AP EUROPEAN HISTORY



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AP European History

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This text was compiled on 04/16/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

1: The Crises of the Middle Ages

- 1.1: 1.1 Crusades
- 1.2: 1.2 The Northern Crusades and the Teutonic Knights
- 1.3: 1.3 Medieval Politics
- 1.4: 1.4 Monasticism
- 1.5: The Mongols
- 1.6: The Black Death
- 1.7: The Hundred Years' War
- 1.8: The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism
- 1.9: Conclusion

2: The Renaissance

- 2.1: Humanism
- 2.2: Important Thinkers
- 2.3: Art and Artists
- 2.4: End of the Renaissance
- 2.5: Background
- 2.6: Economics
- 2.7: Political Setting
- 2.8: City-States of Northern Italy
- 2.9: Print

3: Gunpowder Revolution

- 3.1: The Ottoman Empire
- 3.2: War and the Gunpowder Revolution
- 3.3: Western Europe
- 3.4: The Holy Roman Empire

4: European Exploration and Conquest

- 4.1: Prelude to European Exploration and Conquest
- 4.2: Africa and India
- 4.3: Spain, Columbus, the Great Dying, and the Columbian Exchange
- 4.4: The Conquistadors
- 4.5: New World Wealth

5: Reforming Christianity

- 5.1: The Initial Catholic Church Reaction
- 5.2: The Inquisition and the Council of Trent
- 5.3: Religious Orders
- 5.4: Conclusion
- 5.5: The Context of the Reformation
- 5.6: Indulgences

- 5.7: Lutheranism
- 5.8: Calvinism
- 5.9: The English Reformation

6: Religious Wars

- 6.1: Prelude to Religious Wars
- 6.2: The Little Ice Age
- 6.3: The French Wars of Religion
- 6.4: Spain and the Netherlands
- 6.5: England
- 6.6: The Thirty Years' War

7: Absolutism

- 7.1: France
- 7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King
- 7.3: Prussia
- 7.4: Austria
- 7.5: Spain
- 7.6: England's Civil War
- 7.7: England's Glorious Revolution
- 7.8: Introduction
- 7.9: Conclusion

8: Trade Empires

- 8.1: Prelude to Trade Empires
- 8.2: Overseas Expansion in the 17th and 18th Centuries
- 8.3: The Netherlands
- 8.4: 8.4 Britain and the Slave Trade
- 8.5: Around the Globe

9: Scientific Revolution

- 9.1: The Scientific Process
- 9.2: Astronomy
- 9.3: Mathematics
- 9.4: Medicine
- 9.5: Science and Society - Women
- 9.6: Scientific Institutions and Culture
- 9.7: The Philosophical Impact of Science

10: The Enlightenment

- 10.1: The Enlightenment Defined
- 10.2: Context and Causes
- 10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
- 10.4: Politics and Society
- 10.5: The Radical Enlightenment
- 10.6: Implications of the Enlightement

11: The Society of Orders

- 11.1: Prelude to The Society of Orders
- 11.2: Social Orders Divisions
- 11.3: The Great Powers--First Four
- 11.4: Great Powers--Russia
- 11.5: Wars

12: The French Revolution

- 12.1: The Causes of the Revolution
- 12.2: Events of the Early Revolution
- 12.3: "Equality"
- 12.4: The Radical Phase and the Terror

13: Napoleon

- 13.1: The Rise of Napoleon's Empire
- 13.2: Military Strategy
- 13.3: Civil Life
- 13.4: The Fall of Napoleon's Empire
- 13.5: Russia, Elba, and Waterloo
- 13.6: The Aftermath

14: The Industrial Revolution

- 14.1: Big Changes
- 14.2: Geography of the Industrial Revolution
- 14.3: Transportation and Communication
- 14.4: Social Effects
- 14.5: Cultural Effects

15: Political Ideologies and Movements

- 15.1: After the Revolution
- 15.2: Conservatism
- 15.3: Ideologies
- 15.4: Romanticism
- 15.5: Nationalism
- 15.6: Liberalism
- 15.7: Socialism
- 15.8: Social Classes

16: The Politics of the Nineteenth Century

- 16.1: The Congress of Vienna
- 16.2: Revolts and Revolutions
- 16.3: The Revolutions of 1848
- 16.4: National Unifications---Italy
- 16.5: Germany
- 16.6: Russia

17: Culture, Science, and Pseudo-Science

- 17.1: Victorian Culture
- 17.2: Scientific and Pseudo-Scientific Discoveries and Theories
- 17.3: Mass Culture
- 17.4: Culture Struggles--Germany
- 17.5: First Wave Feminism
- 17.6: Modern Anti-Semitism

18: Imperialism

- 18.1: Introduction
- 18.2: Technology
- 18.3: The Second Industrial Revolution
- 18.4: The British Empire
- 18.5: Africa
- 18.6: Effects
- 18.7: The Counter-Examples – Ethiopia and Japan

19: World War I

- 19.1: Background to the War
- 19.2: The Start of the War
- 19.3: The Early War
- 19.4: The Evolution of the War
- 19.5: The Eastern Front and the Ottoman Empire
- 19.6: The Late War
- 19.7: The Aftermath

20: The Early Twentieth Century

- 20.1: Political Disappointments
- 20.2: Fascism in Italy
- 20.3: Fascism in Germany- The Nazis
- 20.4: Fascism- The Spanish Civil War
- 20.5: Russian Revolutions
- 20.6: Early Twentieth-Century Cultural Change
- 20.7: Modernism
- 20.8: The Great Depression

21: World War II

- 21.1: Conclusion
- 21.2: Leading up to War
- 21.3: The Early War
- 21.4: The War in the East
- 21.5: The Turn of the Tide
- 21.6: The Holocaust

22: The Soviet Union and the Cold War

- 22.1: Marxism-Leninism
- 22.2: Stalinism

- 22.3: World War II and the USSR
- 22.4: The Cold War
- 22.5: The USSR During the Cold War
- 22.6: Conclusion- What Went Wrong with the USSR

23: Postwar Conflict

- 23.1: Introduction
- 23.2: Major Cold War Conflicts
- 23.3: India, Israel, and Palestine
- 23.4: Africa
- 23.5: The Non-Aligned Movement and Immigration

24: Postwar Society

- 24.1: Second-Wave Feminism
- 24.2: Social Democracy
- 24.3: The Postwar Boom and Cultural Change
- 24.4: Philosophy and Art
- 24.5: The Youth Movement and Cultural Revolution

25: New Horizons

- 25.1: Introduction
- 25.2: Population and Climate Change
- 25.3: Growth in Technology
- 25.4: Towards the Present
- 25.5: Conservatism
- 25.6: Eastern Europe
- 25.7: The European Union
- 25.8: Globalization

Index

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

Detailed Licensing

Licensing

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: The Crises of the Middle Ages

The high and late Middle Ages were marked by economic and territorial expansion, demographic and urban growth, the emergence of national identity, and the restructuring of secular and ecclesiastical institutions.

1.1: 1.1 Crusades
1.2: 1.2 The Northern Crusades and the Teutonic Knights
1.3: 1.3 Medieval Politics
1.4: 1.4 Monasticism
1.5: The Mongols
1.6: The Black Death
1.7: The Hundred Years' War
1.8: The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism
1.9: Conclusion

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1.1: 1.1 Crusades

The Crusades were a series of invasions of the Middle East by Europeans in the name of Christianity. They resulted in a shift in the identity of Latin Christianity, great financial benefits to certain parts of Europe, and many instances of horrific carnage. The Crusades serve as one of the iconic points of transition from the early Middle Ages to the “high” or mature Middle Ages, in which the localized, barter-based economy of Europe transitioned toward a more dynamic commercial economic system.

Located in the Middle East, the Seljuk were fierce fighters, trained by their background as steppe nomads and raiders, who had converted to Islam prior to the eleventh century. They proved even more deadly foes to the Byzantine Empire than had the Arab caliphates. By the late eleventh century, the Byzantine emperor Alexius called for aid from the Christians of western Europe, despite the ongoing divide between the Latin and Orthodox churches.

In 1095, Pope Urban II responded by giving a sermon in France summoning the knights of Europe to holy war to protect Christians in and near the Holy Land. Urban spoke of the supposed atrocities committed by the Turks, the richness of the lands that European knights might expect to seize, and the righteousness of the cause of aiding fellow Christians. The idea caught on much faster and much more thoroughly than Urban could have possibly expected; knights from all over Europe responded when the news reached them. The idea was so appealing that not only knights, but thousands of commoners responded, forming a “people’s crusade” that marched off for Jerusalem, for the most part without weapons, armor, or supplies.

Urban II offered unlimited penance to the crusaders, meaning that anyone who took part in the crusade would have all of their sins absolved. Furthermore, pilgrims were now allowed to be armed. Thus, the Crusades were the first armed Christian pilgrimage, and in fact, the first “official” Christian holy war in the history of the religion. In addition to the promise of salvation was the promise of loot (and, again, Urban’s speech explicitly promised the crusaders wealth and land). Many of the crusaders were minor lords or landless knights, who now had the chance to make something of themselves in the name of liberating the Holy Land. Thus, most crusaders combined ambition and greed with genuine Christian piety.

The backbone of the Crusades were the knightly orders: organizations of knights authorized by the church to carry out wars in the name of Christianity. Originally organized to provide protection to Christian pilgrims visiting the Holy Land, the “monk-knights” took monastic vows (of obedience, poverty, and chastity) but spent their time fighting as well as praying. The crusading period caused the orders to grow quickly. Two orders in particular, the Hospitallers and the Templars, would go on to achieve great wealth and power despite their professed vows of poverty.

In all, eight major Crusade expeditions — varying in size, strength, and degree of success — occurred between 1096 and 1291.

Consequences

The Crusades had numerous consequences and effects.

- First, the city-states of northern Italy, especially Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, grew rich transporting goods and crusaders back and forth between Europe and the Middle East. Indeed, some of these cities evolved to become the banking center of Europe and the site of the Renaissance starting in the fifteenth century.
- Second, the ideology surrounding the Crusades was to inspire European explorers and conquerors for centuries. The most obvious example was the Reconquest of Spain, explicitly seen through the lens of the crusading ideology at the time. In turn, the Reconquest was completed in 1492, precisely the same year that Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas. With the subsequent invasions of South and Central America by the Spanish, the crusading spirit, of spreading Catholicism and seizing territory at the point of a sword, lived on.
- Third, there was a new concern with a particularly intolerant form of religious purity among many Christian Europeans during and after the Crusades. Numerous outbreaks of anti-Semitic violence occurred as many crusaders attacked Jewish communities in Europe while the crusaders were on their way to the Holy Land. In addition, anti-Jewish laws were enacted by kings and lords.

Going forward, European Christianity became harsher, more intolerant, and more warlike because of the Crusades.

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1.2: 1.2 The Northern Crusades and the Teutonic Knights

The “Northern Crusades” were invasions of the various Baltic regions of northeastern Europe (i.e. parts of Denmark, northern Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Finland). According to Catholic Church officials, the purpose was to convert pagans to Christianity. Leading the charge were the **Teutonic Knights,** a group closely modeled after the Templars, adopting their “rule” (code of conduct) and spending most of the twelfth-century crusading in the Holy Land.

The Baltic lands were the last major region of Europe to remain pagan. Neither Latin nor Orthodox missionaries had made significant headway in converting the people of the region, outside of the border region between the lands of the Rus and the Baltic Sea. Thus, the Teutonic Knights could make a very plausible case for their Crusades as analogous to the Spanish Reconquest.

The Teutonic Order ultimately outlasted the other crusading orders. The Order was authorized by various popes not only to conquer and convert, but to rule over the peoples of the eastern Baltic. Thus, by the thirteenth century, the Teutonic Knights were in the process of conquering and ruling Prussia, parts of Estonia, and a region of southeastern Finland and present-day Lithuania called Livonia. These kingdoms lasted a remarkably long time. In fact, the Teutonic Order ruled Livonia all the way until 1561, when it was finally ousted. Thus, for several centuries, the map of Europe included the strange spectacle of a theocratic state: one ruled directly by monk-knights, with no king, prince, or lord above them.

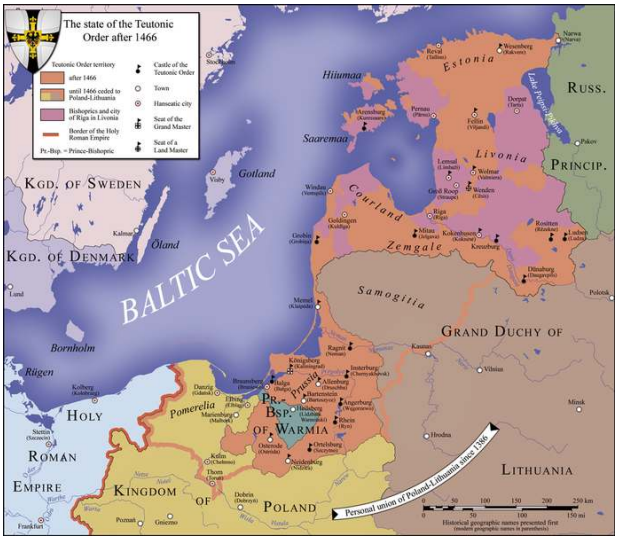


Figure 1.4.1: The theocracy of the Teutonic Knights as of 1466 (marked in orange and purple along the shores of the Baltic). Note that 1466 falls squarely into the Renaissance period - the Northern Crusades began during the Middle Ages but their influence lasted far longer.

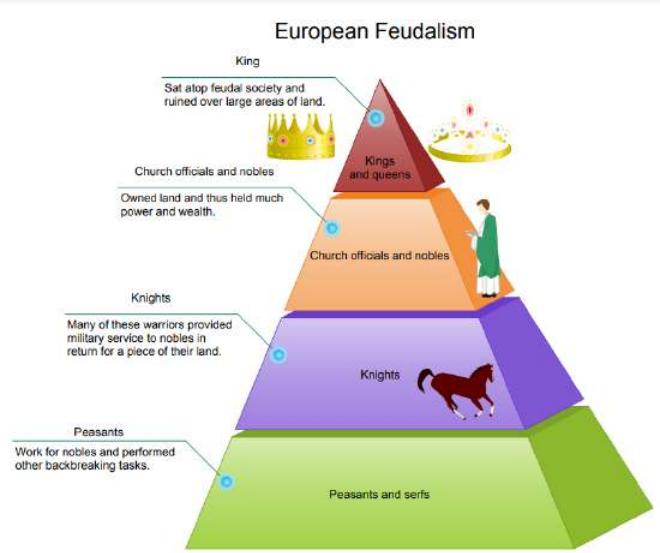
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1.3: 1.3 Medieval Politics

The feudal system flourished in the High Middle Ages, and consisted of a rigidly hierarchical social and political system in which one's vocation was largely determined by birth, landowning, and making war.



Full screen image: Edrawsoft.com

One of the traditional rights, and a vital factor in the lives of peasants, were the commons: lands not officially controlled by anyone that all people had a right to use. The commons provided firewood, grazing land, and limited trapping of small animals, collectively serving as a vital "safety net" for peasants living on the edge of subsistence. Access to the commons was based on traditional, centuries-old agreements that governed the interactions between different social classes. After the Middle Ages, landowning nobles would start to convert these lands to cash-producing farms.

The kingdoms of Europe were barely unified. In many cases, kings were simply the most powerful nobles, men who extracted pledges of loyalty from their subjects but whose actual authority was limited to their personal lands. Likewise, leaders were largely itinerant, moving from place to place all year long. These trips were critical, ensuring that their powerful vassals would stay loyal to them. A vassal ignored for too long could, and generally did, simply stop acknowledging the lordship of his king. Those patterns started to change during the High Middle Ages, and the first two kingdoms to show real signs of centralization were France and England.

In France, a series of kings named Philip (I through IV) ruled from 1060 to 1314, building a strong administrative apparatus complete with royal judges who were directly beholden to the crown. The kings ruled the region around Paris (called the *Île-de-France*, meaning the "island of France"), but had little influence beyond. Philip IV managed to seize almost complete control of the French Church, defying papal authority. He also proved incredibly shrewd at creating new taxes and in attacking and seizing the lands and holdings of groups like the French Jewish community and the Knights Templar.

In England, the decedents of William the Conqueror were effective in creating a relatively stable political system. All land was legally the king's, and his nobles received their lands as "fiefs," essentially loans from the crown that had to be renewed for payments on the death of a landholder before it could be inherited. Henry II (r. 1154 – 1189) created a system of royal sheriffs to enforce his will, created circuit courts that traveled around the land hearing cases, and created a grand jury system that allowed people to be tried by their peers.

In 1215, a less competent king named John signed the Magna Carta ("great charter") with the English nobility. This document formally acknowledged the feudal privileges of the nobility, towns, and clergy. The center principle: even the king had to respect the law. Thereafter, English kings began to call the Parliament, a meeting of the Church, nobles, and well-off commoners, in order to get authorization and money for their wars.

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1.4: 1.4 Monasticism

Monks and nuns took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience when they left their normal lives and joined (respectively) monasteries and convents. Attending to the spiritual needs of laypeople (i.e. people outside of the Church) was the primary function of priests. Thus, monks and nuns devoted themselves to prayer and to useful works, activities that were thought to encourage piety and devotion, and often proved to be extremely profitable to the monasteries and convents.

Monasteries and convents grew to become some of the most important economic institutions in medieval Europe. Over time, activities like overseeing agriculture on monastery lands, brewing beer or making wine, or painstakingly copying the manuscripts of books often became a major focus of life. In addition, they encouraged innovative new forms of agriculture, sold products at a healthy profit, and despite their vows of poverty, successful monasteries and convents became lavishly decorated and luxurious for their inhabitants. In essence, many monasteries and convents became the most dynamic and commercially successful institutions in their home regions.

Simultaneously, medieval elites left land and wealth to monasteries and convents, with the expectation that such actions would improve the chances of entering heaven. The result was astonishing. Statistically, monasteries owned a full 20% of the arable land of Western Europe by the late Middle Ages.

Learning

Scholarship *did* continue and even prosper within the church during the late Middle Ages. Numerous priests were literate in Latin and deeply knowledgeable about Christian theology. In addition, they had made major strides in considering, debating, and explaining the nuances of Christian thought. The church provide meaningful guidance and comfort to medieval Christians, and some of its members were exemplary thinkers and major intellectuals.

If there was a single event that changed education and scholarship in the late Middle Ages, it was the arrival of the lost works of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who had produced learned works on philosophy, astronomy, physics, biology, literary criticism, and logic. Over the course of the eleventh century, translations of Aristotle's work on formal philosophical logic re-emerged in Europe. Most of his work had been preserved in the Arab world. Enterprising scholars - many of them Jewish philosophers who lived in North Africa and Spain - translated his work on logic from Arabic into Latin. Later, Greeks from Byzantium brought their translations to Europe.

Aristotle's work on logic offered a formal system for evaluating complicated bodies of work like the Christian Bible. For example, the Christian Bible is full of parables, stories, and accounts of events that are often difficult to interpret. Even the four gospels sometimes offer conflicting accounts. What did Christ mean when he said "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:24)? How was a Christian to make sense of the stern, vengeful God described in the Old Testament and the deity of peace and forgiveness represented by Christ? Most medieval Christians were content to simply accept the sacraments and offer prayers to the saints without worrying about the theological details. Yet, increasingly, educated priests wanted to understand the nuances of their own religion.

Armed with his newly-rediscovered system of logical interpretation, key figures within the Church began to analyze the Bible and the works of early Christian thinkers with energy and focus. The result was **scholasticism**, the major intellectual movement of the High Middle Ages. Because the cathedral schools of the late Middle Ages increasingly relied on scholasticism to train and teach new priests, it spread rapidly across all of Europe.

By roughly 1100 CE, a new form of formal education based on scholasticism was the method of instruction in cathedral schools. The instructor 'lecture' or read a short passage from the Bible or an early Christian intellectual leader, then cite various authorities on the meaning of the passage. Then, students would consider the possible meanings of the passage in a period of meditation. Finally, students would debate their respective interpretations, citing the passage itself and any supporting evidence from the vast body of sacred and ancient writings. As a result, large numbers of newly-minted priests emerged with a strong understanding of Christian thought and an equally strong grasp of rhetoric, debate, and logic.

