The other big controversy surrounding Malthusian thought was that it was used by some members of the British upper classes to argue that the conditions of the poor should not be improved. If poor people had higher wages and more to eat, they argued, they would have more children and more of their children would survive, which would put unnecessary stress on the social system and in the long run lead to mass starvation. The poor simply had to suffer, they said, or society was doomed. Some critics accused these upper-class Malthusians of simply wanting to hoard more of everything for themselves. But some of them sincerely believed that there just wasn't enough to go around, and that adding more hungry mouths wasn't good for the poor or the rich.

It turns out, however, that the assumption held by Malthus and those members of the British upper class (and by many people today) that feeding the poor would lead to a population explosion is actually untrue. Population scientists today agree, after studying societies all over the world, that as economic security increases, a "demographic shift" occurs and birth rates decline. In other words, if the poor have enough to eat, infant mortality rates and people's fear of starving in their old age decrease. Death rates of children decline and as a result parents needing to insure that someone will survive to take care of them in their old age have fewer children. Educating women is the other major factor demographers have credited with reducing birthrates. Both factors have contributed to a demographic shift in the developed world where family sizes have decreased from an average of six children per family in the early nineteenth century to 1.6 in the twentieth. Many developed nations now face decreased growth or even shrinkage in their native populations.

In spite of the developed world's success limiting population growth by providing education for women and a social safety net, the argument is still raging regarding the "developing world." The Gates Foundation recently started a campaign called #StopTheMyth. A few years ago Melinda Gates made a short video titled "You Decide: Save the People or Save the Planet," claiming that the issue is still very poorly understood. Gates compared two nations, Afghanistan and Thailand, which currently have populations of similar size. She pointed out that in Afghanistan, where 10% of children die before the age of five, population is expected to nearly double by 2050. In Thailand, on the other hand, the number of children dying has decreased substantially. And so has the birthrate. "Clearly," Gates concluded, "letting children die now so they don't strain the planet later doesn't really work. It's a myth."



The other assumption you may have noticed in the Malthusian theory was that food production is expected to increase much more slowly than population. As we have already seen, this has not been the experience of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. New staple crops from the Americas, abundant land, fertilizers, and technology created a global Green Revolution that has allowed us to continually outrun Malthus for the last two centuries. But an agricultural scientist named Karl Sprengel noticed in 1828 that plant growth was limited by the availability of the essential nutrient with the lowest concentration. Sprengel's contemporary, biologist Justus von Liebig, realized this idea had wider applications and popularized it as Liebig's Law, which became a key idea in ecology. The Law states that growth is dictated not by the total resources available, but by the scarcest resource, which he called the limiting factor. So the question is, will we be able to keep outrunning Malthus forever, or will a limiting factor end our exponential growth?

**Questions for Discussion**

- Why did Malthus worry that overpopulation would lead to chaos?
- What has prevented a Malthusian catastrophe so far?
- Why do you think Melinda Gates felt she needed to set the record straight on population?

Until very recently in human history, the Earth has been so big and the total human population relatively so small, that the resources available to us have often seemed infinite. In 1800 there were fewer than a billion people on the planet. In 1900 there were still less than two billion. By 1960 there were three billion, and in 1999 there were six billion. Current world population is about 7.7 billion people. During this dramatic increase, there were periods like the early industrial revolution when worriers like Malthus and his followers expressed doubts and anxiety.

Malthus had no idea that his nation was about to expand its empire into Africa and Asia, or that emigration to the Americas and Australia would continue to reduce populations at home. And of course he couldn't anticipate advances in technology or the demographic effects of increasing economic security we have just considered. But sometimes even these advances proved temporary or subject to disruption.

The population of Ireland boomed in the first decades of the nineteenth century, as potatoes increased the calories available to poor people and seemed to eliminate the threat of famine. The Irish population peaked at over 8 million in 1841, based on the potato. About a third of all Irish people ate no other solid food, and lived on a diet of milk and potatoes. Worse, the entire nation (indeed all of Europe) grew just a single variety of potato, called the Irish Lumper. The blight that attacked this monoculture and destroyed potato harvests for several years in Ireland and throughout Europe killed over a million people and forced a million more to flee to America. The Irish population is about 4.8 million today, a little more than half its peak 175 years ago. As the science of ecology developed in the second half of the twentieth century and we began to distinguish between renewable and nonrenewable resources, and to worry about the dangers of depending on monoculture food supplies. Malthusian anxiety has returned.



In 1968 Stanford University Biology professor Paul R. Ehrlich published a sensational book called *The Population Bomb*, that was an instant bestseller. It began with the statement, "The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s, hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now. At this late date, nothing can prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate." Ehrlich became an instant celebrity and publicized his theories of social collapse on popular media like Johnny Carson's Tonight Show. Ehrlich's scenarios inspired some great dystopian science fiction, but luckily they did not happen in the way Ehrlich had predicted. Actually, a couple hundred million people did die of hunger in the decades after *The Population Bomb* was published. It's hard to tell exactly because when the United Nations reported worldwide deaths in the 1970s and 80s, it specifically omitted deaths from hunger. But these deaths did not reduce world population overall or result in the social chaos that Ehrlich had prophesied.

*The Population Bomb* may have done more harm than good in the long run, by making worry over the population issue an easy target for critics. But people remained concerned about the rapid increase of the world's human population. In 1972 an international organization called The Club of Rome published a study titled *The Limits to Growth*. Unlike Ehrlich's sensational predictions of doom, *The Limits to Growth* applied mathematical systems modeling to five particular variables: world population,

industrialization, pollution, food production, and natural resource depletion. The researchers used newly-available computer technology to produce a study that illustrated the complex interactions of these variables by showing three potential future outcomes. In two of these scenarios, the global system experiences what the researchers called “overshoot and collapse” in either the middle or toward the end of the twenty-first century. In the third scenario the computer models arrived at what the researchers called a stabilized world system.