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1.5: The Mongols

The Mongols were nomads and herders with very strong traditions of horse riding, archery, and warfare, who lived in the eastern steppes of Asia. Traditionally, they threatened China. In 1206 the Mongols elected a leader named Temujin (b. 1167) “Khan,” which simply means “warlord.” After his election, he launched the single most successful campaign of empire-building in world history, eventually becoming known as **Genghis Khan**, or “Great Khan”.

Temujin personally oversaw the beginning of the expansion of the “Mongol Horde”. Over the following decades, Mongol armies conquered all of Central Asia itself, Persia (in 1221), northern China (in 1234), Russia (in 1241), the Abbasid Caliphate (in 1258), and southern China (in 1279). Importantly, most of these conquests occurred under Temujin’s sons and grandsons (he died in 1227), demonstrating that Mongol military prowess was not dependent on Temujin’s personal genius. Ultimately, the Mongol empires (a series of “Khanates” divided between the sons and grandsons of Temujin) stretched from Hungary to Anatolia and from Siberia to the South China Sea.

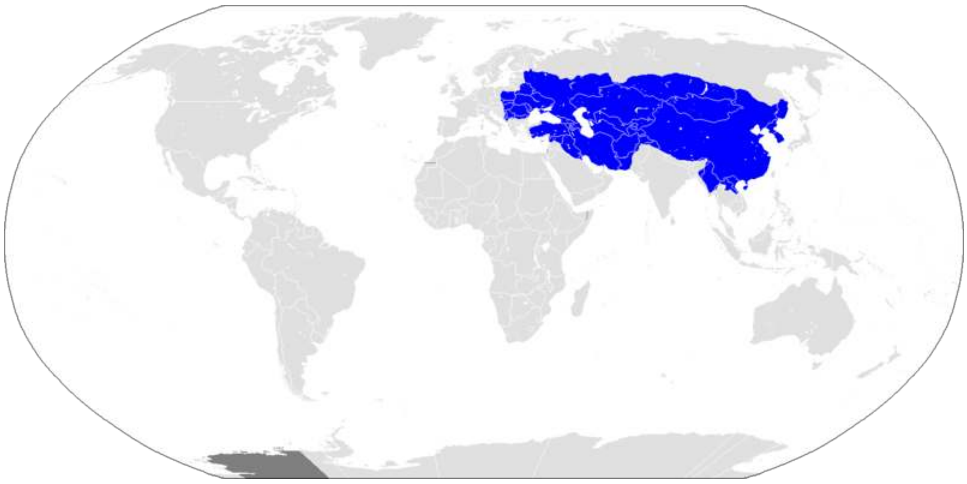


Figure 2.1.1: The Mongol Empire at its height, under Temujin’s grandson Kublai Khan, was the largest land empire in world history.

In 1241, Poland and Hungary would have been incorporated into the Mongol empire if the Great Khan Ogodei (Temujin's third son) had not died, and the European *Tumen* were recalled to the Mongol capital of Karakorum. This event spared what could have been a Mongol push into Central Europe itself. As it happens, the Mongols never came back.

Mongol rule had mixed consequences for both Asian and European history. Trade stabilized across the west–east axis in Eurasia, as Silk Road traders enjoyed a relatively peaceful route. It also terrified Europeans, who heard travelers’ tales of the non-Christian “Tatars” in the east who had crushed all opposition. Meanwhile, in Russia, it created a complex political situation in which the native Slavic peoples were forced to pay tribute to Mongol lords. To this day, the period of Mongol rule is often taught in Russia as the period of the "Tatar Yoke," when any hope of progress for Russia was suspended for centuries while the rest of Europe advanced. While that may be a bit of an exaggeration, it still has a kernel of truth.

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1.6: The Black Death

The deadliest epidemic in medieval and early-modern history began in the Mongol khanates and spread west. The Black Death (1346 – 1352), or simply “the plague,” devastated the areas it affected. Europe was especially vulnerable due to poor harvests and the lack of practical medical knowledge.



Figure 2.3.1: A later depiction of a doctor in the midst of a plague epidemic.

Historians still debate as to exactly which disease or diseases caused the Black Death. It was most likely the bubonic plague, which is transmitted by fleas. In the incredibly unsanitary conditions of medieval Europe, there were both rats and fleas everywhere. In turn, many human victims developed the “pneumonic” form of the disease, spread by coughing, creating an incredibly virulent and lethal version (about 90% of those who developed pneumonic plague died).

The plague exploded across Europe starting at the end of the 1340s. All of Southern Europe was affected in 1348; Central Europe and England by 1349; and Eastern Europe and Scandinavia by 1350. Social scientists estimate that the Black Death killed about one-third of the population of Europe in just three years. (That is a conservative estimate - some present-day historians have calculated that it was closer to half!) This enormous demographic shift had lasting consequences for European society, thanks mostly to the labor shortage that it introduced.

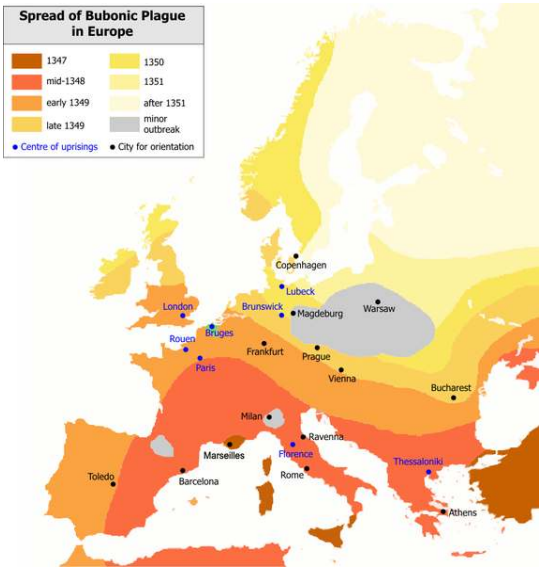


Figure 2.3.2: The plague’s spread, from south to north, over the course of just a few years. The section marked in grey is incorrectly labeled “minor outbreak”. In fact, while data is difficult to come by for that region, it seems clear that the plague hit just as hard there as elsewhere in Europe.

Consequences

Ironically, the plague contributed to largely positive economic effects.

- Lords tried to keep their peasants from fleeing the land and to keep wages at low levels. This action sparked various peasant uprisings. Even though those uprisings were generally put down, the overall trend was that laborers *had* to be paid more. Labor was simply more valuable. In the decades that followed, many peasants benefited from higher prices for their labor and their crops.
- For roughly a century after the plague, women had more legal rights in terms of property ownership, the right to participate in commerce, and land ownership. Women were even able to join certain craft guilds for a time, something that was unheard of earlier. The reason for this temporary improvement was precisely the same as that of peasants: the labor shortage.
- Europeans became so used to death that they often depicted it graphically in art. Paintings, stories, and theatrical performances emerged having to do with the "Dance of Death," a depiction of the futility of worldly possessions and status vis-à-vis the inevitability of death. Likewise, graves and mausoleums came to be decorated with statues of grotesque skeletons and writhing bodies. When people were dying, their families and friends were supposed to come and view them, inoculating everyone present against the temptation to enjoy life too much and encouraging them to greater focus on preparing their souls for the afterlife.



Figure 2.4.1: The Dance of Death, with this image produced decades after the Black Death had already run its course.

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1.7: The Hundred Years' War

The Hundred Years' War (1337 – 1453) was not really one war, but instead consisted of a series of battles and shorter wars between the crowns of England and France interrupted by periods of peace.

The root of the problem was that the English kings were descendants of William the Conqueror, the Norman king who had sailed across the English Channel in 1066 and defeated the Anglo-Saxon king who then ruled England. From that point on, the royal and noble lines of England and France were intertwined. As marriages between both nobles and royalty often took place across French - English lines, the inheritance of lands and titles was often a point of contention. The culture of nobility was so similar that the "English" nobles generally spoke French instead of English in day-to-day life.

The war began in the aftermath of the death of French King Charles IV in 1328. The king of England, **Edward III**, was next in line for succession, but powerful members of the French nobility rejected his claim and instead pledged to give the crown to a French noble of the royal line named Philip VI. When Philip began passing judgments to do with the English-controlled territory of Aquitaine, Edward went to war, sparking the Hundred Years' War itself.

The most famous victory was the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, when a smaller English force decimated the elite French cavalry through the effective use of longbows, a weapon that could transform an English peasant into more than the equal of a mounted French knight. In the aftermath of Agincourt, most of the French nobility accepted the Henry V of England as the king of France. However, Henry V promptly died, and the conflict exploded into a series of alliances and counter alliances between rival factions of English and French nobles. (One French territory, Burgundy, even declared its independence from France and became a staunch English ally for a time).

Between the fighting and the plague, the French population declined by half. Many French regions suffered economically as luxury trades shut down and whole regions were devastated. The French crown introduced new taxes, such as the *Gabelle* (a tax on salt) and the *Taille* (a household tax), that further burdened commoners. On the cultural front, the English monarchy and nobility severed their ties with France and high English culture began to self-consciously reshape itself as distinctly *English* rather than French, leading among other things to the use of the English language as the language of state and the law for the first time.

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1.8: The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism

As conflict ensued between the French and English, the Catholic Church fell into a state of disunity, resulting in the “Babylonian Captivity”. In the early 14th Century, the church was a very diverse and diffuse institution. Due to the geographical distance between Rome and the kingdoms of Europe, the popes did not exercise much practical authority over the various national churches. Thus, the high-level churchmen in European kingdoms were often more closely associated with their respective kings than with Rome. Likewise, there were many times during the Middle Ages when individual popes were weak and ineffectual and could not even command obedience within the church hierarchy itself.

In 1303, the **Babylonian Captivity** began when Pope Boniface VIII issued a papal bull (formal commandment) that all kings had to acknowledge his authority over their kingdoms, a challenge he issued in response to the taxes kings levied on church property. Unfortunately for Boniface, he lacked both influences with the monarchs of Europe and the ability to defend himself. Infuriated, the French king, Philip IV, promptly had the pope arrested and thrown in prison. He was released months later but promptly died.

In 1305, Philip supported the election of a new pope, Clement V. Clement was a Frenchman with strong ties to the French nobility. Since Rome was a very dangerous city, with rival noble families literally fighting in the streets over various feuds, Clement moved the papal office to the more peaceful French city of Avignon. Non-French Church officials (most of them Italian) feared that the French king, then the most powerful ruler in Europe, would have undue influence over the papacy. That fear seemed confirmed when Clement appointed 113 Frenchmen cardinals out of a possible 134 positions in the following decades.

From 1305 to 1378, the popes continued to live and work in Avignon (despite the English invasions of the 100 Years’ War). They were not directly controlled by the French king, but they were definitely influenced by French politics. In addition, they accepted bribes and kickbacks for the appointment of Church officials and shady schemes with Church lands. This situation was soon described as a new Babylonian Captivity, comparing the presence of the papacy in France to the enslavement of the ancient Jews in Babylon.

In 1378, Urban VI announced his intention to move the papacy back to Rome. So, a group of French cardinals elected another pope, Clement VII. Thus, Europe was split between two rival popes, both of whom excommunicated each other as a heretic and impostor (the term used at the time was “**antipope**.”) This **Great Western Schism** (1378 to 1417) led to as many as *three* rival popes vying for power.

Finally, in 1417, the Conciliar Movement elected a new pope, Martin V, and made the claim that church councils could and should hold the ultimate authority over papal appointments. (Known as the *via consilii*, the existence of a great council with binding powers over the church’s leadership.) However, this idea undermined the concept of the “Doctrine of the Keys”, in which the pope’s authority was passed down directly from Christ and not based on a council's approval. Ultimately, pope Eugene IV reconfirmed the absolute power of the papacy in 1431. These failed attempts at reform would inadvertently set the stage for more radical criticisms of papal power in the future.

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1.9: Conclusion

France and England emerged from the 100 Years War to become stronger, more centralized states. In the aftermath of the Black Death, the labor shortage spurred a period of modest economic growth. And, while European culture may have become more pessimistic and xenophobic as a whole, one region was rising to wealth and prominence precisely because of its long-distance trade and cultural connections: Northern Italy. It was there that the Renaissance began.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: The Renaissance

“The” Renaissance was the “rebirth” of culture, art, and learning that started in Italy and spread to various other parts of western Europe, and lasted from about 1300 to 1500. It "ended" when the northern Italian heartland declined in economic importance and the pace of change and progress in the arts and learning slowed. The timing of the Renaissance coincided with some of the crises of the Middle Ages described in the last chapter. Most of Europe remained resolutely “medieval”. The ways of life, forms of technology, and political structure did not suddenly change with the flowering of the Renaissance. Likewise, in Italy itself, the lives of most people (especially outside of the major cities) were all but identical in 1500 to what they would have been centuries earlier.

2.1: Humanism
2.2: Important Thinkers
2.3: Art and Artists
2.4: End of the Renaissance
2.5: Background
2.6: Economics
2.7: Political Setting
2.8: City-States of Northern Italy
2.9: Print

*Thumbanil: Lorenzo de' Medici was the de facto ruler of the Florentine Republic and the most powerful and enthusiastic patron of Renaissance culture in Italy. (Public Dom*ain; via Wikipedia).

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2.1: Humanism

Renaissance thinkers and artists very consciously made the claim that they were reviving long-lost traditions from the classical world in areas as diverse as scholarship, poetry, architecture, and sculpture. Much of the Renaissance began as an attempt to mimic or copy Greek and Roman art and scholarship (corresponding to one another in classical Latin, for example). Although inspired by the classics, some thinkers sought to be creators in their own right.

One theme of Renaissance thought was **humanism**, an intellectual paradigm that emphasized both the beauty and the centrality of humankind in the universe. In other words, humankind was inherently rational, beautiful, and noble, rather than debased, wicked, or weak. These thinkers sought to celebrate the beauty of the human body in art, of the human mind and human achievements in scholarship, and of human society in the elegance of architectural design. Humanism was, among other things, an optimistic attitude toward the artistic and intellectual possibilities that cited the achievements of the ancient world as proof that humankind was the crowning achievement of God's creation.

Renaissance humanism was the root of the modern notion of individuality, along with the idea that education ought to arrive at a well-rounded individual. This shift was a true, meaningful change over medieval forms of learning that emphasized clarification of religious questions or better intellectual support for religious orthodoxy.

Along with the idea of a well-rounded individual, Renaissance thinkers championed the idea of **Civic Humanism**: one's moral and ethical standing was tied to devotion to one's city. For example, the rich and powerful Medici family of Florence made a tremendous effort to invest in the city in the form of building projects and art. This action was tied to the prestige of the family, but it was also a heartfelt dedication to one's home, analogous to the present-day concept of patriotism.

Further, there was a shift in the practical business of education from medieval scholasticism, which focused on law, medicine, and theology, to disciplines related to business and politics. Renaissance learning was born in the cities of northern Italy because of the wealth of northern Italy. Princes and other elites wanted skilled bureaucrats to staff their merchant empires, especially with a knowledge of law and mathematics. Some city governments began educating children directly, along with the role played by private tutors. These schools and tutors emphasized practical education: rhetoric, math, and history. This new form of education is usually referred to as "humanistic education", and spread from Italy to the rest of Europe by the late fifteenth century. By the sixteenth century, a broad cross-section of European elites, including nobles, merchants, and priests, were educated in the humanistic tradition.

Drawing from the work of thinkers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Virgil, Renaissance thinkers came to support the idea of a virtuous life that was not the same thing as a specifically *Christian* virtuous life. It was possible to become a good person simply through studying the classics – all of the major figures of the Renaissance were Christians, but they insisted that one's moral status could and should be shaped by emulation of the ancient virtues, combined with Christian piety. While medieval intellectual life prospered during the High Middle Ages, there was definitely a distinct kind of intellectual courage and optimism that came out of the return to classical models over medieval ones during the Renaissance.

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2.2: Important Thinkers

Renaissance thinkers embraced and used the ideals of humanism as inspiration for creating innovative new approaches to philosophy, philology (the study of language), theology, history, and political theory. In other words, reading the classics inspired Renaissance thinkers to emulate the great writers and philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome, creating poetry, philosophy, and theory on par with that of Aristotle or Cicero. Some of the more noteworthy are included below.

Dante (1265 - 1321)

Durante degli Alighieri, better remembered as Dante, was a major figure who anticipated the Renaissance rather than being alive during most of it. (There is no "official" start to the Renaissance, 1300 is sometimes used as a convenient date). Experiencing what would later be called a mid-life crisis, Dante turned to poetry to console himself. Written in his own native dialect of Tuscan, *The Divine Comedy* describes Dante's descent into hell, guided by the spirit of the classical Roman poet Virgil. Dante and Virgil emerge on the other side of the earth, with Dante ascending the mountain of purgatory and ultimately entering heaven, where he enters into the divine presence.

Dante's work presaged some of the essential themes of Renaissance thought. Dante's travels through hell, purgatory, and heaven in the poem are replete with encounters with two categories of people: Italians of Dante's lifetime or the recent past, and both real and mythical figures from ancient Greece and Rome. In other words, Dante was indifferent to the entire period of the Middle Ages, concentrating on what he imagined the spiritual fate of the great thinkers and heroes of the classical age would have been. Ultimately, educated people in Italy would eventually come to read the *Comedy*, and it came to serve as the founding document of the modern Italian language in the process.

In Domenico di Michelino's 1465 fresco, Dante is shown holding a copy of the *Divine Comedy*, next to the entrance to Hell, the seven terraces of Mount Purgatory, and the city of Florence, with the spheres of Heaven above.



Petrarch (1304 – 1374)

Francesco Petrarca, known as Petrarch in English, was in many ways the founding father of the Renaissance. Like Dante, he was a native of the city of Florence and single-handedly spearheaded the practice of studying and imitating the great writers and thinkers of the past. Petrarch personally rediscovered long-lost works by Cicero, widely considered the greatest writer of ancient Rome during the republican period. Petrarch wrote to friends and associates in a classical, grammatically spotless Latin (as opposed to the often sloppy and error-ridden Latin of the Middle Ages) and encouraged them to learn to emulate the classics in their writing, thought, and values. He went on to write many works of poetry and prose that were based on the model provided by Cicero and other ancient writers.

Christine de Pizan (1364 - 1430)

Christine de Pizan was the most famous and important woman thinker and writer of the Renaissance era. Her father, the court astrologer of the French king Charles V, was exceptional in that he felt it important that his daughter receive the same quality of

education afforded to elite men at the time. She went on to become a famous poet and writer in her own right, being patronized (i.e. receiving commissions for her writing) by a wide variety of French and Italian nobles. Her best-known work was *The Book of the City of Ladies*, in which she attacked the then-universal idea that women were naturally unintelligent, sinful, and irrational. Instead, she argued, history provided a vast catalog of women who had been moral, pious, intelligent, and competent, and that it was men's pride and the refusal of men to allow women to be properly educated that held women back. In many ways, the *City of Ladies* was the first truly feminist work in European history, and it is striking that she was supported by, and listened to by, elite men due to her obvious intellectual gifts despite their own deep-seated sexism.



Figure 4.2.1: Christine de Pizan presents a copy of The City of Ladies to a French noblewoman, Margaret of Burgundy. The illustration is in the pre-Renaissance “Gothic” style, without linear perspective, despite its approximate date of 1475. This image demonstrates the relatively slow spread of Renaissance-inspired artistic innovations.

Desiderius Erasmus (1466 - 1536)

Erasmus was an astonishingly erudite priest who benefited from both the traditional scholastic education of the late-medieval church and the new humanistic style that emerged from the Renaissance. Of his various talents, one of the most important was his mastery of philology: the history of languages. Erasmus became completely fluent not just in classical and medieval Latin, but in the Greek of the New Testament. (Most of the earliest versions of the New Testament of the Christian Bible are written in the vernacular Greek of the first century CE). He also became conversant in Hebrew, which was very uncommon among Christians at the time.