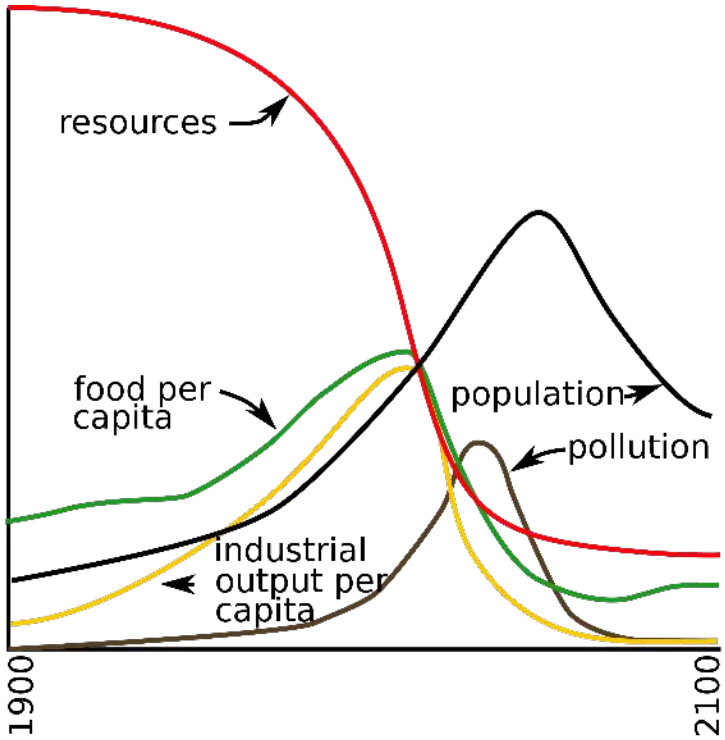



Figure: World Model Standard Run as shown in The Limits to Growth, which the authors claim has been validated by the data from the last thirty years.

In 2008, the original authors of *The Limits to Growth* returned to their models and published a 30-year review of how accurate their predictions had been. They found that measurements of all the variables they had identified were tracking with the predictions the computer models had made for an “overshoot and collapse” scenario. The accuracy of the predictions the study had made for the short term does not prove their longer-term predictions were accurate, of course. However, the findings do suggest that further study might be in order.

### Questions for Discussion

- What monocultures do we depend on today that might make us vulnerable, similar to the Irish potato situation in the 19th century?
- Why did Paul Ehrlich’s book possibly do more harm than good?
- Do you think the possibility of social collapse, even if uncertain, is something we should study more closely?

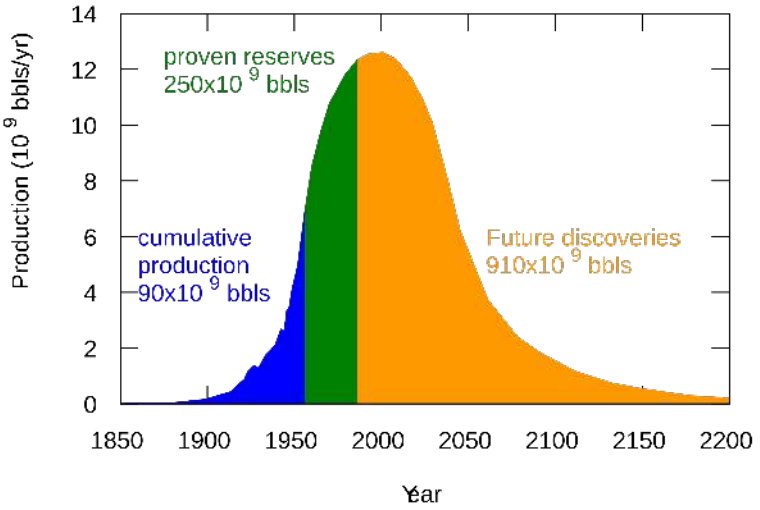



Figure: A bell-shaped production curve, as originally suggested by M. King Hubbert in 1956

Not all the warnings that humanity is reaching resource limits have come from university academics or international think-tanks that are naturally distrusted by regular people and corporate leaders. Marion King Hubbert was an American geophysicist working for Shell Oil in 1956 when he presented a research paper to an oil industry trade group The American Petroleum Institute, where he showed that for any geographical area (and by implication, for the planet as a whole), petroleum production follows a predictable bell-shaped curve. Hubbert's theory, which became known as Peak Oil, correctly predicted that oil production in the continental US would peak between 1965 and 1970, and then begin to decline. Hubbert also predicted that world oil production would peak "in about fifty years." Although the data and especially its interpretation are very controversial, several credible sources suggest that the peak in world production happened between 2003 and 2004, right on Hubbert's schedule.

Petrochemical prices can be expected to rise as supplies diminish. Currently, new technologies such as fracking and converting tar sands have added some new sources to the supply we now designate as "petroleum." These new additions do not refute the logic of Hubbert's predictions, although they do potentially push back the timing of the supply crunch that we would expect to raise prices. Two elements of *The Limits to Growth*'s computer mode, industrial production and food supplies, depend heavily on the price of energy, and a third (pollution) is an issue for both fracking and tar sands processing. A reduction of the supply of oil, an increase in its cost, or an increase in pollution could all have a significant negative impacts on those variables.

Hubbert's words actually echoed Malthus. "Our principal constraints," he said, "are cultural. During the last two centuries we have known nothing but exponential growth, and in parallel we have evolved what amounts to an exponential growth culture. Hubbert said our growth culture is "so dependent on the continuation of exponential growth for its stability that it is incapable of reckoning with problems of non-growth." These are not the words of some dewy-eyed environmentalist or crazy academic or sensationalist. Hubbert was an oil industry analyst. Some have argued that possible future discoveries of more oil could postpone society's shift to a non-fossil fuel energy economy. But even the oil industry for the most part agrees that production will decline. So the question we are left with is, how quickly will we use up what remains? And, given what we have learned in the last decade about the effect of burning fossil fuels on the global climate, should we?

**Question for Discussion**

What did Hubbert mean by an "exponential growth culture"?

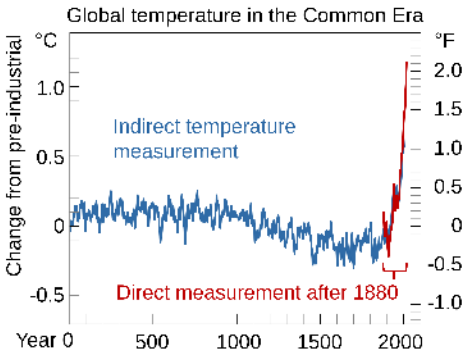
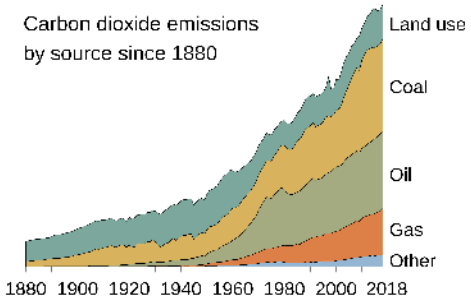



Figure: Global surface temperature reconstruction over the last millennia using proxy data from tree rings, corals, and ice cores in blue. Observational data is from 1880 to 2019.

Some climate activists have begun to suggest that for the sake of the environment, we ought to switch from fossil fuels to other energy sources as soon as possible and leave as much as possible of what is left in the ground. The argument against burning the rest of the oil (and coal) is that fossil fuels are one of the biggest contributors of atmospheric carbon that leads to global warming. While this is true, other factors such as deforestation and even agribusiness release comparable amounts of carbon. Simply stopping the use of oil will not solve the whole climate change problem, although it is a key element of the change society needs to make to stabilize the global climate.




But because energy is such a large part of the economies of developed nations, any change is heavily contested. Global energy corporations have an incredible ability to influence politics. A few years ago BP (British Petroleum, established in 1908 as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and now operating in 72 countries) issued an “Energy Outlook” report for the year 2035. BP claimed that Hubbert’s Peak Oil scenario was actually incorrect and announced the company’s intention to burn just as much as possible over the next two decades. BP’s claim that oil production hasn’t peaked, however, depended on redefining the word oil to include both tar sands and biofuels such as ethanol. Ethanol production depends not only on the energy-intensive production of surplus corn and cane sugar (used in Brazil as the primary plant source), but in government subsidies that keep the prices of these commodities below their cost of production. So it’s hard to see how biofuels could legitimately be called a new source of “oil.”

Climate change, more than any other environmental concern, has dominated the attention of Americans in recent years (and has in many cases pushed pollution off the table, which is unfortunate). Although the idea that the planet’s climate has been adversely affected by human activity is very controversial in the media, politics, and popular culture, it is almost universally accepted by scientists. According to NASA, at least 97% of climate scientists agree that global warming over the past couple of centuries is due to human activities, or anthropogenic. American and international science organizations like the American Geophysical Union, the American Meteorological Society, and the American Medical Association, in addition to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, have all gone a step further, agreeing with the American Physical Society, “We must reduce emissions of greenhouse gases beginning now.”