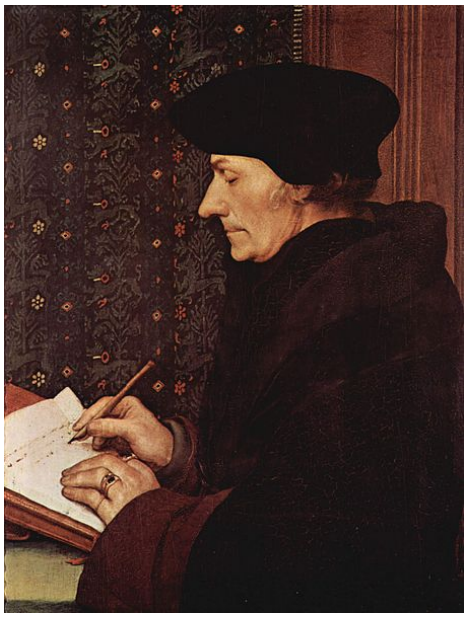


Figure 4.2.2: In this well-known portrait, of Erasmus is depicted in heavy, fur-lined robes and hat, a necessity even when indoors in Northern Europe for much of the year. Realistic portraiture was another major innovation of the Renaissance period.

Armed with his lingual virtuosity, Erasmus undertook a vast study and re-translation of the New Testament, working from various versions of the Greek originals and correcting the Latin Vulgate which was the most widely used at the time. In the process, Erasmus corrected the New Testament itself, catching and fixing numerous translation errors, In addition, while he did not re-translate the Old Testament from the Hebrew, he did point out errors in it as well.

Erasmus was not officially authorized to carry out his studies and translations. Nevertheless, his corrections were not just a question of grammatical issues, but of *meaning*. The Christian message that emerged from the "correct" version of the New Testament was a deeply personal philosophy of prayer, devotion, and morality that did not correspond to many of the structures and practices of the Latin Church. He was also an advocate of translations of the Bible into vernacular languages, although he did not produce such a translation himself.

Two other examples of his work are: *In Praise of Folly*, a satirical attack on corruption within the church, and *Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, which de-emphasized the importance of the sacraments. Erasmus used his abundant wit to ridicule sterile medieval-style scholastic scholars, the corruption of "Christian" rulers who were essentially glorified warlords, and even the very idea of witches, which he demonstrated relied on a faulty translation from the Hebrew of the Old Testament.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 – 1527)

Machiavelli was a "courtier," a professional politician, ambassador, and official who spent his life in the court of a ruler. While in Florence, Machiavelli wrote various works on politics, most notably addressing the proper functioning of a republic like Florence. Unfortunately for him, Machiavelli was caught up in the whirlwind of power politics and ended up being exiled by the Medici.

While in exile, Machiavelli undertook a new work of political theory which he titled *The Prince*. This book detailed how an effective ruler should

- train constantly in war
- force his subjects to fear (but not hate) him
- study the ancient past for role models like Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar
- never waste a moment worrying about morality when power was on the line

In the process, Machiavelli created what was arguably the first work of "political science" that abandoned the moralistic approach of how a ruler *should* behave as a good Christian and instead embraced a practical guide to holding power. *The Prince* caused a scandal for completely ignoring the role of God and Christian morality in politics, and he died not long after. That being noted, Machiavelli is now remembered as a pioneering political thinker.

Baldassarre Castiglione (1478 - 1529)

Castiglione was the author of *The Courtier*, published in 1528. Whereas Machiavelli's *The Prince* was a practical guide for rulers, *The Courtier* was a guide to the nobles, wealthy merchants, high-ranking members of the church, and other social elites who served and schemed in the courts of princes. The work centered on what was needed to win the prince's favor and to influence him. This idea was tied to the growing sense of what it was to be "civilized" – Italians at the time were renowned across Europe for their refinement, the quality of their dress and jewelry, their wit in conversation, and their good taste. The relatively crude tastes of the nobility of the Middle Ages were "revised" starting in Italy, with Castiglione serving as both a symptom and cause of this shift.

According to Castiglione, the effective courtier was tasteful, educated, clever, and subtle in his actions and words, a true politician rather than merely a warrior who happened to have inherited some land. Going forward, growing numbers of political elites came to resemble a Castiglione-style courtier instead of a thuggish medieval knight or "man-at-arms." When he died, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V lamented his loss and paid tribute to his memory.

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2.3: Art and Artists

Medieval art (called "Gothic" after one of the barbarian tribes that had conquered the Roman Empire) had been unconcerned with realistic depictions of objects or people. Medieval paintings often presented things from several angles at once to the viewer and had no sense of three-dimensional perspective. Likewise, Gothic architecture tended to be bulky and overwhelming rather than refined and delicate. The great examples of Gothic architecture are undoubtedly the cathedrals built during the Middle Ages, often beautiful and inspiring but a far cry from the symmetrical, airy structures of ancient Greece and Rome.

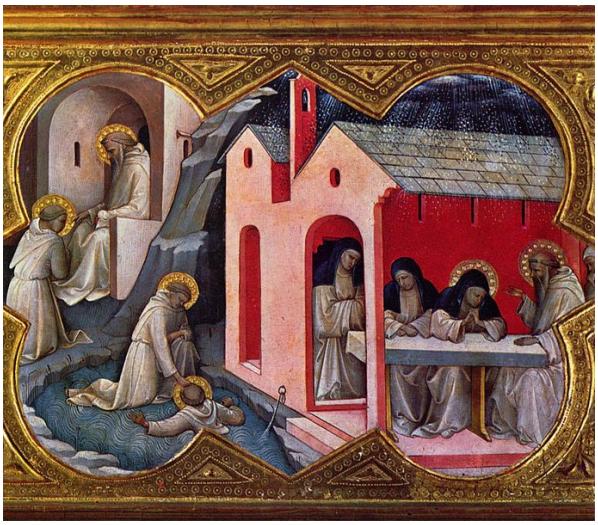


Figure 4.3.1: An example of Gothic art. Lorenzo Monaco painted it during the Renaissance period, but the work was created before linear perspective had replaced the “two-dimensional” style of Gothic painting.

In contrast, Renaissance artists studied and copied ancient frescoes and statues in an attempt to learn how to realistically depict people and objects. Just as Petrarch "invented" the major themes of Renaissance thought by imitating and championing classical humanist thought, a Florentine artist, architect, and engineer named Filippo Brunelleschi "invented" Renaissance art through the imitation of the classical world.

Filippo Brunelleschi (1377 - 1446)

Brunelleschi was an astonishing artistic and engineering genius. As a prominent client of the Medici, and with their political and financial support, he undertook the construction of what would be the largest free-standing domed structure in all of Europe. For generations, the cathedral of Florence had stood unfinished. Its main tower had been built too large and too tall for any architect to complete. No one knew how to build a freestanding stone dome on top of a tower over 350 feet high. By studying ancient Roman structures and employing his own incredible intellect, Brunelleschi built the dome in such a way that the internal structure held together during the construction process. He invented a giant, geared winch to raise huge blocks of sandstone hundreds of feet in the air and into place. The dome was completed in 1413.

While the dome is usually considered Brunelleschi's greatest achievement, he was also the inventor of linear perspective. He determined how to draw objects in two dimensions so that they looked realistically three-dimensional (i.e. having depth, as in looking off into the distance and seeing objects that are farther away "look smaller" than those nearby). Unlike other Renaissance innovations that had direct parallels in other cultures, like the study of ancient texts or a recognizably humanistic approach to philosophy, the linear perspective appears to be one truly unprecedented intellectual invention originating in Europe. It spread rapidly and completely revolutionized the visual arts, resulting in far more realistic drawings and paintings.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452 - 1519)

Da Vinci was famous as one of the greatest painters of his age. In addition, he was sought after for his skill in engineering, such as overseeing the construction of the naval defenses of Venice and swamp drainage projects in Rome at different points. Hired by a whole swath of the rich and powerful in Italy and France, he would become the official chief painter and engineer of the French king.

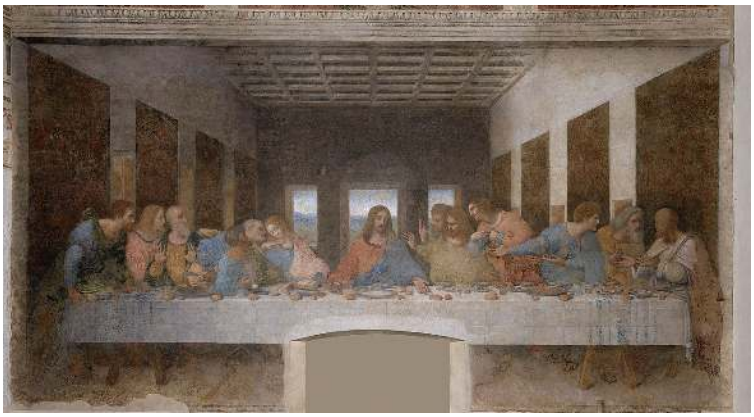


Figure 4.3.2: Leonardo Da Vinci's The Last Supper. Note how the walls and ceiling tiles appear to slant downwards toward a point at the horizon behind Jesus (in the center). That imaginary point - the "vanishing point" - was one of the major artistic breakthroughs associated with linear perspective first discovered by Brunelleschi.

Leonardo's most important "scientific" work at the time had to do with human anatomy. The Catholic Church banned the dissection of corpses. Many Christians believed that the soul needed a site to return to during the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world, so human bodies were not to be tampered with. Da Vinci received special dispensation from the church to perform human dissections on the bodies of executed criminals to look for the physical organ that contained the soul. His anatomical drawings inspired new generations of physicians to learn how the body functioned based on empirical observation.



Figure 4.3.3: One of Da Vinci's anatomical sketches, in this case examining the musculature of the shoulder and neck.

Ironically, while Da Vinci was well known as a practical engineer, no one had a clue that he was an inventor in the technological sense: he never built physical models of his ideas, and he never published his concepts.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475 - 1564)

Michelangelo was the most famous artist of the Renaissance, patronized by the city council of Florence (run by the Medici) and the pope alike. He created numerous works, most famously the statue of David and the paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.



Figure 4.3.4: Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel Ceiling was painted between 1508 and 1512.

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2.4: End of the Renaissance

During the 14th and 15th centuries, while the city-states of northern Italy were enjoying the height of their prosperity, northern and western Europe was divided between a large number of fairly small principalities, church lands, free cities, and weak kingdoms. Under the medieval system of monarchy, a king's power was based primarily on the lands they owned through the family dynasty, *not* on the taxes or deference they extracted from other nobles or commoners. In many cases, powerful nobles could field personal armies that were as large as those of the king, especially since armies were almost always a combination of loyal knights (by definition members of the nobility) on horseback, supplemented by peasant levies and mercenaries. Standing armies were almost nonexistent and wars tended to be fairly limited in scale.

During the late medieval and Renaissance periods, monarchs began to wield more power and influence. The largest monarchies expanded their territory and wealth, which provided the funds for better armies and more expansion. In the process, smaller states were often absorbed or at least forced to do the bidding of larger ones; this is true of the Italian city-states and formerly independent kingdoms like Burgundy in eastern France.

End of the Renaissance

A new regional power arose in the Middle East and spread to Europe starting in the 14th century: the Ottoman Turks. In 1453, the Turks had already seized control of the entire Balkan region (i.e. the region north of Greece including present-day Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Albania, and Macedonia). The rise in Turkish power spelled trouble for the east-to-west trade routes the Italian cities had benefited from so much since the era of the crusades. Despite deals worked out between Venice and the Ottomans, the profits to be had from the spice and luxury trade diminished (at least for the Italians) over time.

By the mid-fifteenth century, northern manufacturing began to compete with Italian production. Particularly in England and the Netherlands, northern European crafts were produced that rivaled Italian products and undermined the demand for the latter. Thus, the relative degree of prosperity in Italy vs. the rest of Europe declined in the sixteenth century.

The balance of power inaugurated by the Peace of Lodi slowly collapsed. The growing powers of France and of the Holy Roman Empire threatened Italian independence. The French king, Charles VIII, decided to seize control of Milan, citing a dubious claim based on the web of dynastic marriage, and a Milanese pretender who invited the French to help him seize control of the despotism in 1494. All of the northern Italian city-states were caught in the crossfire of alliances and counter alliances. Indeed, the Medici were exiled from Florence the same year for offering territory to the French in an attempt to get them to leave the city-state alone.

The Italian Wars ended the Renaissance. France, the Holy Roman Empire, and Spain jockeyed with one another and with the papacy (which behaved like a warlike state) to seize Italian territory. As Italy became a battleground, the independence of the Italian cities was either compromised or completely extinguished. Between 1503 – 1533, one by one, the cities became territories or puppets of one of the great powers. In the process, the Italian countryside was devastated and the financial resources of the cities were drained. Only the Papal States of central Italy remained truly politically independent, and the Italian peninsula would not emerge from under the shadow of the greater powers until the nineteenth century.

That being noted, the Renaissance did not *really* end. What "ended" with the Italian Wars was Italian financial and commercial power and the glory days of scholarship and artistic production that had gone with it. By the time the Italian Wars started, all of the patterns and innovations had already spread north and west. In other words, "The Renaissance" was already a European phenomenon by the late fifteenth century, so even the end of Italian independence did not jeopardize the intellectual, commercial, and artistic gains that had originally blossomed in Italy.

The greatest achievement of the Italian Renaissance was probably humanistic education, which combined the study of the Classics, a high level of literary sophistication, and a solid grounding in practical commercial knowledge (most obviously mathematics and accounting). Royal governments across Europe sought out men with humanistic educations to serve as bureaucrats and officials, even as merchants everywhere adopted Italian mercantile practices for their obvious benefits (e.g. the superiority of Arabic numerals over Roman ones, the crucial importance of accurate bookkeeping, etc.). Thus, while not as glamorous as beautiful paintings or soaring buildings, the practical effects of humanistic education led to its widespread adoption almost everywhere in Europe.

Even the Church, which continued to educate its priests in the older scholastic tradition, welcomed the addition of humanistic forms of education in some ways. Many of the most outstanding European scholars remained members of the Church. Erasmus and the German monk Martin Luther are two examples.

European artists tended to study under Italian masters, then return to their countries of origin to do their own work. By the middle of the fifteenth century, a "Northern Renaissance" of painters was flourishing in parts of northern Europe, particularly the Low Countries (i.e. the areas that would later become Belgium and the Netherlands). By the sixteenth century, "Renaissance art" was universal in Europe, with artists everywhere benefiting from the use of linear perspective, evocative and realistic portraiture, and the other artistic techniques first developed in Italy.

Italy in 1559



Source: Wikipedia

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2.5: Background

The prosperity of northern Italy helped trigger the Renaissance. Italy did not face a major, ongoing series of wars like the Hundred Years' War in France. It was hit hard by the plague, but no more so than most of the other regions of Europe. However, Italy benefited from the Babylonian Captivity and Great Western Schism. The Italian cities found it easy to operate with little papal interference, and powerful Italian families often intervened directly in the election of popes when it suited their interests. Likewise, the other powers of Europe either could not or had no interest in troubling Italy. England and France were at war, the Holy Roman Empire was weak and fragmented, and Spain was not united until the late Renaissance period. In short, the crises of the Middle Ages actually *benefited* Italy, because they were centered elsewhere.

In this relatively stable social and political environment, Italy also enjoyed an additional advantage: it was far more urbanized. Clustered in the north, Italian cities represented about 10% of Italy's overall population. While 90% of the population was either rural or lived in small towns, there was still a far greater concentration of urban dwellers in Italy than anywhere else in Europe. Among those cities, Florence and Milan served as centers of banking, trade, and craftsmanship. In addition, Italian cities had large numbers of very productive craft guilds and workshops producing luxury goods that were highly desirable all over Europe.

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2.6: Economics

Italy lay at the center of the incredibly lucrative trade between Europe and the Middle East. From the Arab world, Italian merchants ultimately adopted a number of commercial practices and techniques that helped them (Italians) stay at the forefront of the European economy. For example, Italian accountants adopted double-entry bookkeeping (accounts payable and accounts receivable) and Italian merchants invented the ***commenda***, a way of spreading out the risk associated with business ventures among several partners - an early form of insurance for expensive and risky business ventures. Italian banks had agents all over Europe, which provided reliable credit and bills of exchange, allowing merchants to travel around the entire Mediterranean region without having to literally cart chests full of coins to pay for new wares.

One other noteworthy innovation was the use of Arabic numerals instead of Roman numerals. Imagine trying to do complicated multiplication or division using Roman numerals like "CLXVIII multiplied by XXXVIII," meaning "168 multiplied by 38" in Arabic numerals.

During the era of the Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism, Italian bankers started to charge interest on loans, becoming the first Christians to defy the church's ban on "**usury**" in an ongoing, regular fashion. Bankers became so wealthy that social and religious stigma alone was not enough to prevent the spread of the practice. This action actually led to *more* anti-Semitism in Europe, since the social role played by Jews - money-lending - was increasingly usurped by Christians.

Much of the prosperity of northern Italy was based on the trade ties maintained with the Middle East, which by the fourteenth century meant both the remains of the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople as well as the Ottoman Turkish empire. From the Turks, Italians bought precious cargo like spices, silks, porcelain, and coffee, in return for European woolens, crafts, and bullion. The Italians were also the go-between linking Asia and Europe by way of the Middle East.

The Italian city-states were sites of manufacturing. Raw wool from England and Spain made its way to Italy to be processed into cloth, and Italian workshops produced luxury goods sought after everywhere else in Europe. Italian farms were prosperous and produced a significant and ongoing surplus, feeding the growing cities.

One result of the prosperity generated by Italian mercantile success was the rise of a culture of conspicuous consumption. Both members of the nobility and rich non-nobles spent lavishly to display wealth, culture, and learning. All of the famous Renaissance thinkers and artists were patronized by the rich. In turn, patrons expected "their" artists to serve as symbols of cultural achievement that reflected well on the patron. Mercantile and banking riches translated into social and political status through art, architecture, and scholarship.

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2.7: Political Setting

The medieval feudal system had never taken hold in Italy. There were lords and vassals, as well as a large and strong independent class of artisans and merchants who balked at subservience, especially against those lords who did not live in the cities. Thus, by 1200, most Italian cities had come to dominate their respective hinterlands.

Instead of kings and vassals, power was in the hands of the *popoli grossi*, (literally meaning the “fat people)”. However, the term was used to identify about 5% of the population that was rich, noble or non-noble. This culture was rife with flattery and politicking, since so much depended on personal connections. The most important thing to the social elite was *honor*. Any perceived insult had to be met with retaliation, meaning there was a great deal of bloodshed between powerful families. One example is Shakespeare's famous play *Romeo and Juliet*, featuring rival elite families locked in a blood feud over honor. There was no such thing as a police force, just the guards of the rich and powerful and, usually, a city guard that answered to the city council. Both law enforcement and personal vendettas were generally carried out by private mercenaries.

Ironically, the *popoli grossi* required a peaceful political setting on a large scale in order for their commercial interests to prosper. Thus, they were often hesitant to embark on a large-scale war in Italy. In an effort to show off both their mastery of arms and thought, they focused on education and culture, which led to the creation of Renaissance art and scholarship.



Figure 3.3.1: Portrait of a young Cosimo de Medici, who would become the de facto ruler of Florence in the fifteenth century. He is depicted holding a book and wearing a sword: symbols of his learning and his authority.

The central irony of the prosperity of the Renaissance was that the vast majority of the population benefited only indirectly or not at all. Poor townsfolk had to endure heavy taxes on basic foodstuffs that made it especially miserable to be poor in one of the richest places in Europe at the time. A significant percentage of the population of cities were “paupers,” the indigent and homeless who tried to scrape by as laborers or sought charity from the church. Cities were especially vulnerable to epidemics as well.

Patronage

To understand why the Renaissance brought about a remarkable explosion of art, it is crucial to grasp the nature of *patronage*. In patronage, a member of the *popoli grossi* would pay an artist in advance for a work of art. That work of art would be displayed publicly, demonstrating the patron's wealth, political power, and influence. While there was plenty of bloodshed between powerful Renaissance families, political competition often took the form of an ongoing battle over who could commission the best art and then "give" that art to their home city, rather than actually fighting in the streets.