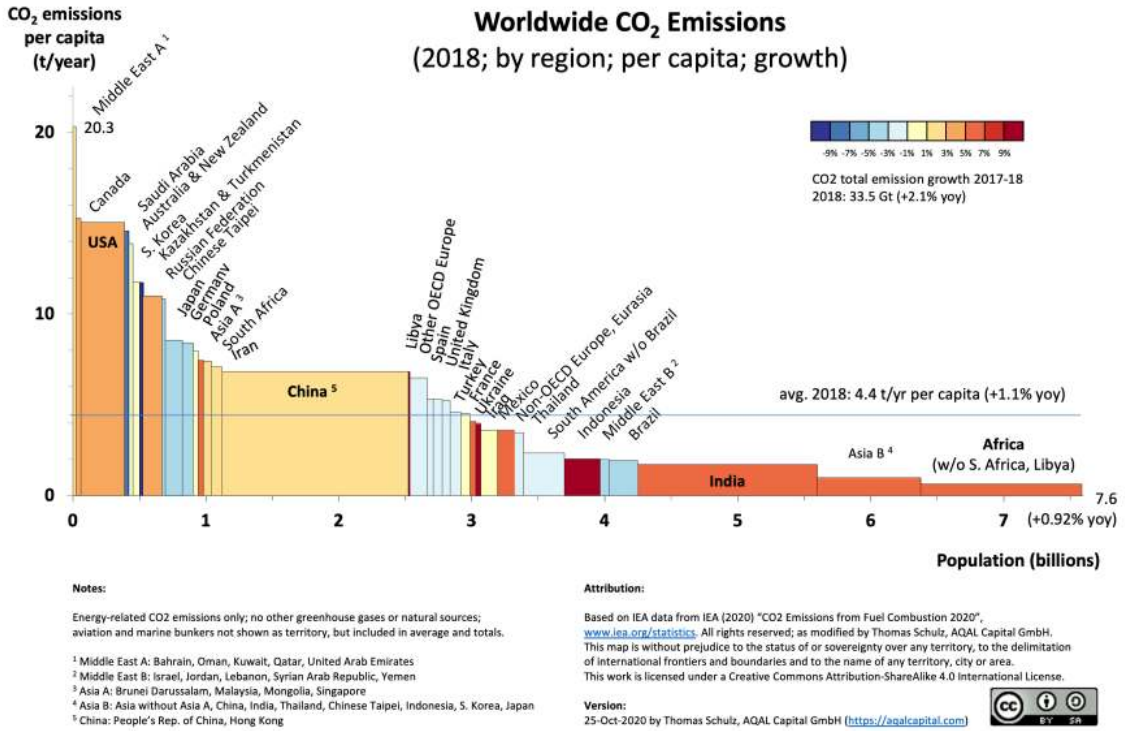



Figure: Per capita carbon emissions by country. Height = per capita emission; width = size of population. Color = rate of change.

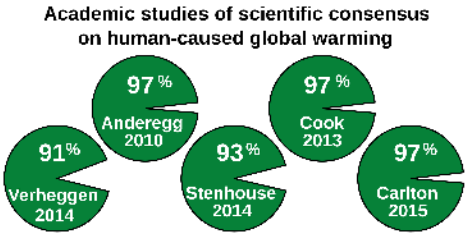
Of course who they mean by "we" is unclear, and the penalties for heeding their warnings are really hard to specify. We often hear that "The forecasts show that it is China, India, and the other emerging economies that are increasing their carbon dioxide emissions at a speed that will cause dangerous climate change. In fact, China already emits more CO2 than the USA, and India already emits more than Germany." This objection came from a European Union environment minster, speaking at the World Economic Forum at Davos in 2007. The population of China is 1.386 billion. India is 1.339 billion, USA 327 million, Germany 82.79 million. That means that although China emits more total CO2 than the US, on a per person basis, we still emit twice as much (15.7 tons per person to China's 7.7 tone). Similarly, on a per capita basis, Germany emits more (9.7 tons) than China, and five times more than India (1.8 tons per capita). While it's important for China and India to get their carbon emissions under control, it is unacceptable for Europe and America to try to shift the blame when we still outproduce them on a per capita basis. Especially since most of the carbon now in the atmosphere was put there by us.

### Questions for Discussion

- Why is atmospheric carbon a global rather than a regional or national problem?
- Why is it misleading to compare current total carbon emissions between countries in trying to assess "blame"?



Climate science is compli[redacted]rs worse, most Americans share a belief system tha[redacted] most cherished religious doctrines about the nature of the world and their place in it. To make matters even worse, concern over climate change has been identified with a particular political orientation, with people like former Vice President Al Gore seeming to suggest that if people aren't alarmed by climate change, they're monsters who don't love their children. The claim that only liberals care about the environment is not only absurd, but it ignores the traditional meaning of the word conservative. In reality, this is not a liberal vs. conservative issue. However, in addition to the negative reaction many people had to the tone of messages like the trailer above, the argument against recognizing climate change and doing something about it has also been carefully managed and funded by political action committees and foundations representing corporations that oppose changes in fossil fuel energy policy.




Although 97% of climate scientists agree on anthropogenic climate change, when Americans are asked by pollsters, "Do most scientists believe that the Earth is getting warmer because of human activity?" 55% say either "No" or that they don't know. Less than half of Americans are aware that scientists are basically unanimous on this issue, and thinking that scientists are unsure affects their own opinions about climate change and the the government policies they are willing to support to mitigate it. A recent study found that most of the public statements against climate change made from 2003 to 2010 could be traced to about 91 organizations which received $558,000,000 in funding during that period. From 2003 to 2007 this money was easily traceable to sources such as Exxon-Mobil and Koch Industries, two corporations opposed to any changes in energy policy.

With the changes in foundation funding that followed the 2008 Citizens United Supreme Court decision that allowed corporations to hide their political spending, the sources of money paying for climate change denial have been more difficult to trace. Ultra-free market foundations and even a few religious organizations like the John Templeton Foundation pay the bills of websites like Climatedepot.com that go out of their way to label any scientist endorsing climate change a "Warmist" who is probably working for Al Gore in an effort to regulate every aspect of our lives in some big global prison state. Climate deniers warn of the "command economies" they claim environmentalists wish to impose, using language designed to rile up libertarians and free market enthusiasts and mobilize them against changing the economy in ways that although they would be very bad for big oil companies, would almost certainly create millions of new jobs.

A Recent study found that conservative think tanks funded by energy corporations play a central role in "denying the reality and significance of anthropogenic global warming (AGW), especially by manufacturing uncertainty over climate science." The conservative think tanks sponsored the publication of 108 books denying climate change through 2010. American think tanks have also recently begun funding publishing in foreign countries to spread their message.

The study also examined the credentials of the authors and editors of these climate change denial books and found that "an increasing portion of denial books are produced by individuals with no scientific training. It appears that at least 90% of denial books do not undergo peer review, allowing authors or editors to recycle scientifically unfounded claims that are then amplified by the conservative movement, media, and political elites."

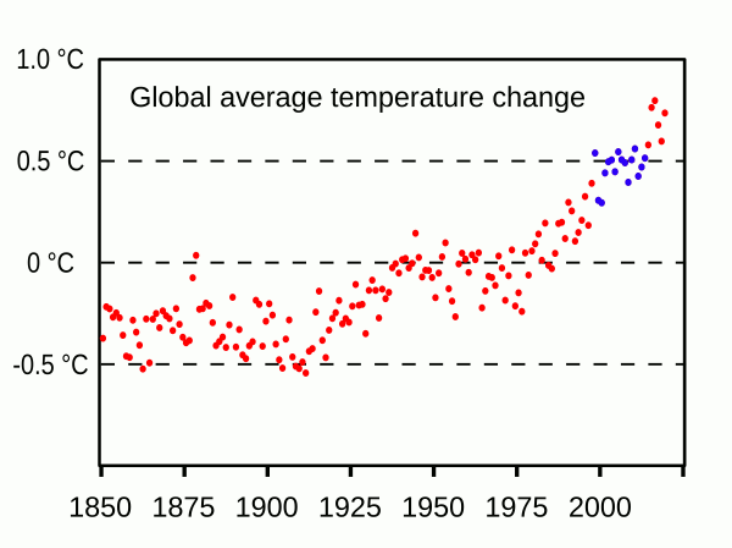



Figure: One deceptive approach is cherry picking data from short time periods to falsely assert that global average temperatures are not rising. Blue trend lines show short-term countertrends that mask longer-term warming trends (red trend lines). Blue dots show the so-called global warming hiatus.



Figure: The Solar Settlement, a sustainable housing community project in Freiburg, Germany.

This is unfortunate, to say the least. While Germany is becoming a world leader in solar energy deployment, in spite of receiving only as much sunlight as Alaska, and while Britain is mapping its shift to a post-oil based economy with its “transition towns,” many Americans continue wasting their time arguing over the make-believe issue of climate change denial. Most economists agree that there are currently more jobs in the renewable energy sector than in the fossil fuel sector, and that trend is going to increase. The overall economy would be better off, if we shifted to sustainable energy sources and reduced carbon emissions. Of course, the global petroleum industry would be decimated, so they’re spending their money trying to slow the transition.

Of nearly 14,000 peer-reviewed climate articles published between 1991 and 2012, only 24 reject global warming. There really isn’t any doubt that the Earth’s climate is changing in ways that are going to cause serious social disruption in the future. When political leaders say there is still doubt about the need to address climate change, we should follow the money to discover why. Our unwillingness or inability to understand the situation causes us to continue being manipulated by organizations interested in maintaining the status quo, and may mean that our choices in the future will be much more limited than they need to be.

### Questions for Discussion

- How does politicizing the climate debate make it more difficult to find solutions?
- What motivates some organizations to resist the idea that humans have caused global warming?
- Would addressing climate change more rapidly hurt or help the global economy?

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# 1.15: Appendix A - Choosing a Chief Executive and Voting

## Three Branches of Government: Legislative, Executive and Judicial

Since the late 18th century, many republics have separated governmental responsibilities into three branches, the legislative, executive and judicial.

The legislative branch (usually called a congress, parliament, or assembly), writes laws (including those that raise revenue) and appropriates funds for governmental departments and agencies. Some legislative branches have two chambers—for instance, the United States has a Senate in which states have equal representation, and a House of Representatives, whose members are apportioned according to each state's population. Bills—proposed laws—need to pass through both chambers.

The executive (a president or prime minister on the national level, or governor on a state level, or mayor on a city level) administers and enforces the laws passed by the executive branch, while generally conducting foreign policy. They select members of their "cabinet," usually with the approval of the legislative branch, who are called secretaries of departments (like in the U.S.) or ministers of ministries. These individuals run the agencies created by the legislatures to address various social and economic aspects of society. Foreign policy is mainly run through the chief executive and a foreign minister (the "Secretary of the State Department" in the U.S.). Local, state, and national executives enforce laws through the police and the operation of prisons, while national chief executives are often the commanders-in-chief of the armed forces.

The judicial branch is made up of the courts, who interpret the laws, determining whether or not a law has been broken. The highest court (for instance, the Supreme Court in the U.S.) decides whether or not particular laws are "constitutional," following the foundational law of the country.

## How Democracies Choose a Chief Executive

Democratic countries choose the chief executive through either a presidential, parliamentary, or presidential-parliamentary system.

*The Presidential System*

In the presidential system, citizen voters choose the chief executive (usually called a "president"). In addition to the executive powers described above, the president can also veto laws passed by the legislative branch, which then usually need a super-majority (like two-thirds of all members of each chamber), to pass the law "over" the presidential veto. This system originated in its modern form in the U.S. Constitution. It is also common in most Latin American countries.

The United States has its own indirect method of choosing a president, which is unique in the world: The Electoral College. Technically, in a presidential election, U.S. voters do not directly choose a presidential candidate, but instead vote for "electors" who are pledged to vote for a certain candidate. The number of electors for each state is the number of Senators (always two) plus the number of Representatives in the House of Representatives (which is allocated based on population). The least-populated states have a minimum of three electors (example: North and South Dakota); the most-populated state (California) has 55; Minnesota and Wisconsin each have ten; and Iowa has seven. Because of this system, it is mathematically possible for a candidate to win the popular vote and lose the electoral college vote—most recently, this happened in the 2000 and 2016 elections.