Perhaps the most spectacular example was Cosimo de Medici, leader of the Medici family and its vast banking empire. In 1439, he threw a city-wide party called the Council of Florence, which featured public lectures on Greek philosophy, displays of art, and a huge church council that brought together representatives of both the western Latin Church and the Eastern Orthodox church in a (doomed) attempt to heal the schism that divided Christianity. The Catholic hierarchy used the occasion to establish the canonical version of the Christian Bible, specifically which books ought to be included in the Old Testament. de Medici paid for the entire event out of his personal fortune. He even covered the travel expenses of visiting dignitaries from places as far away as India and Ethiopia. The Council clinched the Medici as *the* family of Florence for the next generation, with Cosimo being described by a contemporary as a “king in all but name.”

Art and learning benefited enormously from the wealth of northern Italy precisely because the wealthy and powerful of northern Italy competed to pay for the best art and the most innovative scholarship - without that form of cultural and political competition, it is doubtful that many of the masterpieces of Renaissance art would have ever been created.

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2.8: City-States of Northern Italy

In the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth centuries, the city-states of northern Italy were aggressive rivals. However, as the power of the French monarchy grew in the west and the Ottoman Turks became an active threat in the east, the most powerful cities signed the Peace of Lodi, in 1454, which committed each city to the defense of the existing political order. For the next forty years, Italy avoided major conflicts, a period that coincided with the height of the Renaissance.

Italy in 1453



Source: Timemaps

The great city-states were Milan, Venice, and Florence. Milan was the archetypal despot-controlled city-state, reaching its height under the Visconti family from 1277 – 1447. Milan controlled considerable trade from Italy to the north. Its wealth was dwarfed by that of Venice.

Venice

Venice was ruled by a merchant council headed by an elected official, the **Doge**. Its Mediterranean empire generated so much wealth that Venice minted more gold currency than England and France combined. As a result, its gold coins (ducats) were accepted across the Mediterranean. Further, the government had representation for all of the moneyed classes. However, no one represented the urban poor which made up more than half of the city's population.

The source of Venice's prosperity was its control of the spice trade. Europeans had a limitless hunger for spices. Unlike other luxury goods that could be produced in Europe, spices could only be grown in the tropical and subtropical regions of Asia, meaning their transportation to European markets required voyages of many thousands of miles, vastly driving up costs.

In about 1300, 40% of all ships bearing spices offloaded in Venice. By 1500, it was up to 60%. The prices commanded by spices ensured that Venetian merchants could achieve incredible wealth. For example, nutmeg (grown in Indonesia and halfway around the world from Italy) was worth a full 60,000% of its original price once it reached Europe. Likewise, pepper, cloves, and cinnamon could only be imported rather than grown in Europe, and Venice controlled the majority of that hugely lucrative trade. Spices were, in so many words, worth far more than their weight in gold.

Based on that wealth, Venice was the first place to create true banks (named after the desks, *banchi*, where people met to exchange or borrow money in Venice). Furthermore, it was too risky to travel with chests full of gold, so Venetian banks created letters of credit between branches. A letter of credit could be issued from one bank branch at a certain amount to a person. Then, that individual could travel to any city with a Venetian bank branch and redeem the letter of credit, which could be spent on trade goods.

Venice needed a peaceful trade network for its continuing prosperity. So, it created formal diplomatic relations with neighboring states. By the late 1400s, practically every royal court in Europe and North Africa had a Venetian ambassador in residence.

Ultimately the rest of Europe adopted many of the Venetian methods, such as the political power of merchants, advanced banking and mercantile practices, and a sophisticated international diplomatic network.

Florence

Florence was a republic with longstanding traditions of civic governance. Citizens voted on laws and served in official posts for set terms, with powerful families dominating the system. By 1434, the real power was in the hand of the **Medici family**, who controlled the city government (the *Signoria*). Rising from obscurity and a non-noble background, the Medici eventually became the official bankers of the papacy, acquiring vast wealth as a result. The Medici spent huge sums, funding the creation of churches, orphanages, municipal buildings, and the completion of the great freestanding dome of the city's cathedral. They also patronized most of the most famous Renaissance artists, including Donatello, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo.

Florence benefited from a strong culture of education. Florentines prided themselves on wealth, knowledge, and refinement. By the fifteenth century, there were 8,000 children in both church and civic schools out of a population of 100,000. They often boasted that even their laborers could quote the great poet, and native of Florence, Dante Alighieri (author of *The Divine Comedy*). By about 1500, the central position of scholarship diminished as foreign invasions undermined Florentine independence.

Rome

The city of Rome remained firmly in papal control despite the decline in the independence of the other major Italian cities. After the conclusion of the Great Schism, the popes re-asserted their control of the Papal States in central Italy. For example, Julius II (r. 1503 – 1513) personally lead troops against the armies of both foreign invaders and rival Italians. While the popes usually proved effective at secular rule, their spiritual leadership was undermined by their tendency to live like kings rather than priests. The most notorious, Alexander VI (r. 1492 – 1503), sponsored his children's attempts to seize territory all across northern Italy.

Regardless of their moral failings, the popes restored Rome to its importance as a city. Under the so-called "Renaissance popes," the Vatican became the gloriously decorated spectacle that it is today. Julius II paid Michelangelo to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. In addition, many of the other famous works of Renaissance artists are seen on the walls and facades of Vatican buildings today. In short, after the end of the Great Western Schism, popes were often much more focused on behaving like members of the *popoli grossi*, rather than worrying about the spiritual authority of the church to laypeople.

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2.9: Print

In general, the Renaissance did not coincide with a great period of technological advances. There was one momentous exception: the proliferation of the movable-type printing press. Not until the invention of the typewriter in the late nineteenth century and the Internet in the late twentieth century would comparable changes to the diffusion of information come about. Print vastly increased the rate at which information could be shared, and underwrote the rise in literacy of the early modern period. In Europe, the production of text moved away from a "scribal" tradition in which educated people hand-copied important texts toward a system of mass production.

Prior to the Renaissance, there had been *some* major technological advances. The agricultural revolution had been brought about by the use of heavier plows, new harnesses, crop rotation, etc. Likewise, warfare was influenced by the introduction of the stirrup and a "gunpowder revolution" (described in more detail later.) However, print introduced a revolution in *ideas*.

The printing press works by coating a three-dimensional impression of an image or text with ink, then pressing that ink onto paper. First invented in China and used in Korea and parts of Central Asia, there is no direct evidence that the concept was transmitted from Asia to Europe. In the late 1440s, a German goldsmith named **Johannes Gutenberg** struck on the idea of carving individual letters into small, movable blocks of wood (or castings in metal) that could be rearranged as necessary to create words. This movable type made it simple to rearrange the letters to print subsequent pages. Thus, an entire book could be printed with clear, readable letters, and at a fraction of the cost of hand-copying.



Figure 3.7.1: A modern replica of a printing press of Gutenberg's era.

After developing a working prototype, Gutenberg created the first true printed book to reach the mass market, a copy of the Latin Vulgate (the official version of the Bible used by the Church). Later dubbed the "**Gutenberg Bible**," it became the world's first "best-seller" in 1455. By being printed, church officials thought that errors were far less likely to be introduced as compared to hand-copying. Likewise, purchasing a printed Bible became cheaper.

Printing spread quickly. Within about twenty years, there were printing presses in all of the major cities in Western and Southern Europe. By 1500, about fifty years after its invention, the printing press had already largely replaced the scribal tradition in book production. However, there was a notable lengthy delay in its diffusion to Eastern Europe, especially Russia. Presses tended to operate in large cities and smaller independent cities, especially in the Holy Roman Empire. Thus, the free cities of the German lands and Italy were as likely to host a press as were larger capital cities like Paris and Rome.

In 1461, Gutenberg invented printed illustrations using carved blocks that were sized to fit alongside movable type. Even when people could not read, they could look at pamphlets and posters (called "broadsides") with illustrations. Within decades, cheap printed posters and pamphlets were commonplace in the major cities and towns, often shared and read aloud in public gatherings and taverns. Thus, even the illiterate enjoyed increased access to information.

Not all writing shifted to print. A scribal tradition continued in the production of official documents and luxury items. Likewise, personal correspondence and business transactions remained hand-written. The legacy of good penmanship survived well into the twentieth century. Nevertheless, by the late fifteenth century, whenever a text could be printed to serve a political purpose or to generate a profit, it almost certainly would be.

There were unanticipated issues that arose because of print. Written material could not be mass-produced, so the only ideas that spread quickly did so through word of mouth. Print made censorship much more difficult and much more *important*, since now anyone could print just about anything. As early as the 1460s, a work that advocated the pursuit of salvation without reference to the church entitled *The Imitation of Christ was* produced. The Catholic Church would eventually (in 1571) introduce an official Index of Prohibited Books, but several works were already banned by the time the Index was created.

Print also began the process of standardizing language itself, so that people in different parts of “France” or “England” were able to read the same works and understand the grammar and meaning. For the first time, the concept of proper spelling emerged.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Gunpowder Revolution

3.1: The Ottoman Empire

3.2: War and the Gunpowder Revolution

3.3: Western Europe

3.4: The Holy Roman Empire

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3.1: The Ottoman Empire

The **Ottoman Empire** was the very model of a successful early-modern state, politically centralized, economically prosperous, and engaged in not just warfare but an enormous amount of commerce with other states. At its greatest extent, the empire extended to three continents -- stretching from the Balkans in southeastern Europe across Anatolia, Central Asia, Arabia, and North Africa.

The Turks were an interrelated group of people originating in Central Asia. They spoke various related dialects and shared a common ethnic origin. They began the transition from steppe nomads to the rulers of settled kingdoms by the 10th century, culminating with the Seljuk invasion of the 11th century. The Turks were driven by two motivations: the tradition of warfare against non-Muslims, and the straightforward interest in looting defeated enemies. They made frequent war against Byzantium, the Arab Muslims states, and each other. In the early 14th century, a Seljuk lord named Osman captured a significant chunk of territory from the Byzantines in Anatolia, and founded a dynasty named after his clan, anglicized to “Ottoman.”

The Ottomans went on to conquer vast territories, including the lands of the earlier Caliphates and parts of Europe that had never before been held by Islamic rulers, such as the islands of the eastern Mediterranean, Greece, and the Balkans. In 1453, the Ottoman Sultan (king) Mehmet II succeeded in conquering Constantinople and, with it, the remnants of Byzantium itself. He moved the Ottoman capital to Constantinople. By 1600, the city's population had reached 700,000, making it the largest city in Europe or the Middle East.

Over the course of the 16th century, relying on a newly-constructed navy, the Ottomans crippled the Venetian commercial empire and then conquered various islands in the Mediterranean and territories in North Africa. In 1517, the Ottomans defeated a rival Turkic empire, the Mamluks, in Egypt. As the first major empire to take full advantage of the gunpowder revolution, their armies excelled at using muskets and field guns at a time when most European armies still relied on pikes and bows. Ottoman armies were well-trained and well-provisioned, and they consistently bested European armies in open battle.

During the 16th century, the Ottomans also conquered the western coast of the Arabian peninsula, and with it the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Through a somewhat questionable story about a survivor of the Mongol attacks and his descendants, the Ottoman Sultans claimed the title of Caliph, or spiritual head of the entire Sunni Muslim world.

The Sultan **Suleyman the Magnificent** (r. 1520 – 1566) carried out a stunning series of expansions and conquests. His armies occupied the Balkans, then Hungary, and ultimately laid siege to Vienna in 1529, something that would have been unthinkable a century earlier. By his death in 1566, the Ottoman Empire was one of the largest in the world, exceeding the territory that had been held by Byzantium even at its height.



Figure 5.9.1: The Ottoman Empire at the start of the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent.

Within the empire, non-Muslims were officially tolerated as *dhimmis*, protected peoples, who had to pay a special tax but were not compelled to convert to Islam. Both the Christian patriarch of the Orthodox Church and the head of the Jewish congregation of Constantinople (as well as the Armenian Christian patriarch) were official members of the Sultan’s court, with each religious leader carrying both the privilege and the responsibility of representing their respective religious communities to the Ottoman government. For example, they oversaw their own distinct educational systems and were responsible for tax collection among their

communities, referred to as *millets*. Non-Muslims were held in a socially and legally secondary position within Ottoman society, but they still enjoyed vastly better status and treatment than did religious minorities in Christian kingdoms in Europe at the time.

Another great strength of the Ottoman state was its use of soldiers and officials. After the conquest of Christian lands formerly held by Byzantium, the core of the Ottoman armies were the **Janissaries**, Christians who were taken as slaves as young adolescents and trained in both war and administration back in Istanbul, after being converted to Islam. Although these men were the most powerful individuals in the empire, they were technically the slaves of the Sultan himself. Up until at least the 17th century, their children were free and did not inherit Janissary status.

The Ottomans developed an enormous and highly organized bureaucracy well before the “absolutist” monarchs of Europe tried to do the same. By the sixteenth century, the bureaucracy was divided between the highest officers, recruited from the Christian slave system, and the middle ranks, consisting of free Muslims.

The late 16th century was the height of Ottoman power. Their chronological trajectory matched Spain’s, which enjoyed its real flowering after a century of plundering the New World. While the Ottoman Empire stopped expanding by the end of the 17th century, it remained one of the most powerful states in the entire region of the Mediterranean for centuries to come.

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3.2: War and the Gunpowder Revolution

The European monarchies were originally the product of the Germanic conquests at the end of the Roman period. Political loyalty was to the king one served, *not* the territory in which one lived. Likewise, territories were won through war or marriage, so they did not necessarily make sense on a map. Many kings ruled over a patchwork of different regions that were not necessarily adjacent, i.e. they did not physically abut one another. Kings fought wars to glorify their dynasties and seize territory. Kings and nobles alike trained in war constantly, organized and fought in tournaments, and were absolute fanatics about hunting. For example, Henry VIII (r. 1509-1547) of England spent about two-thirds of his "free" time hunting.

Developed in China, and first used militarily in the Middle East, gunpowder arrived in Europe in the fourteenth century. By the fifteenth century, it was increasingly widespread in war. Early gunpowder weapons were ridiculously inaccurate and dangerous (to the user) by later standards. They frequently exploded, were grossly inaccurate, and took a long time to reload. They were also both lethal and relatively easy to use.

Thus, by the later part of the fifteenth century, the king and his elite noble knights still rode on horseback, but the actual tactical utility of cavalry charges started to fade. Instead, squares of pikemen (i.e. soldiers who fought with long spears called pikes) supplemented by soldiers using primitive muskets neutralized the effectiveness of knights. In turn, these new units tended to be made up of professional soldiers for hire, mercenaries, who fought for pay instead of honor or territory.



Figure 5.3.1: Illustration of a siege during the 100 Years' War. Cannons were introduced by the second half of the war, but note the fact that most of the soldiers remain armed with bows and pikes - the gunpowder "revolution" took the better part of a century.

Another change in military technology, **cannons** completely undermined the efficacy of castles. The ability to build, maintain, and operate cannons required advanced metallurgy and engineering, which in turn required highly skilled technicians (either royal ones or mercenaries for hire). The most famous example of superiority was the Turkish **siege of Constantinople** in 1453, which spelled the end of the Byzantine Empire. The artillery revolution cussed fortresses and walls to be redesigned and rebuilt quite literally from the ground up, a hugely expensive undertaking that forced monarchs and nobles to seek new sources of revenue.

Financial Consequences

Gunpowder inaugurated a long-term change in how wars were fought. In the process, states were forced to come up with enormous amounts of revenue to cover the costs of guns, mercenaries, and new fortifications. Even larger kingdoms like France were constantly in need of additional sources of wealth, leading to new taxes to keep revenue flowing in. Royal governments also turned to officials drawn from the towns and cities, men whose education came to resemble that of the humanist schools and tutors of Italy. Most of these new royal officials were not of noble birth; they were often from mercantile families.

The practical nature of humanistic education ensured that this new generation of bureaucrats was more efficient and effective than its predecessors. Whereas members of the nobility believed that they *owned* their titles and authority, royal officials did not – they were dependent on their respective kings. Kings could not fire their nobles, but they could fire their officials. Thus, this new breed of educated bureaucrats had to be good at their jobs, as they had no titles to fall back on.

The new royal officials expanded the crown's reach. They targeted both the nobles and the church, which was the largest and richest institution in Europe. One iconic example was the French crown's almost complete control of the French church, which included directly appointing French bishops. In turn, those bishops often served the state as much as they did the church.

The idea of the right of a government (aka the king) to levy taxes across an entire territory under its control dates from this period. Starting in the fourteenth century, the kingdoms of Europe levied taxes on commodities, like salt that was needed by everyone, and on people just for being there (a head tax or a hearth tax). The medieval king was supposed to live on the revenues from his own estates. The Renaissance king promoted the right to levy taxes across the board.

That being noted, nowhere did kings succeed in simply levying taxes without having to make concessions to their subjects. Different forms of representative bodies from the nobility, the church, and (typically) the cities had the right to approve new taxes. However, kings were able to secure approval by rewarding loyalty with additional titles, gifts, land, and promises of no future changes to taxation. An institution of this type was the English parliament, which strongly asserted its control over taxation, a role played in France by several different *parlements* distributed across the kingdom.

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3.3: Western Europe

Europe in 1453



Source: TimeMaps

In the Middle Ages, Spain had been divided between small Christian kingdoms in the north and larger Muslim ones in the south. The Crusades were part of a centuries-long series of wars the Christian Spaniards called the **Reconquest**,. Spain became a powerful and united kingdom for the first time when the monarchs of two of the Christian kingdoms were married in 1479: Queen **Isabella of Castile** and King **Ferdinand of Aragon**. During their own lifetimes Aragon and Castile remained independent of one another, though obviously closely allied, but Isabella and Ferdinand's daughter Joanna and her son Charles V would go on to rule over Spain as a single, unified kingdom.

The "Catholic monarchs", as they were called, were determined to complete the Reconquest of the Iberian peninsula. In 1492, they succeeded by capturing Grenada, the last Muslim kingdom. Full of crusading zeal, they immediately set about rooting out "heretics", forcing Jews to either convert to Catholicism or leave the kingdom. In 1502, they gave the same ultimatum to hundreds of thousands of Muslims as well. Most Jews and Muslims chose to go into exile, either to the relatively tolerant and economically prosperous kingdoms of North Africa or the (highly tolerant by the standards of European kingdoms at the time) Ottoman Empire.

The Spanish monarchs also attacked the privileges of their own nobility, in some cases literally destroying the castles of defiant nobles and forcing nobles to come and pay homage at court. After Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of the New World in 1492, recalcitrant nobles were often shipped off as governors of islands thousands of miles away. The tax system was reformed to generate more revenue. By 1500, the Spanish army was the largest and most feared in Europe.

In many ways, the sixteenth century was "the Spanish century," when Spain was the most prosperous and powerful kingdom in Europe, especially after the flow of silver from the Americas began. Spain went from a disunited, war-torn region to a powerful and relatively centralized state in just a few decades.

England

While Spain was becoming stronger and more unified, England plunged into decades of civil war before a strong monarchy emerged. After the end of the Hundred Years' War, English soldiers and knights returned with few prospects at home. They enlisted in the service of rival nobles' houses, ultimately fueling a conflict within the royal family between two different branches, the

Lancasters and the Yorks. The violent conflict over the crown, called the **War of the Roses**, lasted from 1455 – 1485. Ultimately, a Welsh prince named **Henry Tudor,** who was part of the extended family of Lancasters, defeated Richard III of York and claimed the throne as King Henry VII.

Henry VII proved extremely adept at controlling the nobility, in large part through the **Star Court**, a royal court used to try nobles suspected of betraying him or undermining the king's authority. The Star Court's judges were royal officials appointed by Henry, and it readily and regularly used torture to obtain confessions from the accused. He also seized the lands of rebellious lords and banned private armies that did not ultimately report to him. The result was a streamlined political system under his control and a nobility that remained loyal to him as much out of fear as genuine allegiance. During the 16th Century, Henry's line, the Tudors, establish an increasingly powerful English state, largely based on a pragmatic alliance between the royal government and the gentry, the landowning class who exercised the lion's share of political power at the local level.

The alliance was shored up by staggering levels of official violence through law enforcement and the brutal suppression of popular uprisings. For example, between 1580 and 1610, roughly 20,000 people were executed, a rate which, if applied to the present-day United States, would amount to 46,000 executions a year. Criminals who were not hanged or beheaded were routinely whipped, branded, or mutilated in order to inspire "terror" among other potential law-breakers or rebels. Despite the violence and its relatively small population, England did emerge as a powerful and centralized kingdom by the middle of the sixteenth century.