No matter how the president is chosen, the presidential system can result in the situation of a president from one political party and a legislative branch (Congress) led by another party. Because of this "divided government," critics point out that it is difficult to legislate, while others claim that it is an important check on executive power. Recent examples in the U.S. include most of the Clinton presidency, the last two years of George W. Bush presidency, and most of the Obama administration. In the last two years of the Trump administration, the House of Representatives had a Democratic majority while President Trump was a Republican as were most members of the Senate.

Another potential check on executive power in the presidential system is the process of impeachment, in which the legislature can decide to remove a president from office for criminal activity.

*The Parliamentary System*

In a parliamentary system, citizens elect the members of the legislative branch (usually called a "parliament"), which then chooses the chief executive (usually called the "prime minister" but referred to as the "chancellor" in Germany). In most cases, the

legislative branch has only one chamber instead of two.

The system originated in Great Britain and is common in many former British colonies (i.e. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Jamaica). Parliamentary systems sometimes include a monarch involved in the government, but usually as a figurehead who holds only symbolic power (i.e. Great Britain, Spain, Netherlands, and Sweden).

The Prime Minister is usually a member of the largest party, which means that legislation is more easily passed; it is impossible for the executive branch to be controlled by one party and the legislative branch controlled by another, as has occurred frequently in the U.S.

Parliament has the right to vote against a prime minister, which may force a new election. This especially happens in a multi-party system, where a Prime Minister needs the support of coalitions of several political parties: if one party decides to not support the Prime Minister, there are new elections.

*Presidential-Parliamentary system: Two chief executives*

In this system, voters elect both a president and a parliament; the parliament also chooses a prime minister.

The system is common in countries that previously had monarchs (Germany, France, Italy, Iraq, and India) but not always (Israel). Like most monarchs, the president in this case is frequently just a figurehead who only holds symbolic power, but not always (for instance, in France).

Sometimes the president plays a key role in multi-party democracies in which the president asks the head of a political party to form a government, usually in coalition with other parties. A historical example we discussed earlier was Germany's Weimar Republic. This is how Hitler became chancellor. When a parliament votes against a prime minister, the president may ask some other party to form a government instead of calling for new elections.

## Voting Systems in Democracies

There are several ways in which elections can be organized in democracies.

*Winner-take-all*

In this system, the candidate with the most votes wins, meaning they can win with a plurality rather than a majority of votes. It is common in most elections in the United States, especially in choosing members of Congress and in choosing presidential electors.

Winner-take-all usually results in a two-party system, as in the U.S., since voters feel that they are "wasting" their votes if they choose a third-party candidate. This often results in people voting against candidates they don't want rather than for candidates they do. They reason that the candidate they actually prefer might take votes away from the "lesser-of-two-evils" candidate, resulting in a government that they *really* do not want.

Still, this voting system may result in candidates winning with less than a majority of the vote when there are more than three viable candidates (such as the U.S. presidential elections of 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2016; Minnesota Senate election of 2008; Minnesota elections for governor from 1998 through 2010). Some criticize this system since voters are limited in their choice of candidates; others argue that the additional system of "primary elections"—in which voters choose which candidate will represent a party in the "general election"—gives all voices a chance to be heard.

*Proportional Representation*

This system is only used in legislative elections. In proportional representation, voters choose a party; parties are assigned their number of seats in a legislature based on the percentage of votes that the party wins.

> Fictional example: 100 seats in the Minnesota Senate, elected statewide by proportional representation
>
> Democratic Party: 30%—30 seats
>
> Republican Party: 35%—35 seats
>
> Independence Party: 20%—20 seats
>
> Green Party: 15%—15 seats

Proportional representation almost always results in a multi-party system, since voters do not feel that they are “wasting” a vote on a third party, since every party wins something (if they reach a certain percentage of total votes).

The system of choosing who will represent the party varies; it may occur before the elections (parties draw up an ordered list of potential representatives) or on the day of the election (voters choose both the party and the individual, so that vote tallies for individuals determine the order of potential representatives). In the fictional case described above, if the Republicans won 35% of the vote, the first 35 individuals on their list would win a seat in the legislature.

Combined with a parliamentary or a presidential-parliamentary system of government, a multi-party situation frequently means that a prime minister is chosen as part of a coalition of parties, if no party has a clear majority in the legislature. This is the current situation in Germany, Italy, and Israel.

*Fifty Percent Plus One*

Candidates in this system must win at least a simple majority of votes (fifty percent plus one); if this does not happen, the top two vote-winners compete in a second (run-off) election.

This system is common in choosing presidents in both the presidential and presidential-parliamentary systems (an important exception is the U.S.). It encourages a multi-party situation, while preventing a candidate from being elected with only a small plurality. This system is used in some Congressional elections in the U.S. (Texas currently has this system). Historical example: Electing the President in the Weimar Republic.

*Ranked Choice Voting*

A variation of the “fifty percent plus one” system is called Instant Run-Off Voting (IRV), where voters rank their first choice, then their second choice, and then their third choice. If no candidate receives more than 50% as a first choice, the next count is limited to the top two vote-getters, with the second-choice votes cast by those whose first choice lost added to the top two vote-getters. This system is currently being used in the Twin Cities in elections for city council and mayor.

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# 1.16: Appendix B- Finance and Taxes

## Basics of Banking: Lending Money at Interest

Banks earn a profit by lending money at interest; when borrowers pay back what they owe, they also pay the bank a percent above the amount lent. Borrowers include both individuals who want to purchase homes and consumer goods, and businesses which are financing their operations or investing in their own expansion.