France

France emerged as the only serious rival to Spain. The French king Charles VII (r. 1422 – 1461), who won the 100 Years War for France and expelled the English, created the first French professional army that was directly loyal to the crown. He funded it with the *taille*, the direct tax on both peasants and nobles that had originally been authorized by the nobility and rich merchants during the latter part of the Hundred Years' War, and the *gabelle*, the salt tax. Each of these taxes was supposed to be temporary sources of revenue to support the war effort.

Charles's successor Louis XI (r. 1431 – 1483) managed to make the new taxes permanent. In other words, he converted what had been an emergency wartime revenue stream into a permanent source of money for the monarchy. Nicknamed "The Spider", he had the ability to trap weak nobles and seize their lands under various legal pretenses. He also expelled the Jews of France as heretics, seizing the wealth of Jewish money-lenders in the process. Further, he liquidated the old crusading order of the **Knights Templar** headquartered in France. By the time of his death, the French monarchy was well-funded and exercised increasing power over the nobility and towns.

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3.4: The Holy Roman Empire

In contrast to the growth of relatively centralized states in Spain, England, and France, the German lands of central Europe remained fragmented. Indeed, the concept of “Germany” was an abstraction during the Renaissance era. Germany was simply a region, a large part of central Europe in which most, but not all, people spoke various dialects of the German language. Politically divided between hundreds of independent kingdoms, city-states, church lands, and territories, its only overarching political identity took the form of that most peculiar of early-modern European states: the Holy Roman Empire.

The Holy Roman Empire dated back to the year 800 CE, when the Frankish king Charlemagne was crowned “Holy Roman Emperor” by the pope. The point of the title was to convey to Charlemagne, and his vast territory, the historical legacy of the Roman Empire. Likewise, an explicit link was made between the pope and the emperor as the two most powerful figures in Christendom.

The Empire only stayed united for a short time after Charlemagne’s life when his three grandsons divided it. The title and the concept survived, but the position of emperor became nothing more than a kind of exclamation mark at the end of a long list of titles carried by whoever the emperor happened to be at a given time. “Real” power was determined by the other lands and titles the 'emperor' inherited through normal dynastic succession.

By the early modern period, emperorship was an elected position. In 1356, Charles IV issued the Golden Bull, which created a system by which future emperors would be chosen by their most powerful subjects. Seven great rulers scattered across the Empire (four princes and three archbishops) had the right to vote on imperial succession. Starting in 1438, the rich and powerful princely Austrian family of Habsburg was able to secure the title and convert it to a virtually-hereditary one by consistently being able to offer the largest bribes to the electors. The Habsburgs were also favored by the electors because their kingdoms bordered the growing Ottoman Turkish empire, which played a vital role in holding the Turks in check. From 1438 to 1806, there was only one non-Habsburg emperor.

The Holy Roman Empire featured a parliament, the Imperial Diet, wherein representatives of the member states, free cities, kingdoms, duchies, and church lands met to petition the emperor and to debate political issues of the day. Practically speaking, the Diet had little impact on the laws of the constituent states of the empire. The emperor had the right to issue decrees, but any member state in the Empire could safely ignore those decrees unless the emperor was willing to back them with his own force. After 1438, the Habsburgs were willing to mobilize their own armies.

Although the Holy Roman Empire was not a centralized state, the Habsburgs were unquestionably one of the most powerful royal lines, and their own territories stretched from Hungary to the New World by the sixteenth century. In terms of land, Charles V was the greatest emperor (r. 1519 – 1558). A grandson of Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain, Charles inherited a gargantuan amount of territory. He was emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and king of Spain, grand duke of various territories in Poland and Romania, princely count of southern German lands, duke of others, and even claimed sovereignty over Jerusalem. (Of course, he did not actually control the Holy Land.)

The unofficial Habsburg motto was “Let others wage war. You, happy Austria, marry to prosper.” Charles oversaw not only the Habsburg possessions in Europe, but the enormous new (Spanish) empire that had emerged in the New World.

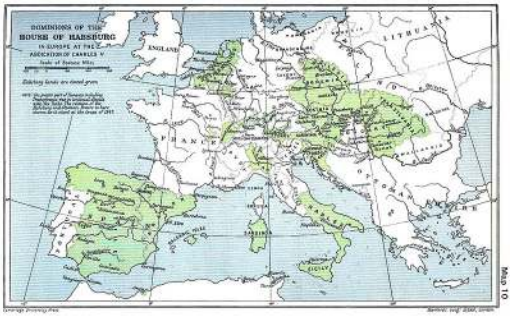


Figure 5.8.1: The European possessions of Charles V. Note how his territories were non-contiguous (i.e. they were not geographically united) because he inherited them from various ancestors.

Ironically, despite his personal intelligence and competence, Charles had a terrible time managing anything. He proved unable to contain the explosion of the Protestant Reformation, engaged in ongoing defensive wars against both France and the Turks, and spent most of his life traveling between his territories. In 1558, after recognizing that the Habsburg lands were almost ungovernable, he abdicated. His brother became Ferdinand I Holy Roman Emperor, and his son became Philip II King of Spain and its possessions.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: European Exploration and Conquest

4.1: Prelude to European Exploration and Conquest

4.2: Africa and India

4.3: Spain, Columbus, the Great Dying, and the Columbian Exchange

4.4: The Conquistadors

4.5: New World Wealth

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4.1: Prelude to European Exploration and Conquest

In the 15th century, the long expansion of European power began. Why was it *Europe* that took over the Americas rather than Persia, the Ottoman Empire, India, or China?

Poverty was one issue. Whereas the intra-Asian trade routes linking China, Korea, Japan, the islands of the western Pacific, Southeast Asia, and India ensured that Asian states enjoyed access to wealth and luxury goods, Europeans had to rely on the hugely expensive long-distance trade between Asia, the Middle East, and Europe to access goods that they could not produce themselves.

The demand for trade was limitless in European society. Stretching all the way back to Roman times, luxury goods from south and east Asia were sought-after commodities. Spices were worth far more than their weight in gold, and Chinese goods like porcelain and silk were also highly prized. Enterprising merchants positioned themselves somewhere along the Indian Ocean trade routes or the famous Silk Road between Europe and China. However, the distances covered were so vast that it was very difficult and perilous to take part in mercantile ventures. Thus, Isabella of Spain was not alone in funding explorers who sought to reach the east via easier routes when she hired Columbus.

When Constantinople fell to the Ottoman in 1453, the traditional trade routes to Asia were disrupted, particularly as the Turks started taking over the Venetian maritime empire. Likewise, Europeans had long traded with Muslim merchants in North Africa for gold, ivory, and spices, and they longed to cut out the middlemen and get to the sources farther south. Simply put, the Ottomans directly controlled a major link in the East- est trade axis, deriving profits that Europeans desired for their own.

In addition, the crusading tradition, especially that inspired by the **Reconquest of Spain and Portugal**, served as an inspiration for European explorers. The Reconquest was completed in 1492, the same year that Columbus sailed in search of a western route to Asia. Indeed, many of the Spanish *conquistadors* (conquerors) who invaded South and Central America had acquired military experience from what they considered to be the holy wars against the Muslim inhabitants of the Iberian peninsula. That crusading ideology was easily adapted for the purposes of conquering vast American territories and forcibly converting the indigenous American inhabitants to Christianity.

Europeans were *able* to access wealth due to technological advances. Until about 1400, Europeans had no ships capable of sailing across an entire ocean. (The Viking longboats of the Middle Ages were an exception, but they were no longer in use by the Renaissance era.) Further, European understanding of geography and navigation was extremely primitive. However, from about 1420 on, maritime technology improved dramatically and it became feasible to launch voyages that could cross the entire Atlantic Ocean with a reasonable degree of certainty that they would succeed.

The key was the invention of the caravel, a new kind of ship that was able to sail both with the wind and against lateral winds. As long as the wind was not blowing in the opposite direction one wanted to travel in, it was possible to keep moving in the right direction. Reasonably effective compasses and a device to measure latitude called the astrolabe came into European hands from the Middle East around 1400.

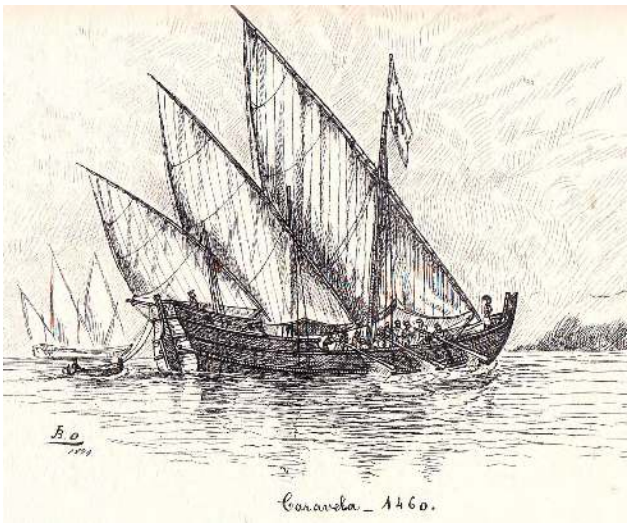


Figure 6.0.1: Nineteenth-century drawing of a Portuguese caravel based on the designs used during the early Portuguese expeditions of the fifteenth century.

Despite those advances, the European grasp of geography remained very shaky. As of 1400, Europeans had terribly imprecise knowledge about the rest of the world. They did not know anything about the Americas, and tended to confuse “India,” “Cathay,” and “Japan” with “Asia” itself. They had a vague notion that all of Asia was ruled by Khans, in part because of the Venetian merchant Marco Polo’s famous account of his travels from the 13th century. Still yet, many people believed that monsters occupied the interiors of Africa and Asia. Besides Polo, no Europeans had ever made the trek to the far east and returned to tell the tale.

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4.2: Africa and India

Europeans did know about North Africa. The Mediterranean had served as the crossroads of the civilized Western World since ancient times. Despite North Africa being ruled by Muslim kingdoms, Europeans regularly traded with Muslim merchants. Many lucrative commodities (like gold and ivory) were only available from North African merchants. Although Europeans knew that these commodities originated somewhere across the Sahara desert, they were unable to access the sources directly.

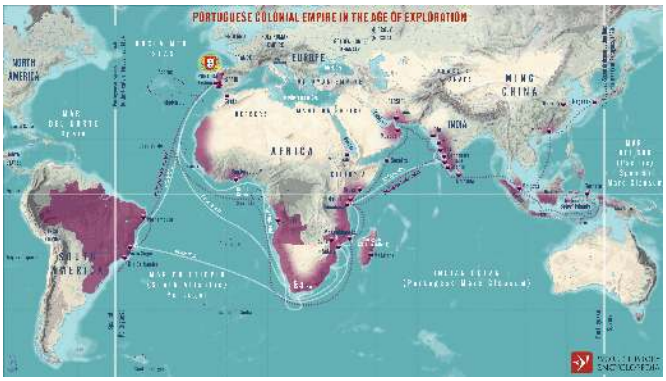
During the European Middle Ages, Sub-Saharan Africa was dominated by various medium-sized kingdoms, most of which had converted to Islam. Mali was the largest one, and oversaw a lucrative trade in gold and various luxury goods via caravan to North Africa and the rest of the Mediterranean. Likewise, other kingdoms traded with one another, the Middle East, and Europe. These kingdoms also engaged in frequent warfare against one another (just as the states of Europe did).

Drawn by the gold they were able to acquire via merchants in North Africa, Europeans tried to unsuccessfully sail down the west coast of the continent. In the 15th century, the caravel made it possible, as did the new compasses and astrolabe.

Prince Henry the Navigator (1394 – 1460), the governor of the southernmost province of Portugal, sponsored numerous Portuguese expeditions along the west coast of Africa, hoping to somehow seize lands or at least find routes to lucrative sources of gold and spices. In 1497, Vasco Da Gama, a Portuguese nobleman, was sponsored by the Portuguese crown and sailed around Africa and as far as India, in the process claiming various territories for Portugal. By the 16th century, the Portuguese maintained a lucrative royally-controlled, militarily-enforced monopoly on trade between Europe and West African kingdoms, East African kingdoms, and Indian merchants. Thus, tiny Portugal was, for a time, one of the wealthiest states in Europe.

This Portuguese "monopoly" was first and foremost a monopoly between the Indian Ocean trade and Europe, *not* a monopoly of trade within the Indian Ocean itself. Indian, African, and Middle Eastern merchants continued to exchange goods and wealth whose value greatly exceeded that of the trade between Europe and the Indian Ocean region. Now, Portugal was at the forefront of the European states with direct access to the sources of luxury commodities like spices, indigo, ivory, and gold. Other states were quick to follow once the sheer extent of African and Indian wealth was revealed through Portuguese trade. Soon, first the Dutch and then the English started taking over the oceanic trade routes from the Portuguese.

This map illustrates the evolution of Portugal into a global colonial power following the period of European exploration of the 15th Century. For a full-screen version, click here.



Source: Worldhistory.org

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4.3: Spain, Columbus, the Great Dying, and the Columbian Exchange

During the early modern period, some of the important voyages of discovery were undertaken by agents of the Spanish monarchy, starting with that of **Christopher Columbus** in 1492. Inspired by religious fervor as much as a practical desire for riches and fresh off the successful Reconquest, Queen Isabella agreed with Columbus's vision of flanking the Muslim forces of the Middle East and recapturing the Holy Land as well as establishing new trade routes to Asia. The voyage was thought to be feasible. All educated people already accepted that the world was round (common knowledge since the days of ancient Greece). However, the circumference of the globe was not really clear, so no one knew how long one would have to sail west to reach the east.

Columbus had inaccurate beliefs about the distance between Europe and Asia. He based his geography on an ancient (and completely inaccurate) account by the Greek philosopher Ptolemy. Thus, he thought that Asia was not far west of Europe. Despite being disliked and distrusted by most rulers, Columbus succeeded in winning Isabella over to his vision, and she paid to outfit him with a tiny fleet. She also sent him with letters of introduction to the Great Khan, who she presumed still ruled in Asia. In August, 1492, Columbus departed with three small boats – the Niña, Pinta, and Santa Maria - and 90 men. They arrived in the Bahamas in October.

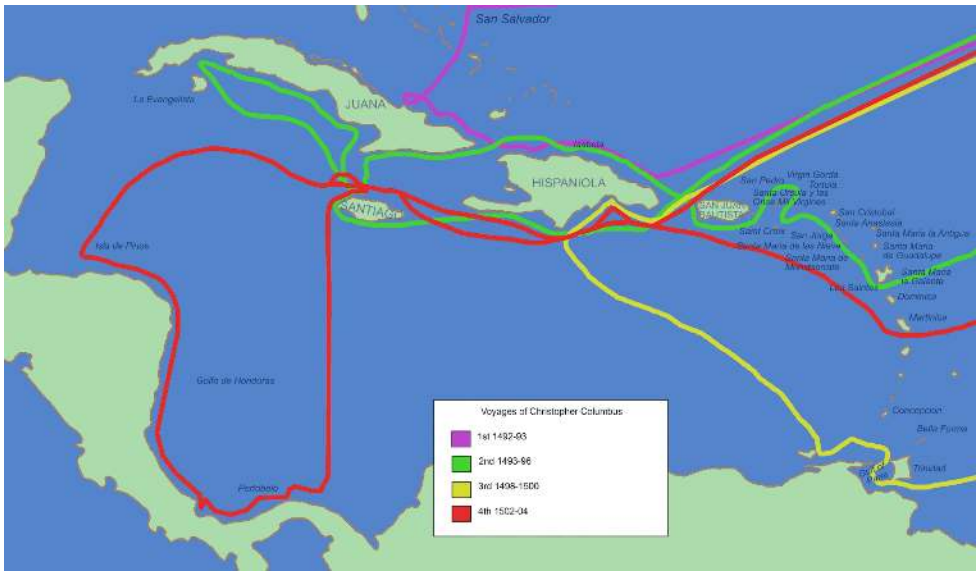


Figure 6.2.1: The four voyages of Columbus between 1492 and 1504. 'Juana' is present-day Cuba, and 'Hispaniola' is present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Columbus's action would be representative of the Spanish attitudes toward the Americas: brutality against the native "Indians," attempts to convert Indians by force, intense greed for precious metals, and the introduction of pathogens against which the native people had absolutely no resistance. With Columbus, the exchanging of goods and commodities between the two hemispheres began. Historians refer to that enormous distribution of plant and animal species, as well as bacteria and viruses, as the **Columbian Exchange**.

From the New World, Europeans brought back corn, potatoes, tobacco, chocolate, and tomatoes, which soon flourished across Africa and Eurasia. From the Old World, Europeans imported all of the large domesticated animals - horses, cows, sheep, goats, pigs, and sheep - as well as numerous crops like rice, wheat, sugarcane, and coffee. Indeed, potatoes would go on to reshape the demographics of all of northern Europe, since they provide a great deal of nutrition and calories and could be grown in poor, rocky soils. The poor of many European regions (Ireland, most famously) became largely dependent on potatoes for nourishment by the eighteenth century.

The single most significant biological entity to be exchanged between the hemispheres was the **smallpox virus**, which led to the worst epidemic in world history. Almost all diseases that affect humans are mutated strains of diseases affecting domestic animals, referred to as zoonotic diseases. In addition, all of the large animal species that can be domesticated were Eurasian in origin except llamas. Thus, Eurasians and Africans had spent thousands of years both suffering from and building up resistance to epidemics

while Native Americans did not. Those epidemic pathogens arrived all at once with the European invasion of the New World that began.

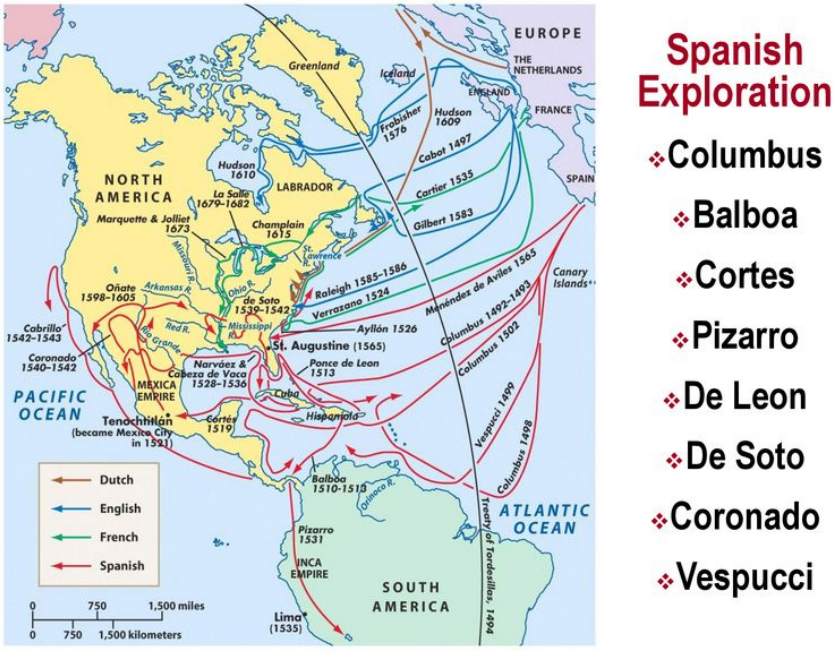
Historians refer to the demographic catastrophe that accompanied the European encounter with the Americas as the **Great Dying**. Up to 90% of the native people of the Americas died within a few generations of Columbus's arrival. Due largely to their use of steel weapons and horses, the Spanish and Portuguese did win some noteworthy military engagements with native forces. However, their true military advantage lay in germ warfare, something they certainly did not anticipate unleashing on their arrival. In the early 16th Century, Spanish explorers would encounter vast swaths of land abandoned by sophisticated cultures that had been decimated by disease.

Almost immediately after Columbus's return to Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain grasped the significance of his discovery and actively funded more expeditions and, soon, colonists. The Spanish crown also quickly tried to cement its hold on the New World by petitioning the pope to grant them everything across the Atlantic. After papal intervention and negotiations, the **Treaty of Tordesillas** gave Spain everything west of an arbitrary line 1,100 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands, with everything to the east granted to the Portuguese. Practically speaking, the Portuguese concentrated their colonization efforts on Brazil, Africa, and India, while the Spanish concentrated on the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

By the 1520s, Europeans recognized that Columbus had been completely wrong about the New World being part of Asia. The term "America" was invented by Italian **Amerigo Vespucci**, who led two expeditions between 1497 and 1503 and was the first to grasp the immensity of the western hemisphere. He also coined the phrase "New World". Vespucci's accounts were printed prior to Columbus's. Otherwise, the continents may have been called something different!