To acquire money to lend, banks do at least two things: attract depositors by guaranteeing to pay them interest on their savings accounts; and borrow money from other, larger banks. In most countries, banks can also borrow from a central government-run bank (called the Federal Reserve in the United States). Also, in some countries (including the United States), banks make investments in stocks, bonds, and other financial instruments to earn higher rates of return.

### What is Money Worth?

Like any commodity—corn, soybeans, cars, shoes—the value of any currency is based on supply and demand: high demand and low supply raises the value of money, while low demand and high supply lowers the value. The trick to remember, however, is that if there is a high supply and low demand of a currency—too much money in the money supply—the value of money drops, so prices actually go *up*. The consumer needs *more* currency to buy things if the market feels that there is too much of it. This is called inflation.

Until the early 1970s, most national currencies were "backed" by gold (and silver); in other words, its "worth" was denominated in metal. Since that time, countries have generally based the value of their currency on whatever the domestic and international financial markets determine it to be (through the concept of supply and demand explained above). Almost always, international finance is denominated in U.S. dollars (although the Euro, the British pound, the Chinese yuan, and the Japanese yen are also important international currencies).

As seen in the example of hyperinflation during the Weimar Republic in Chapter 8, too much money in the money supply may mean that wages chase prices, which in turn chase wages; causing an inflationary spiral with people losing their savings to buy basic food items. However, the example of hyperinflation reveals one positive aspect to inflation: it is easier to pay off debts since the new currency is worth less than what was borrowed.

Normal inflation, therefore, can be a good thing, since it can encourage borrowing to buy things: what you borrow today may not be worth as much by the time you pay off your loan. However, defining what is "normal" inflation, and achieving that level, is the challenge faced by banking systems. Usually central banks in each country play a key role in determining the money supply; in the United States, that is the Federal Reserve System—the "Fed."

### Financial Concepts in the U.S.: Inflation and the Federal Reserve System

The Federal Reserve System was established in the United States in 1913 during the period of activist government known as the Progressive Era. Other countries already had government-run central banks, and the U.S. had experimented with this idea in the 1820s and 1830s, but had abandoned it, relying exclusively on the private banking system.

A few years before the Fed existed, in 1907, a financial crisis broke out, called the "Bankers' Panic." Banks stopped lending to businesses and to each other, fearing that they would not be paid back, threatening the stability of the U.S. economy. However, private banking tycoon J.P. Morgan stepped in, lent money to banks that were on the verge of collapse, and investors' confidence in the financial system was restored.

After the panic, many people began thinking that maybe having the entire U.S. banking system dependent on a single private citizen was a bad idea, and that the U.S. should adopt the "central bank" concept from other countries. Thus, the Fed was organized. There are checks and balances involved: members of the Federal Reserve board and its chair are appointed by the U.S. President for set terms of office; and their appointments need to be approved by the Senate.

*Interest Rates, Banks, and Lending*

The Fed lends money to banks at interest, which then lend to each other and to the rest of the economy at a higher rate of interest. The interest rate banks use to lend to each other is called the prime rate. It is usually three percentage points above the Fed's

interest rate to the banks. For example, if the Fed's rate is 1%, then the prime rate is 4%. Banks make profits by lending money at interest—but they have to also pay back the Fed.

The banks that borrow from other banks establish a higher interest rate than the prime rate for loans to businesses and personal borrowers. Borrowers are typically required to pay back at least the monthly interest rate plus a bit of "principle" (the original amount borrowed).

The bank's rate may fluctuate for individual borrowers based on how much confidence a bank has that they will be paid back. This decision is based on a "credit rating" which is established by private companies like Standard and Poor's and Moody's. The credit rating is measured by determining previous borrowing history and how well a borrower reliably pays back their loans (including on credit cards). Banks also consider other factors, for both individuals and businesses, such as savings and other investments, before lending money.

If a bank or other lending institution has less confidence in a borrower, they will charge a higher interest rate. This means the borrower would have to make higher required monthly payments—the reasoning is that if they borrower eventually stops making payments, at least more of the debt will be paid off to the bank up front.

*Controlling the Money Supply: The Fed's Interest Rate and Monetary Policy*

As mentioned, the Federal Reserve plays an important role in determining interest rates. It uses this power to establish a healthy rate of inflation or to help stimulate the economy.

Consider the following problems and their solutions:

> Problem—High inflation. Solution—Fed raises interest rates.
>
> If the Fed's rate goes up, the prime rate goes up and banks, businesses, and consumers borrow less and buy less because borrowing gets too expensive. This means less money in the money supply, which controls inflation. However, high interest rates may also slow down the economy because businesses will invest less and consumers will not buy as much.
>
> Problem—Slow economic growth or a recession. Solution—Fed lowers interest rates.
>
> If the interest rate goes down, banks, businesses, and consumers borrow more and buy more. This stimulates the economy. However, lower interest rates may lead to inflation—more money in the money supply—or to investors taking too many risks (the fundamental problem behind the 2008 Financial Crisis).

*The Fed's Monetary Policy, 1979-Today*

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when there was a recession with over 10% inflation and high unemployment, the Fed raised interest rates and the prime rate went up to control inflation. At the time, banks actually competed with prizes and other incentives to attract depositors, including establishing high rates of interest on savings accounts. People spent less and saved more, which also affected the money supply. The policy also deepened the recession, in the short run.

After the crisis began to fade, the Fed gradually lowered interest rates, just in time for the huge technology boom of the 1990s. New companies borrowed more at low interest rates. However, when the tech boom slowed down around 1999, the Fed lowered interest rates even more to stimulate the economy. This policy led to increased borrowing to buy real estate, which indirectly led to the 2008 Financial Crisis.