Europeans persisted in their quest to find a western route to Asia. The Spanish explorers and sailors sought Asia by going around the Americas, even though they were also busy conquering the great empires of the Aztecs and Incas. **Ferdinand Magellan** (1480 – 1521), who commanded a small fleet of five ships funded by the Spanish crown, tried to find a western route to Asia in 1519. He succeeded in rounding South America and crossing the Pacific, but was killed by natives of the Philippines in 1521. The remnants of his fleet limped back to Spain in 1522. The Spanish would subsequently use the Philippines as the basis of their Pacific trade network, ultimately linking together Europe, the Americas, and Asia and fulfilling the original vision of a western route to Asia that had inspired Columbus's expedition in the first place.

This map shows the various Dutch, English, French, and Spanish explorations. A key has been provided that lists the Spanish-backed explorers.



Source: Slideplayer

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4.4: The Conquistadors

The **Conquistadors** were the military explorers sent by the Spanish monarchs to claim land, convert "heathens," and enrich both themselves and the crown. They were usually poor noblemen with few prospects. Indeed, many of the first generation of explorers were essentially unemployed knights. Some men simply launched expeditions to the New World without royal authorization, hoping to seize enough plunder to receive retroactive royal approval. Official explorers were obliged to turn over the “royal fifth” - 20% of all precious metals discovered or mined - of all loot to the crown.

Perhaps the most significant conquistador was **Hernan Cortes** (1485 – 1547). A poor knight who had fought in the aftermath of the Reconquest as a young man, Cortes proved brilliant at manipulating the native groups in Mexico, where he arrived in 1519 with 450 Spanish troops and 15 horses. There, a powerful empire under the **Aztecs** had recently seized control of a large swath of territory. The Aztecs rules through a constant flow of tribute, including captives who were destined for human sacrifice. Needless to say, the Aztecs were not popular with their subjects.

Working through a native translator, Malinche, who had already learned Spanish, Cortes was able to convince native groups resentful of the Aztecs to fight alongside the Spanish. Practically speaking, this action meant that the native groups suffered most of the casualties. His army fought its way to the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, where Cortes was initially welcomed by the emperor **Montezuma II**. Once the Aztecs realized the extent of the rapacious designs of the Spanish, they were chased from the city. But, then an epidemic of smallpox undermined the Aztec ability to fight. In 1522, the surviving Aztec forces surrendered, and the Spanish colony of New Spain was founded in the center of Mexico.

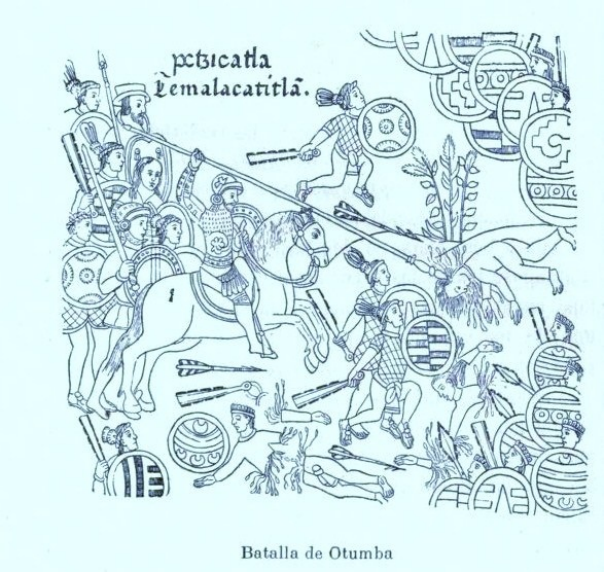


Figure 6.3.1: A later Spanish illustration of the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire. Note the allied Native Mexican troops behind and in front of the charging Spanish soldier.

Another noteworthy conquistador of the first generation was **Francisco Pizarro** (1478 – 1541). Inspired by Cortes’ success in Mexico, Pizarro set off (with 180 Spanish troops and 30 horses) for western South America in 1531. The **Incan empire** was a relatively young state that encompassed territory along the Andes Mountains through present-day Chile, Ecuador, and Peru. Pizarro ambushed the Inca emperor Atahualpa and captured him, demanding a building full of gold for his release. Once the ransom was paid, Pizarro had the emperor killed and then marched on the Inca capital of Cuzco. By 1533, Spanish forces were in control of the empire and began sending enormous quantities of bullion back to Spain.

Thus, less than fifty years after Columbus's initial landing, the two greatest empires of Central and South America had already fallen to the Spanish. By 1600, practically every part of Central and South America was at least nominally under Spanish (or, in the case of Brazil, Portuguese), control.

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4.5: New World Wealth

An important source of wealth in all of the Americas for the Spanish crown was discovered in 1545: the enormous silver deposits of the mountain of Potosi in present-day Bolivia. Extracting the metal required slave labor produced by the native people, which often led to death from exhaustion.

Part of that abuse inflicted upon the native population grew out of the crusading tradition. The Christian Bible did not explain their origins, so the Spanish invented various hypotheses, such as Native Americans were descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel described in the Old Testament. By the 1530s, the general consensus was that Native Americans were blank slates who had to be conquered for their own good. Although the Pope recognized the humanity of the Indians, the church continued to support forcible conversion. Native Americans were referred to as the “justly conquered" and either enslaved outright or conscripted as serfs in service to Spanish colonial masters.

In the New World, Spanish royal authority was enforced by two viceroys, royal officials who ruled over the northern and southern parts of the territory. Under them, rich nobles (often originally successful conquistadors) ran *encomiendas*, feudal estates with the legal right to exploit native labor. These estates often evolved into even larger *haciendas*, the size of whole states back in Europe.

The vast majority of Spanish immigrants were men. However, a formal ban on marriage between Spanish men and native women did not prevent the growth of a large “mixed” class of *mestizos*, the children of Spanish – American unions who were often recognized as legitimate children. A racialized hierarchy existed in the New World society, and more ethnic mixing occurred in Central and South America than in North America.

The surplus of precious metals generated by American mines undermined the vitality of the Spanish state itself in the long run – Spain did not have to cultivate trade nor pursue technological or bureaucratic innovation in the same manner as the rest of the European powers. Even though Spain was the most powerful state in Europe in the sixteenth century, its longer-term trajectory was one of decline, in large part because of its commercial stagnation. In addition, so much bullion was shipped back to Europe that inflation undermined its value, which weakened Spanish power even more.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Reforming Christianity

5.1: The Initial Catholic Church Reaction
5.2: The Inquisition and the Council of Trent
5.3: Religious Orders
5.4: Conclusion
5.5: The Context of the Reformation
5.6: Indulgences
5.7: Lutheranism
5.8: Calvinism
5.9: The English Reformation

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5.1: The Initial Catholic Church Reaction

Luther and his followers readily embraced the printing press to spread the movement's message across Europe. Initially, most members of the Church hierarchy were overwhelmed and bewildered by the emergence of Protestantism. The past heresies had remained limited in scope as compared with the incredible rapidity with which Lutheranism spread. At first, and for practical political reasons, the pope and various rulers were either unwilling or able to use force to crack down on Protestantism.

In historical hindsight, the shocking aspect of the Catholic Church's initial reaction was that there *was* no reaction. For decades, popes remained focused on the politics of Central Italy or simply continued beautifying Rome and enjoying a life of luxury. Likewise, there was no widespread awareness among most Church officials that anything out of the ordinary was taking place with Luther. Despite the radicalism of his position, most of the clergy assumed that Lutheranism was a "flash in the pan," doomed to fade back into obscurity in the end. By the 1540s, however, church officials began to take the threat posed by Protestantism more seriously.

The initial period of the Catholic Reformation (c. 1540 – 1550) was a fairly moderate one that aimed to bring Protestants back into the fold. Many people felt it difficult to have a permanent break from the Church and Rome. After it became clear that the split was permanent, the Church itself became much more hardline and intolerant. The subsequent reforms were as much about imposing a new internal discipline as they were about making membership appealing to lay Catholics.

Habit, ritual, organization, discipline, hierarchy, and wealth all worked to preserve the Church's power and influence. Likewise, many princes realized that Protestantism often led to political problems in their territories. German princes, who had originally supported Luther in order to protect their own political independence, were worried about having independent-minded denominations in their territories, some of which might reject worldly authority completely.

At all levels of the social hierarchy, Catholic rituals were comforting and appealing. The Catholic Reformation is often associated with the "baroque" style of art and music, which encouraged an emotional connection with Catholic ritual and, potentially, with the experience of faith itself. The Church continued to fund huge building projects and lavish artwork, much of which was aimed to appeal to laypeople, not just serve as pretty decorations for high-ranking churchmen.

Likewise, there was a wave of Protestant conversions that spread very rapidly by the 1530s. However, as the Protestant denominations splintered off and turned on one another, the "purity" of the appeal of Protestantism faded. In other words, when Protestants began fighting each other, there was no longer a clear and simple alternative to Roman corruption.

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5.2: The Inquisition and the Council of Trent

Pope Paul III (r. 1534 – 1549) launched the "hardline" movement of the Catholic Reformation. In 1536, a report concluded that there were numerous abuses within the Church that had to be corrected (e.g. the lack of education of the clergy, the practice of earning incomes from parishes that bishops never visited, etc.), but there was no budging on doctrine. In other words, the essential beliefs and practices of the Church were judged to be entirely correct and Luther (and soon, Calvin) was judged to be entirely wrong.

In 1542, Paul III approved the creation of a permanent branch of the Church devoted to holding Protestantism in check: the **Holy Office**. Also known as the **Inquisition,** the organization existed to search out signs of heresy, including Protestantism, in areas under Catholic control. It had the right to subject people to interrogation, torture, and in extreme cases, execution. Inquisitions had been around since the Middle Ages - the first one was in 1184 and targeted a heretical movement in southern France - but they had always been short-term responses to heresy. Under Paul III, the Inquisition became a permanent part of the Church.

Subsequent popes focused on re-emphasizing orthodoxy and combating heresy. **Paul IV** (r. 1555 – 1559) created the “Index” of forbidden books that would go on to form the basis of royal censorship in all Catholic countries for the next two centuries. He also enforced the stance that the Bible was not to be translated into vernacular languages but had to remain in Latin. This action rejected the Protestant practice of translating the Bible into everyday language for Christians to read and interpret themselves. According to Catholic belief, the Bible had to remain in Latin because only trained priests had the knowledge and authority to interpret it for laypeople. Laypeople, left to their own devices, would simply get the Bible’s message wrong and endanger their souls in the process.

Paul III, Paul IV, and **Pius IV** oversaw an ongoing series of meetings, the **Council of Trent**, that took place periodically between 1545 – 1563. There, the selling of indulgences, the importance of good works in salvation, the spiritual necessity of the sacraments, etc. were debated. Although initially organized to reconcile, at least in part, with Protestantism, the Council reaffirmed almost all of the controversial parts of church doctrine and disputed articles of faith. The major exception was that the cardinals and bishops banned the sale of indulgences in the future. (The Church still issued them, but they were no longer simply sold for cash). Emperor Charles V had earnestly hoped that the Church would give ground on some of the doctrinal issues and thereby win back Protestants in his lands. He even tried to prevent Pope Paul IV from taking office because the latter was so intransigent.



Figure 8.2.1: A depiction of the Council of Trent (in the background) painted in 1588, when wars between Protestants and Catholics were raging.

The Council of Trent did propose one monumental change to the Church. Henceforth, priests would be formally trained for the job. Soon, the Church organized and funded seminaries, colleges with the express purpose of training new priests. All priests would acquire a strong scholastic and humanistic education, fluency in Latin, and a deep understanding of the Bible and the writings of

major Christian thinkers. While abuses of power and moral laxness were not entirely eliminated from the Church, priests were now supposed to be experts in Christian theology.

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5.3: Religious Orders

The Catholic Reformation was happening in earnest by the 1530s. The Church adopted the use of the printing press and began reaching out to both priests and educated laypeople, often in the vernacular languages rather than Latin. (Note: The Bible was to remain untranslated.) The new fervor led to a revival of religious orders focused on reaching out to the common people rather than remaining sequestered from the public in monasteries and convents.

Jesuits

In addition to the edicts and councils convened by the popes, the Catholic Reformation benefited from a resurgence of Catholic religious orders. The most important new religious order was the Society of Jesus. The **Jesuits** were founded by **Ignatius of Loyola** (1491 – 1556), a kind of Catholic counterpart to Luther or Calvin, in 1540. A Spanish knight, Loyola was injured in battle. During his recovery and after reading books on the life of Christ and the saints, he gave up his possessions and took a pilgrimage across Spain and Italy. He claimed to offer “spiritual conversion” to those who would follow his teachings, which led to a brief imprisonment on suspicion of heresy.

Loyola's book, the *Spiritual Exercises*, encouraged a mystic veneration of the Church and single-minded devotion to its institutions. Based on an imaginary recreation of the persecution and death of Christ, the *Exercises* would lead many new members of the Jesuits to experience an emotional and spiritual awakening. That awakening was explicitly focused on what he described as the “Church Hierarchical”: not just a worldly institution that offered guidance to Christians, but the sole path to salvation, imbued by God Himself with spiritual authority.

The Jesuits were to be “faithful soldiers of the pope", with the purpose of fighting Protestantism and heresy. What made the Jesuits distinct from the other religious orders was that they were responsible to the pope, not to kings. They came to live and work in kingdoms all over Europe. However, bypassing royal authority and taking orders directly from Rome did not endear them to monarchs across the region.

By Loyola’s death in 1556, there were about 1,000 Jesuits, a number that rapidly increased by the end of the century. Many Jesuits became influential advisors to kings across Europe, ensuring that Catholic monarchs would actively persecute and root out heresy, including Protestantism. They also began a missionary campaign that sought to rekindle an emotional connection to the Church through its use of passionate sermons.



Figure 8.3.1: Statue of Ignatius of Loyola at the Church of the Gesù in Rome, one of the original Jesuit churches. The statues are in the baroque style, practically dripping with ornamentation and gilding.

Education was important. Indeed, Jesuits were required to undergo an eleven-year period of training before they were full members. Thus, they created schools, where noble and rich, non-noble young men received an excellent humanist education and developed a fierce devotion to the Church. By 1600, there were 250,000 students in Jesuit schools across continental Europe. The schools were noteworthy for being free, funded by the Church and private gifts. However, students did have to apply for admittance. Upon successfully completing school, the young men often went on to positions of considerable political and commercial power.

Jesuits were also active missionaries, traveling all over the known world. Unlike many other orders of missionaries, the Jesuits distinguished themselves by learning the native languages and customs of the people. In East Asia, they founded Christian communities in Japan (in 1549) and China (in 1552). The Jesuits failed to make many converts in China, but did bring back an enormous amount of information about the highly sophisticated, rich, ancient culture that had achieved its power without Christianity.

Carmelites

The **Carmelites** was an order of nuns reformed by **St. Teresa of Avila** starting in 1535. The nuns' vow of poverty and their focus on prayer and purity became the focus. In addition, the use of separate residences and lifestyles for nuns from rich and poor families was abolished. Likewise, many orders started opening hospitals and orphanages in the cities that provided care for both the sick and the poor and indigent.



Figure 8.4.1: This portrait is probably the most accurate representation of St Teresa's appearance. Her age was approximately 61 years old.

Outcomes

While Catholic monarchs continued to almost completely control the Church in their kingdoms, popes had at least moderate success in forcing bishops to stop living like princes, to have priests remain at least nominally celibate, and for church officials to actually live in the places they were supposed to represent. Over time, the moral qualities of members of the Church, while not universally exemplary, did come to more closely resemble the purported standards.

Inspired by the success of Protestantism and to better connect with laypeople, the Church began to sponsor a counter-propaganda campaign. Lives of saints, prayer books, and anti-Protestant propaganda were printed and distributed throughout Europe. The Church began to stage plays on both Biblical scenes and great moments in the Church's history. The new religious orders, including the Jesuits, the **Capuchins**, the **Ursulines**, and the followers of **Vincent de Paul** sponsored major charitable works, reconnecting the poor to the Church. In contrast to the austerity and even harshness of Lutheranism and (especially) Calvinism, the Catholic Church came to offer a mystical, emotional form of both worship and religious experience that was very appealing to those people that had been alienated from the institution.

Literacy definitely benefited from both the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. Schools and universities – both church-supported and private – continued to be created throughout the sixteenth century. All Protestant denominations emphasized the importance of reading the Bible. Also, as the Catholic Church waged its counter-propaganda campaign, the Church hierarchy came to regard general literacy as desirable. Overall, literacy climbed to between 5 – 10% of the population by 1600 across Central and Western Europe.

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5.4: Conclusion

By the 1560s, the battle lines between Protestantism and Catholicism were firmly set. The Catholic Reformation established Catholic orthodoxy and launched a massive, and largely successful, campaign to reaffirm the loyalty and enthusiasm of Catholic laypeople. Meanwhile, Protestant leaders were equally hardened in their beliefs and actively inculcated devotion and loyalty in their followers. "Religious tolerance" did not exist in the modern sense - both sides were convinced that anyone who disagreed with their spiritual outlook was doomed to an eternity of suffering. Soon, the war of propaganda and evangelism would give way to a war of muskets and pikes.

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5.5: The Context of the Reformation

In the late 15th Century, the Catholic Church was omnipresent in European society. About one person in seventy-five was part of the Church, as priests, monks, nuns, or members of lay orders. Practically every work of art depicted Biblical themes. The Church oversaw births, marriages, contracts, wills, and deaths - all law was, by implication, the law of God Himself. Furthermore, in Catholic doctrine, spiritual salvation was only accessible through the intervention of the Church. Without the rituals (sacraments) performed by priests, the soul was doomed to go to hell. Finally, popes fought to claim the right to intervene in secular affairs as they saw fit. However, they had never had much luck, losing even more ground as new, more powerful, and centralized monarchies rose to power.

Simply put, as of the Renaissance era, all was not well with the Church. The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism undermined the Church's authority. The stronger states claimed the right to appoint bishops and priests within their kingdoms. For example, in England and France, laypeople and some priests looked to monarchs, rather than the pope, for patronage and authority.

At the same time, elite churchmen (including the popes) continued to live like princes. Generally, attempts to reform the lifestyles and relative piety of priests generally failed. The papacy was too remote from the everyday life of the priesthood across Europe. Also, since elite churchmen were all nobles, they usually continued to live like nobles. In many cases, these religious leaders openly lived with concubines, had children, and worked to ensure that their children receive lucrative positions in the Church. Laypeople were well aware of the slack morality that pervaded the Church. Medieval and early-modern literature contains many satirical tracts mocking immoral priests, and depictions of hell almost always featured priests, monks, and nuns burning alongside nobles and merchants.

These patterns also affected monasticism, the idea that monastic orders should imitate the life of Christ. Yet, by the early modern period, many monasteries (especially urban ones) ran successful industries, and monks often lived in relative luxury compared to townspeople. Furthermore, the monasteries had been very successful in buying up or receiving land as gifts. Indeed, by the late fifteenth century, a full 20% of the land of the western kingdoms was owned by monasteries. The contrast between the required vow of poverty taken by monks and nuns with the actual wealth and luxury of the same group was obvious to laypeople.

This widespread concern with corruption led to a new focus on the inner spiritual life of the individual, not the priest, monk, or nun. New movements sprung up around Europe, including one called **Modern Devotion** in the Netherlands, that focused on the moral and spiritual life of laypeople outside of the auspices of the Church. Called *The Imitation of Christ*, the Modern Devotion handbook was so popular that its sales matched those of the Bible at the time. It promoted the idea of salvation without needing the Church as an intermediary.

Within the Church, there were widespread and persistent calls for reform to better address the needs of the laity and improve the Church's own moral standards. Numerous devout priests, monks, and nuns abhorred the corruption of their peers and superiors in the Church and called for change. However, almost no one anticipated a permanent break from the Church's hierarchy itself.