Since 2008, the prime rate has been very low, sometimes barely above 0%, in order to stimulate economic growth. In the U.S., the recovery was gradual but sustained—jobs were added to the economy for every month from mid-2009 until the beginning of the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic.

*The Fed and Quantitative Easing: Another Tool in the Toolbox*

At the beginning of the 2008 Financial Crisis, the Fed also began a policy of "quantitative easing." This means that the Fed buys bank debt—what banks borrow from the Fed or other banks—so that banks can lend money instead of using it to pay off their own debts. This also stimulates the economy by encouraging more lending.

*The Fed Compared to Other Central Banks: No "Sovereign Funds"*

Unlike other central banks—for instance, those of China and Japan—the Fed does not make investments. In the case of China and Japan and other countries, central banks maintain "sovereign funds" by buying investments in their own countries, or in others. In this way, these sovereign funds purchase U.S. government debt by buying U.S. bonds (see below).

## Taxes, Government Borrowing and the World Economy

*Taxes and Government Revenue*

Taxes pay for government services (military, police, prisons, education, infrastructure, Social Security, etc.), but there are several different kinds of taxes. For instance in the United States, the U.S. federal government raises revenue by taxing—taking a percentage—of individual income and corporate earnings. The federal government also raises revenue through some sales taxes, especially on gasoline, alcohol and tobacco. Customs and tariffs (taxes on foreign imports) are still around but are a lot less important than they were in the nineteenth century as a source of revenue.

State governments in the U.S. are more likely to raise revenue through sales taxes and fees for certain government services (license plates, hunting licenses, etc.) Sales taxes are a percentage of the purchase price of consumer goods, but not all goods are taxed (for instance, Minnesota is unique in that the state does not levy a sales tax on clothing). Most, but not all, states also have taxes on personal income and corporate earnings.

Municipal governments in the U.S. usually collect property taxes (and, in some cities, sales taxes) to raise revenue. Property taxes are based on the value of real estate held by an individual or corporation.

School taxes in the U.S. are also almost always property taxes, which explains why rich suburban school districts can provide better public schools than poor urban and rural districts.

*The Tax Debate: "Tax and Spend" vs. "Trickle Down"*

"Tax and Spend": Classic Keynesian economics. Advocates of this perspective argue that government projects and services help build the country's future (infrastructure, education, affordable housing, etc.) while providing jobs, especially during hard economic times. (Most Democrats agree with this idea to a degree).

"Trickle Down": Cut taxes as much as possible. Those who promote this theory believe that individuals and businesses should have more money to spend any way they wish. Consumers will stimulate the market through personal spending, while businesses will reinvest and help grow the economy. This will create more government revenue as new workers and growing businesses are paying taxes. (Most Republicans agree with this theory to a degree).

*Government Borrowing: Selling Bonds*

Governments at every level and all over the world borrow money by selling bonds to finance spending on projects and services. Bondholders are paid interest on bonds, but, like stocks, may also resell them to other investors. Government bonds are paid with revenue (through taxes) gradually over years, spreading the debt to the next generations. This makes some sense: Why should current taxpayers pay completely for a new bridge, school, or public park which will be used by everyone for decades to come? Spreading the debt is seen as fairer.

United States federal Treasury Bonds are sold around the world to individuals, banks, and global sovereign funds (the government banks of China, Japan, and many others). The U.S. government has consistently made payments on its bonds for over two centuries and so U.S. bonds are considered globally as the best and safest investment–they are purchased even if they are being sold at almost no interest (which has been the case for most of the last 12 years).

Congress determines the maximum debt the U.S. government can maintain through bonds, called the "Debt Ceiling." The debate about whether or not to raise the debt ceiling is similar to the tax debate: some, especially among Democrats, advocate issuing bonds to invest in America's future, especially while interest rates are low. Others, particularly among Republicans, feel that the government should not burden future generations with more government debt. Like determining the best rate of inflation, the proper prime rate for an economy, and the level of taxation, economists and politicians also debate about how much government debt is too much.

*Confidence in Government Debt*

An important consideration for investors interested in buying government bonds is the confidence in a government's ability to pay its debt. Just like individuals and businesses, as long as a government continues to pay its debt completely and on time, then banks will lend more money to the government, adjusting the interest rate based on their level of confidence. Even countries have credit scores from rating agencies to help lenders and investors make decisions.

However, unlike individuals, governments never completely pay off debt, but that is less important than their ability to borrow based on how well they keep up on payments. For instance, Germany did not finish paying all reparations from World War One until 2010, yet this fact had little effect on its economy, which has consistently been among the world's top three for decades.

If a nation's economy collapses or some other disaster happens, or the debt gets too big (and again, there is a lot of debate over what "too big" is), then investors will have less confidence and a government will be unable to sell bonds and borrow money. This has happened not only to countries but also U.S. territories, most recently Detroit and Puerto Rico. The debt payments are restructured by the lenders, or reneged upon entirely, with future borrowing greatly affected because of the lack of confidence by investors and lenders. Sometimes a government built infrastructure that did not end up stimulating economic growth; other times, they did not foresee huge changes—like a population leaving a city for the suburbs. And sometimes, especially in certain developing nations, corrupt politicians and administrators robbed the funds, saddling a government with debt but leaving nothing of value.

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# Index

## G

globalization
1.13: Neoliberal Globalization

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    - 1.11: Decolonization - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 1.12: Cold War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 1.13: Neoliberal Globalization - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 1.14: Limits to Growth? - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 1.15: Appendix A - Choosing a Chief Executive and Voting - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
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