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5.6: Indulgences

One crucial phenomenon that brought about the Protestant Reformation was the selling of indulgences by the Church. (An indulgence was a certificate that offered the same spiritual power as the sacrament of confession and penance: to have one's sins absolved.) Catholic doctrine held that souls did not go straight to heaven on death. Instead, they would spend years (or even centuries) in a spiritual plane between earth and heaven called **purgatory**. Once their sins were purged through fire, they would ascend to heaven. Each indulgence promised a certain amount of time that the individual would **not** have to spend in purgatory after death.

At first, indulgences were granted by the pope for acts that were supported by the Church, such as the Crusades. Later, popes sold the certificates in order to raise revenue, especially as the Renaissance-era popes built up secular power and patronized the art and architecture associated with the Vatican. By the early sixteenth century, the practice was completely out of control. Contracted by the Church, roaming salesmen sold indulgences without the slightest concern for the moral or spiritual status of the buyer, and even invented little jingles like "when the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs".

The concept of indulgences relied on the notion of a "treasury of merit" – a kind of spiritual bank – whose savings had been deposited by the sacrifices made by Christ and the saints. When someone bought an indulgence, they drew against that treasury in order to avoid time in purgatory. Another way to gain access to the treasury of merit was to possess, or even come into contact with, holy relics (typically the bones of saints). Thus, many rulers tried to create large collections. Indeed, one German prince had enough relics to eliminate 1,902,202 years and 270 days from his and his subjects' time in Purgatory. Another prince's total was 39,245,120 years. Out of the widespread corruption within the Church emerged Martin Luther.

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5.7: Lutheranism

Martin Luther (1483 – 1546) was a German monk who endured a difficult childhood and a fraught relationship with his father. Suffering from bouts of depression and anxiety, he became a monk, receiving both a scholastic and humanistic education, and eventually becoming a professor at the small university in the city of Wittenberg in the Holy Roman Empire. Far from the centers of both spiritual and secular power, he contemplated the Bible, the Church, and his own spiritual salvation.

Luther struggled with his spiritual identity. He was obsessively afraid of being damned to hell, feeling totally unworthy of divine forgiveness and plagued with doubt as to his ability to achieve salvation. In Catholic doctrine, salvation is achieved through a combination of the sacraments, faith in God, and good works (good deeds that merit a person's admission into heaven). Those good works could be acts of kindness and charity or gifts of money to the Church. Indeed, a common "good work" was leaving money or land to the Church in one's will. Luther felt that the idea of good works was ambiguous, especially when works seemed so inadequate when compared to the wretched spiritual state of humankind. He could not understand how *anyone* merited admittance to heaven no matter how much good work they carried out while alive.



Figure 7.3.1: A 1528 portrait of Luther.

In about 1510, Luther began to explore the idea that salvation did not come from works, but from grace, the limitless love and forgiveness of God, which is achievable through faith alone. Over time, he developed the idea that it takes an act of God to merit a person's salvation. A person's willed attempts to do good things to get into heaven were always inadequate; what mattered was that the heartfelt faith of a believer might inspire an infinite act of mercy on the part of God. This idea - salvation through faith alone - was a major break from Catholic belief.

In one stroke, the idea did away with the entire edifice of church ritual. Over time, Luther argued that only baptism and communion were relevant since they were clearly inspired by Christ's actions as described in the New Testament. Further, the priest was a guide rather than a gatekeeper who could grant or withhold the essential rituals. In other words, a believer should be able to read the Bible directly rather than be forced to defer to the priesthood.

In 1517, **Pope Leo X** issued a new indulgence to fund the building of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Luther was incensed at how this new indulgence promised to absolve the purchaser of all sins, all at once. Furthermore, the indulgence could be purchased on behalf of those who were already dead and "spring" them from purgatory in one swoop. In response, Luther posted "**95 Theses**", the first official act of the Protestant Reformation.

The 95 Theses were relatively moderate in tone, attacked indulgences for leading to greed instead of piety, for leading the laity to distrust the Church, and for simply not working. According to Luther, indulgences did not absolve the sins of those who purchased them. Written in Latin, the 95 Theses were intended to spark debate and discussion within the Church. While he criticized the pope's wealth and implied greed, Luther did not attack the office of the papacy itself. Soon, the 95 Theses were translated into German and reprinted.

By 1520, Luther was actively engaged in writing and publishing inflammatory pamphlets that attacked the pope's authority and the corruption of the Church. In 1521, Luther was tried at the **Diet of Worms**, the Holy Roman Empire's official meeting of princes,

where the emperor Charles V ordered him to recant. Luther refused and was declared an “outlaw”. According to this decree, no subject of the Empire was to offer Luther food or water, and they would not suffer any legal penalty should Luther be murdered. A sympathetic German prince, **Frederick the Wise** of Saxony, spirited Luther away, and allowed him to continue writing anti-papal propaganda.



Figure 7.3.2: A (highly dramatized) portrayal of Luther at the Diet of Worms painted in the nineteenth century.

Both the pope and Charles V were reluctant to threaten Frederick the Wise, who was one of the electors of the empire and most powerful nobles. Charles V had enormous prestige and some ability to influence his subjects, but practically speaking each prince was sovereign in his own domain. This loose overall control was disastrous for Catholic uniformity in the empire, as Lutheranism rapidly spread. In addition, Charles V was too preoccupied with wars against France to spearhead a genuine effort to crush Lutheranism. In turn, French King Francis I extended royal protection to Lutherans to undermine Charles' authority.

Very quickly, Protestantism caught on across the empire, especially among elites, churchmen, and the educated urban classes. As Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V felt honor-bound to defend the Church. But his military was tied up fighting against both France and the Ottoman Empire. Thus, in 1526, he allowed the German princes to choose whether to enforce his ban on Lutheranism, in hopes that they would continue to offer him their military assistance. Practically speaking, the German states ended up being divided roughly evenly, with a concentration of Lutheranism in the north and Catholicism in the south.

Luther was a deeply conservative man. His attack on Catholic doctrine was fundamentally based on what he saw as a “return” to the original message of the Bible. Many Protestants interpreted his message as a way to reject the existing social hierarchy too. In 1524, an enormous peasant uprising occurred across Germany, demanding a reduction in feudal dues and duties, the end of serfdom, and greater justice from feudal lords. In 1525, Luther penned a venomous attack against the rebels entitled *Against the Thieving, Murderous Hordes of Peasants*, which encouraged the lords to slaughter the peasants. The revolt was brutally put down, with over 100,000 killed. However, Lutheranism was able to keep the support of the elites like Frederick the Wise who sheltered it.

The very nature of breaking with a single authoritarian institution brought about a number of competing movements, some of which were directly inspired by and connected to Luther, but many of which were not.

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5.8: Calvinism

In 1536, **Jean Calvin**, a French lawyer exiled for his sympathy with Protestantism, settled in Geneva, Switzerland. Born a generation after Luther, religious unity had already been fragmented. In Geneva, Calvin began work on Christian theology and soon formed close ties with the city council. The result of his work was **Calvinism**, a distinct Protestant denomination that differed in many ways from Lutheranism.

Calvin accepted Luther's insistence on the role of faith in salvation. However, Calvin reasoned that if God was all-powerful and all-knowing, and he chose to extend his grace to some people but not to others, it was folly to imagine that humans could somehow influence Him. He noted that only some parishioners seemed able to grasp the importance and complexities of scripture, whereas most were indifferent or ignorant. He concluded that God, who transcended both time and space, chose some people as the "elect," those who will be saved before they are even born. Thus, free will was merely an illusion born of human ignorance, since the fate of a person's soul was determined before time itself began. This doctrine is called "**predestination**," and it was simply the logical extension of the very concept of divine omnipotence according to Calvin.



Figure 7.4.1: Sixteenth-century portrait of Calvin. Austere black clothing became associated with Calvinists, who rejected ostentatious dress and decoration.

Practically speaking, Calvinism involved a kind of circular argument about salvation. Those who were among the elect lived according to the standards of behavior defined in the Bible, refrained from worldly pleasures, and strove to conduct themselves within the legal and social framework of their societies. Thus, good Calvinists were supposed to devote themselves to the study of scripture, temperate living, and hard work. Counterintuitively, it was not that these behaviors would lead to salvation. Rather, it was how the already-saved acted morally according to God's will. Furthermore, one sign of being a member of the elect was financial success, because success was a side-effect of the focus and hard work that the elect naturally exhibited.

In 1555, Calvin worked with a group of fellow French exiles to stage a coup d'etat of the city council. Then, he created the **Consistory**, a group of Calvinist ministers who scrutinized the behavior of Geneva's citizens, fining or imprisoning people for intemperate or ungodly behavior. The idea was that Geneva would be the model Christian community.

While Lutheranism spread to northern Germany and the Scandinavian countries, Calvinism caught on in Switzerland, France (where Calvinists were known as **Huguenots**), and Scotland (where the Scottish Calvinists became known as **Presbyterians**). Everywhere, Calvinists set themselves apart by their plain dress and their dour outlook on merriment, celebrations, and the pleasures of the flesh. The best-known Calvinists in the American context were the **Puritans**, English Calvinists who left Europe, after initially fleeing persecution, to create a perfect Christian community in the new world.

Lutherans and Calvinists quickly came to regard one another as rivals rather than as "fellow" Protestants. Each group finding the other's respective theology as flawed and misleading as that of Catholicism. While some pragmatic alliances between Protestant groups would eventually emerge because of persecution or war, for the most part, each Protestant denomination claimed to have exclusive access to religious truth.

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5.9: The English Reformation

Whereas Lutheranism and Calvinism had come about as protests against the perceived moral and doctrinal failings of the Catholic church, the English Reformation happened because of the selfish desires of a king.

Henry VIII (r. 1509 – 1547) had received a special dispensation from the papacy to marry his brother's widow (a practice banned in the Old Testament of the Bible). **Catherine of Aragon** was the aunt of Charles V and a member of the most powerful royal line in Europe. However, she failed to produce a son. (Their only daughter would go to rule as Mary I.) Henry decided he needed a new wife and another chance at a male heir, so he started an affair with **Anne Boleyn**, a young noblewoman. Simultaneously, Henry petitioned the pope for a divorce - a practice that was strictly forbidden. In 1531, Henry divorced Catherine and married Anne, without the pope's permission.

When Anne did not produce a male heir in a timely manner, Henry trumped up charges of adultery and had her beheaded. In 1534, as papal threats escalated over his impiety, Henry issued the **Acts of Supremacy and Succession**, effectively separating England from the Catholic Church and founding the Church of England. The Church of England was almost identical to the Catholic Church in its doctrine and rituals. It simply substituted the king at its apex and discarded allegiance to the Roman pope. It also gave Henry an excuse to seize Catholic lands and wealth. The spoils from these rich monasteries would fund the crown and its subsequent military and naval buildup into the reign of his daughter, Elizabeth I.

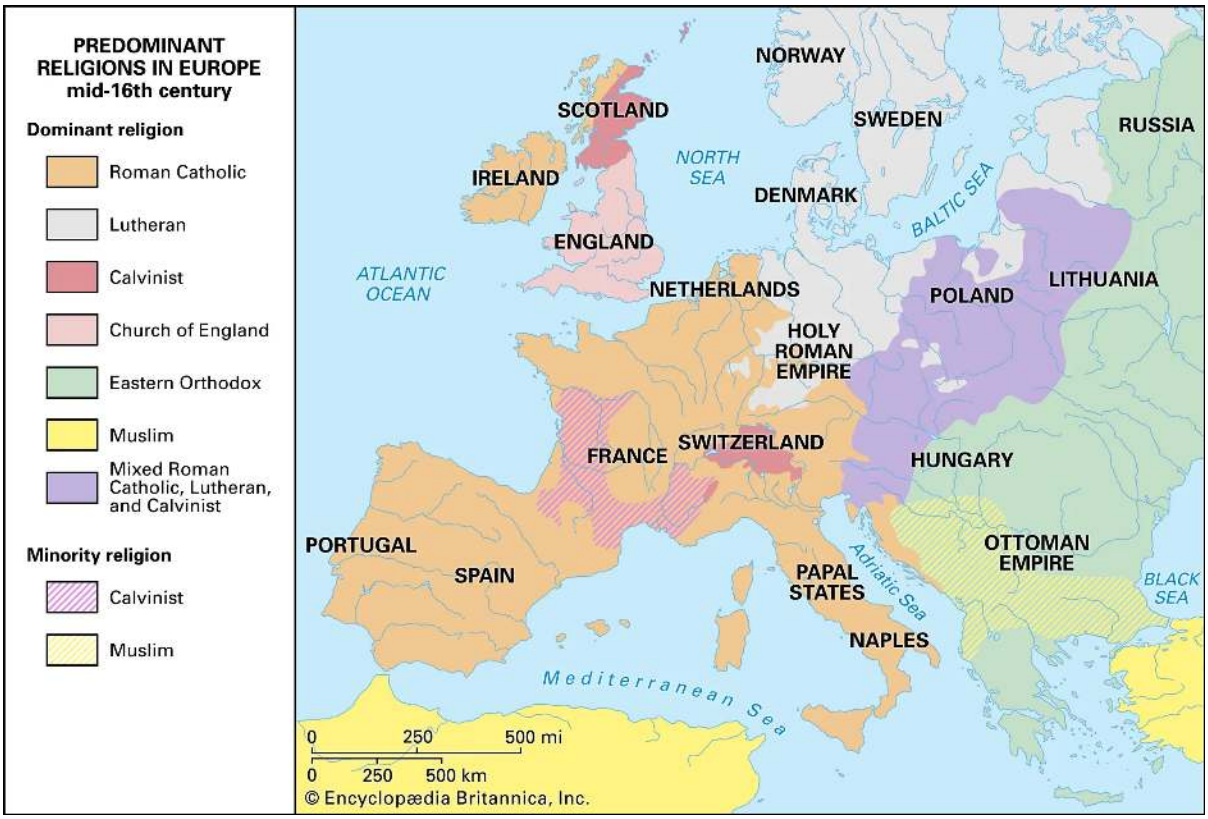


Figure 7.5.1: Easily the best-known portrait of Henry VIII in the prime of life.

Henry married a total of six wives over the course of his life, with two divorced, two executed, one dying of natural causes, and the last, **Katherine Parr**, surviving him. In the end, Henry had three children. Each one took the throne in fairly rapid succession. Under Edward VI (r. 1547 - 1553) and Mary (r. 1553 - 1558), the kingdom oscillated between an extreme form of Protestantism and an attempted Catholic resurgence. **Elizabeth I** (r. 1558 – 1603) would become one of Europe's most effective monarchs. Part of her success was in stabilizing the religious issue in England: she insisted that her subjects be part of the Church of England, but she did not actively persecute Catholics.

England and Scotland were divided between competing Christian factions, but ones very distinct to the British Isles in comparison to the more straightforward Catholic versus Protestant conflicts on the European continent. The Church of England, whose adherents are known as Anglicans, had an official "high church" branch supported by the nobility and the monarchy itself. However, a growing movement openly embraced Calvinism, becoming known as **Puritanism** (or "low church") - still technically Anglican, but rejected by the Church hierarchy. Meanwhile, numerous Catholics continued to worship in secret. Finally, most of Scotland became devoutly Calvinist, while many Scottish nobles remained Catholic until well into the seventeenth century.

Europe in the Mid-16th Century



Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Religious Wars

6.1: Prelude to Religious Wars
6.2: The Little Ice Age
6.3: The French Wars of Religion
6.4: Spain and the Netherlands
6.5: England
6.6: The Thirty Years' War

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6.1: Prelude to Religious Wars

The idea of “live and let live” was almost nonexistent in early-modern Europe. What tolerance had existed in the early decades of the Reformation era tended to fade away. A few exceptions did exist, especially in the Holy Roman Empire, but beliefs had hardened by the end of the 16th Century.

While the Catholic Inquisition is an iconic institution in the history of persecution, most Protestants were equally hostile to Catholics. This polarity was especially true among Huguenots in France, who aggressively proselytized and imposed harsh social and, if they could, legal controls of behavior in their areas of influence. In addition, while actual wars between Protestant sects were rare (the English Civil War being an exception), different Protestant groups usually detested one another.

Why was religion so divisive in the early modern period?

- Religion was “owned” by princes. A given territory’s religion was deeply connected to the faith of its leader. Princes often held some authority in church lands, and priests had always served as important royal officials.
- Numerous ecclesiastical territories, especially in the Holy Roman Empire, were wholly controlled by “princes of the church.”
- Only states had the resources to reform whole institutions, replacing seminaries, universities, libraries, and so on with new material in the case of Protestant states. This necessitated an even closer relationship between church and state. Someone following a rival branch of Christianity was, from the perspective of a ruler, not just a religious dissenter, but a political rebel.

At the same time, hardened doctrines of belief were nailed down by the competing confessions. The Lutherans define their specific creed known as the Augsburg Confession in 1530. In the next decade, the Catholic Council of Trent defined Catholic doctrine. Thus, a hardening of beliefs as ambiguities occurred, and points of common agreement were eliminated.

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6.2: The Little Ice Age

In addition to religious conflict, a Little Ice Age occurred. A naturally occurring fluctuation in the Earth's climate saw the average temperature drop by a few degrees, enhancing the frequency and severity of bad harvests. Starting in the 14th Century in the Northern Hemisphere, that change became dramatically more pronounced between 1570 and the early 1700s. The single most severe period lasted from approximately 1600 until 1640, precisely when the most destructive religious war of all raged in Europe: the Thirty Years' War.

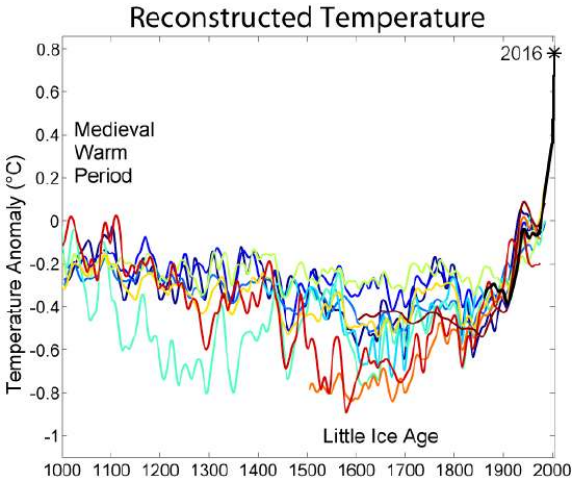


Figure 9.1.1: Overlay of different historical reconstructions of average temperatures over the last two thousand years. Temperatures continue to climb rapidly in the present era. (CC BY-SA 3.0 Unreported; Robert A. Rohde via Wikipedia)

Lower temperatures meant that crop yields dropped, outright crop failures became more common, and famines more frequent. In societies that were completely dependent on agriculture for survival, these conditions ensured that social and political stability was severely undermined. According to historians, major states across the world such as Ming China, the Ottoman Empire, and European colonial regimes in the Americas all suffered civil wars, invasions, or religious conflicts at this time. The climate was a major causal factor.

Thus, religious conflict overlapped with an economic crisis, with the latter making the former even more desperate and bloody. The results are reflected in some simple statistics: from 1500 to 1700, some part of Europe was at war 90% of the time. Indeed, there were only four years of peace in the entire seventeenth century. In addition, the single most powerful dynasty, the Habsburgs, were at war two-thirds of the time.

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6.3: The French Wars of Religion

The first major religious wars of the period were in France, one of the most powerful kingdoms in Europe, as well as the most populous. Although a dynamic economy existed, the **Valois dynasty** was weak and kept in check by the powerful nobility. Some of the noblemen had armies as large as that of the king himself, and many Valois kings had little skill for practical politics. For example, the Valois king Henry II ignored affairs of the state in favor of hunting and was killed in a tournament. (During a joust, a splinter from a broken lance flew in through the eye-slit of his helmet, impaling his eye. He died two weeks later from the subsequent infection. There were no modern-day antibiotics.)

France was divided between two major factions:

- the Catholic **Guise family** advised by the Jesuits and supported by the king of Spain
- Huguenot **Bourbon family,** who represented the growing numbers of economically dynamic Huguenots concentrated in the south (especially numerous in Navarre, a small independent kingdom between France and Spain)

As of 1560, fully 10% of the people of France were Huguenots, many representing the middle class: merchants, lawyers, and prosperous townsfolk. In addition, between one-third and one-half of the lower nobility were Huguenots. Fearing the power of the Huguenots and detesting their faith, the Guises created the **Catholic League**, an armed militia of Catholics that included armed monks, townsfolk, and soldiers. In 1562, a Guise nobleman sponsored a massacre of Huguenots that sparked decades of war.

From 1562 to 1572 there was on-again, off-again fighting between the Catholic League and Huguenot forces. King **Charles X** was a child when the fighting started. Thus, the state was run by his mother, **Catherine de Medici**, who tended to vacillate between supporting her fellow Catholics and supporting Protestants who were the enemies of Spain, France's rival to the south. Neither Charles nor Catherine were fanatical in their religious outlook, much to the frustration of the nobles of the Catholic League.

Hoping to end the conflict, Charles and Catherine invited the Huguenot Prince Henry of Navarre, leader of the Protestant forces, to Paris in 1572 to marry Charles' sister Margaret. Henry arrived in Paris with some 2,000 Huguenot followers, all of whom had agreed to arrive unarmed. However, the Duke of Guise convinced the king that only the death of Henry and his followers would truly end the threat of religious division. With the king's approval, Catholic forces launched a massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, in which more than 2,000 Protestants were killed. The **St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre** would live in infamy in French history as a stark example of religiously-fueled hatred.



Figure 9.2.1: A gruesome depiction of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre painted by a Huguenot.

The events in Paris sparked massacres all over the country with at least 20,000 more deaths. **Henry of Navarre** survived and half-heartedly "converted" to Catholicism to ensure his safety. Then, he escaped to the south and rallied the Huguenot resistance. In 1574, Charles died, leaving the throne of France to his younger brother Henry, the last male member of his family line. After a lull in the fighting, the war resumed in 1576.

In the years that followed, the French Wars of Religion turned into a three-way civil war pitting the Catholic League against the legitimate king of France (both sides were Catholic) with the Huguenots fighting both in turn. Ironically, the leaders of the three factions were all named Henry - King Henry III of Valois, Prince Henry IV of Navarre, and the leader of the Catholic League, Henry, Duke of Guise. Further assassinations followed, including the Duke of Guise and the King. The only heir to the throne was

Henry of Navarre, since he had married into the royal family. In 1594, he was declared Henry IV of France. Realizing the country would never accept a Huguenot king, he famously concluded that “Paris is worth a mass” and converted to Catholicism on the spot.

Henry IV went on to become popular among both Catholics and Protestants for his competence, wit, and pragmatism. In 1598, he issued the **Edict of Nantes** that officially propagated toleration to the Huguenots, who were allowed to build a parallel state within France with walled towns, armies, and an official Huguenots church. However, they were banned from Paris and from participating in the royal government. Eventually, he was assassinated (after eighteen previous attempts) in 1610 by a Catholic fanatic. Ultimately, the “solution” to the French Wars of Religion was political unity instead of religious unity, a conclusion reached out of pure pragmatism rather than any kind of heartfelt toleration of difference.

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6.4: Spain and the Netherlands

During the era of religious wars, the Bourbons' greatest rivals were the Habsburg royal line, who possessed the Austrian Empire, were the nominal heads of the Holy Roman Empire, and had control of Spain and its enormous colonial empire.

The Spanish King **Philip II** (r. 1556 – 1598) was the son of the former Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Philip regarded his place in Europe as being the most staunch defender of Catholicism possible. As a result, there was harsh, even tyrannical, suspicion and persecution of non-Catholics and those Catholics suspected of harboring secret non-Catholic beliefs. He viciously persecuted the *Moriscos*, the converted descendants of Spanish Muslims, and forced their children to turned over to Catholic schools for education. He also held the *Conversos*, converted descendants of Spanish Jews, as suspect of secretly continuing to practice Judaism. Thus, the Spanish Inquisition would frequently try Conversos on suspicion of heresy.

Although Philip was able to exercise a great deal of control over Spanish society, he had much more trouble imposing religious unity in his foreign possessions, especially in the Netherlands. The Netherlands was an amalgam of seventeen provinces with a diverse society and religious denominations, all held in a delicate balance. Its rich significant overseas and European commercial interests were held by a dynamic merchant class. In 1566, Spanish interference in Dutch affairs led to Calvinist attacks on Catholic churches. In turn, Philip sent troops and the Inquisition to impose harsher control. The Spanish Duke of Alba, who sat at the head of a military court called the **Council of Troubles**, executed individuals suspected of being Protestants, which accomplished little more than rallying Dutch resistance.

A Dutch Prince, **William the Silent** (1533 – 1584), led counter-attacks against Spanish forces, and Alba was recalled to Spain in 1573. Meanwhile, Spanish troops, who were no longer getting paid regularly by the crown, revolted, sacking several Dutch cities that had been loyal to Spain, including Brussels, Ghent, and especially Antwerp. This "**Spanish fury**" permanently undermined the economy of the sacked cities, and lent enormous fuel to the Dutch Revolt.



Figure 9.3.1: The Spanish Fury.

In 1581, the northern provinces declared independence from Spain. Then, in 1588, they organized as a republic led by wealthy merchants and nobles. Flooded with Calvinist refugees from the south, the Dutch Republic became staunchly Protestant and a strong ally of Anglican England. In turn, Spain maintained an ongoing and enormously costly military campaign against the Republic until 1648. The supply train for Spanish armies, known as the **Spanish Road**, stretched all the way from Spain across west-central Europe, crossing over both Habsburg territories and those controlled by other princes. Despite the enormous ongoing shipments of bullion from the New World, the Spanish monarchy was wracked by debts, largely due to the Dutch conflict.

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6.5: England

In addition to the costly conflict in the Netherlands, hostility developed between Spain and England. Philip married the English Queen Mary I (r. 1553 – 1558), in part to try to bring England back to Catholicism. After Mary died, her sister, Elizabeth, refused Philip's proposal of marriage and rallied to the Anglican cause. As hostility between England and Spain grew, Elizabeth's government-sponsored privateers - pirates working for the English crown. These privateers began a campaign of raids against Spanish possessions in the New World and Spanish ports, culminating in the sinking of an anchored Spanish fleet in Cadiz in 1587. Simultaneously, the English supported the Dutch Protestant rebels who were engaged in the growing war against Spain. Infuriated, Philip planned a huge invasion of England.

Philip spent years building up an enormous fleet known as the **Spanish Armada** of 132 warships, equipped with cannons and designed to carry thousands of soldiers to invade England. Setting sail in 1588, the armada was resoundingly defeated in the English Channel. The English ships were smaller and more maneuverable, their cannons were faster and easier to reload, and English captains knew how to navigate in the fickle winds of the Channel more easily than their Spanish counterparts. The Armada was forced to limp around England, Scotland, and Ireland trying to get back to Spain. In the process, Spain lost half of its ships and thousands of men. The debacle conclusively ended Spain's attempt to invade England and eliminated the threat to the Anglican church.

Despite the enormous wealth that flowed in from the Americas, Spain went from being the single greatest power in Europe to a second-tier power by 1700. Never again would Spain play a dominant role in European politics, although it remained in possession of an enormous overseas empire until the early 19th Century.

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6.6: The Thirty Years' War

Leading up to the outbreak of the **Thirty Years' War**, there had been an uneasy truce in the Holy Roman Empire between the Catholic emperor, who had limited power outside of his own ancestral (Habsburg) lands, and the numerous Protestant princes in their respective, mostly northern, territories. As of 1618, that compromise seemed relatively stable, despite the religiously-fueled wars across the borders in France and the Netherlands.

The compromise fell apart with the attempted murder of two Catholic imperial officials by Protestant nobles in Prague, when the emperor **Ferdinand II** sent officials to demand that Bohemia as a whole renounce Protestantism and convert to Catholicism. The **Bohemian Diet**, the local parliament of nobles, refused and threw the two officials out of the window of the building in which they were meeting. That event came to be known as the **Defenestration of Prague** - "defenestration" literally means "un-windowing."

The Diet renounced its allegiance to the emperor and pledged to support a Protestant prince instead. A flurry of attacks and counter-attacks ensued, ultimately pitting the Catholic Habsburgs against the German Protestant princes and, soon, their allied Danish king. The Habsburgs led a Catholic League, supported by powerful Catholic princes, while **Frederick of the Palatinate**, a German Calvinist prince, led the Protestant League against the forces of the emperor.

From 1620 – 1629, Catholic forces won a series of major victories against the Protestants. Bohemia was conquered by Catholic forces and over 100,000 Protestants fled. (Historians estimate that during the course of the war, Bohemia lost 50% of its population.) Catholic armies were particularly savage, living off the land and slaughtering those who opposed them.

In 1625, the Danish king, **Christian IV**, entered the war to bolster the Protestant cause. His armies were crushed and Denmark was briefly occupied by Catholic forces. During this period of Catholic triumph, Emperor Ferdinand II issued an Edict of Restitution (1629) that demanded the return of all Church lands seized since the Reformation. This action was hugely disruptive, as those lands had been in the hands of different states for over 80 years!

In 1630, the Swedish king, **Gustavus Adolphus**, received financial backing from the French to oppose the Habsburgs and their forces. (Under the leadership of its savvy royal minister, Cardinal Richelieu, France worked to hold its Habsburg rivals in check despite the shared Catholicism of the French and Habsburg states.) Adolphus invaded northern Germany and even won a major victory against the Catholic forces. He went on to lead a huge Protestant army through the Empire, reversing Catholic gains everywhere and exacting the same kind of brutal treatment against Catholics as had been inflicted on Protestants. In 1632, Adolphus died in battle and the military leader of the Catholics, a nobleman named **Wallenstein**, was assassinated, leaving the war in an ongoing, bloody stalemate.

In 1635, the French entered the war on the Protestant side. At this point, the war shifted from a religious conflict to a dynastic struggle between the two greatest royal houses of Europe: the Bourbons of France and the Habsburgs of Austria. It also extended beyond Germany, with follow-up wars being fought between France and Spain even after the Thirty Years' War ended. Spain provided both troops and financial support to the Habsburg forces in Germany, too.

From the French intervention of 1635, until the war finally ended in 1648, armies battled across the Empire, funded by the various elite states and families while exacting a terrible toll on the German lands and people. Over the 30-year struggle, the population of the Holy Roman Empire dropped by 8,000,000. Whole regions were depopulated and massive tracts of farmland were rendered barren. In 1648, exhausted and deeply in debt, both sides finally met to negotiate peace. The Treaty of Westphalia was a series of messages sent back and forth between the two sides, since the delegations refused to be in the same town.

As a result of the war, the already-weak centralized power of the Holy Roman Empire was further reduced, with the constituent states now enjoying almost total autonomy. In terms of the religious map of the Empire, there was one major change. Whereas roughly half of Western and Central Europe was Protestant in 1590, only one-fifth of it was in 1690. Simply point, fewer people remained Protestants in Habsburg lands after the war.

The "winners" of the war were the relatively centralized kingdoms of France and Sweden, with Austria's status as the most powerful individual German state also confirmed. The big "loser" was Spain. After paying for many of the Catholic armies over thirty years, it was essentially bankrupt, and its monarchy could not reorganize in a more efficient manner as did its French rivals. Likewise, Spain missed out on the subsequent economic expansion of Western Europe. The war undermined the economy of Central Europe, and the center of economic dynamism shifted to the Atlantic seaboard, especially France, England, and the

Netherlands. There, a mercantile middle class became more important than ever, while Spain remained tied to its older agricultural and bullion-based economic system.

The war spelled the end of large-scale religious conflict in Europe. There would be harsh and official intolerance well into the nineteenth century. However, even pious monarchs were now very hesitant to initiate or participate in full-scale war in the name of religious belief. Instead, there was a kind of reluctant, pragmatic tolerance that took root across all of Europe - the same kind of tolerance that had emerged in France at the conclusion of the French Wars of Religion.



Figure 6.6.1: Soldiers robbing, murdering, and raping peasants during the War. The conduct of soldiers was so horrific that many Europe elites came to believe that better-regulated and led armies were essential to prevent chaos in the future.

European elites came to focus as much on the way wars were fought as the reasons for war. The conduct of rapacious soldiers had been so atrocious in the wars, especially in the Holy Roman Empire, that many states went about the long, difficult process of creating professional standing armies that reported to noble officers, rather than simply hiring mercenaries and letting them run amok.

Those concepts - order and control - would go on to inspire the development of a new kind of political system in which kings would claim almost total authority: absolutism.



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Absolutism

7.1: France
7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King
7.3: Prussia
7.4: Austria
7.5: Spain
7.6: England's Civil War
7.7: England's Glorious Revolution
7.8: Introduction
7.9: Conclusion

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7.1: France

The transformation of the French state from a conventional Renaissance-era monarchy to an absolute monarchy began under the reign of Louis XIII, the son of Henry IV (the victor of the French Wars of Religion). Louis XIII was eight-year-old when his father was assassinated in 1610. Thus, he was considered too young to rule, and his mother Marie de Medici held power as regent, one who rules in the name of the king. She enlisted the help of a brilliant French cardinal, Armand de Richelieu. After Marie de Medici stepped down as regent, Richelieu continued to be the king's chief minister.



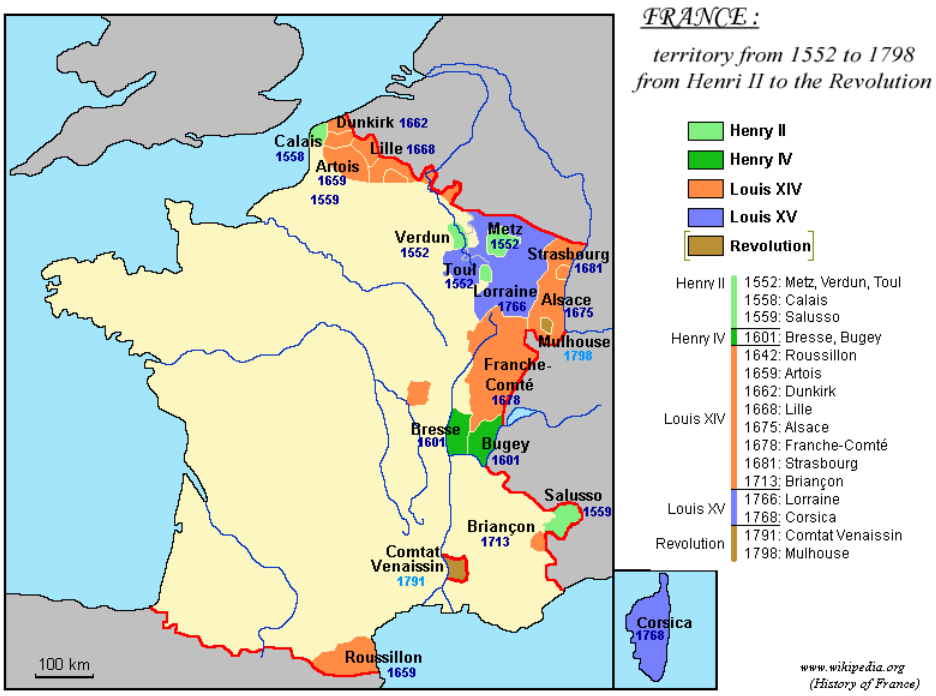
Figure 7.2.1: Cardinal Richelieu, in many ways the architect of absolute monarchy in France.

Richelieu laid the foundation for absolutism in France. He suppressed various revolts against royal power led by nobles, and created a system of royal officials called *Intendants*, royal governors who were drawn from the mercantile classes. They collected royal taxes and oversaw administration and military recruitment in the regions to which they were assigned, and they did not have to answer to local lords.

Richelieu's major focus was improving tax collection. To do so, he abolished three out of six regional assemblies that, traditionally, had the right to approve changes in taxation. Then, he became the superintendent of commerce and navigation, recognizing the growing importance of commerce in providing royal revenue. He managed to increase the revenue from the *taille*, the direct tax on land, almost threefold during his tenure (r. 1628 – 1642). That said, while he did curtail the power of the elite nobles, peasants bore the brunt of his improved techniques of taxation. Richelieu compared the peasants to mules, noting that they were only useful for working.

Richelieu was also a cardinal, one of the highest-ranking "princes of the church," officially beholden only to the pope. However, his real focus was the French crown. It was said that he "worshiped the state" much more than he appeared to concern himself with his duties as a cardinal. For example, he supported the Ottoman Turks against the Habsburgs. Just to underline this point: a Catholic cardinal, Richelieu, supported Protestants and Muslims against a Catholic monarchy in the name of French power.

Territorial Expansion of France (1552 to 1798)



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7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King

In 1643, Louis XIII died, and his son became king Louis XIV. Too young to take the throne, his mother became regent, ruling along Richelieu's protégé, Jules Mazarin, who continued Richelieu's policies and focus on taxation and royal centralization. Almost immediately, simmering resentment against the growing power of the king exploded in a series of uprisings against the crown known as **The Fronde**. Essentially a noble-led civil war against the monarchy, the rebels even formed a formal alliance with Spain. In 1653, they were defeated by loyal forces, but the uprisings made a profound impression on the young king, who vowed to bring the nobles into line.

When Mazarin died in 1661, Louis ascended to full power at the age of 23. His long and dazzling rule (1643 – 1715) witnessed the height of royal power and prestige in France and all of Europe. **Sun King** was a term and an image he actively cultivated, declaring himself "without equal," and being depicted as the sun god Apollo. As a master marketer and propagandist, he had teams of artists, playwrights, and architects build statues, paint pictures, write plays and stories, and build buildings all glorifying his image and authority.

Located about 15 miles southeast of Paris was a hunting lodge built by his father. Refurbished in the baroque style and lavishly decorated with ostentatious finery, the palace and grounds of the **Palace of Versailles** grew into the largest and most spectacular seat of royal power in Europe during Louis XIV's reign. There were 1,400 fountains in the gardens, 1,200 orange trees, and an ongoing series of operas, plays, balls, and parties. 10,000 people could live in the palace, counting its additional buildings. (Louis ultimately had 2,000 rooms built both in the palace and in apartments in the village, all furnished at the state's expense.) The grounds cover about 2,000 acres, or just over 3 square miles (by comparison, Central Park in New York City is a mere 843 acres in size).



Figure 7.3.1: A contemporary photograph of the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles, a spectacular example of baroque architecture and interior design.

Louis expected high-ranking nobles to spend part of the year at Versailles, where they were lodged in apartments and spent their days bickering, gossiping, gambling, and taking part in elaborate rituals surrounding the person of the king. Each morning, high-ranking nobles greeted the king as he awoke (the "rising" of the king, in parallel to the rising of the sun), hand-picked favorites carried out such tasks as tying the ribbons on his shoes, and then the procession accompanied him to breakfast. Comparable rituals continued throughout the day, ensuring that only those nobles in the king's favor ever had the opportunity to speak to him directly. The rituals were carefully staged to represent deference to Louis, and emphasize the hierarchy of ranks among the nobles while undermining their unity and forcing them to squabble over his favor. Living at Versailles was costly – about 50% of the revenue of all but the very richest nobles was spent on lodging, clothes, gifts, and servants.

Around the king's person, courtiers had to be very careful to wear the right clothes, make the right gestures, use the correct phrases, and even display the correct facial expressions. Deviation led to humiliation and sometimes permanent loss of the king's favor. Anyone wishing to "get" anything from the royal government (e.g. having a son appointed as an officer in the army, joining an elite royal academy of scholars, securing a lucrative royal pension, serving as a diplomat abroad, etc.) had to convince the king and his officials that he was witty, poised, fashionable, and respected within the court. One false move and a career could be ruined. At the same time, the rituals surrounding the king celebrated each noble's power in terms of his or her proximity to the king. Nobles at

Versailles were reminded of their dependence and deference to the king, but also their own dignity and power as those who had the *right* to be near the king.

Perhaps surprisingly, any well-dressed person was welcome to walk through the palace and the grounds and confer with those present. Indeed, Louis XIV prided himself on the "openness" of his court, contrasting it with the closed-off court of a tyrant. Both men and women from very humble origins sometimes rose to prominence, making a healthy living by serving as go-betweens for elites seeking royal positions through the bureaucracy. Others took advantage of the state's desperate need for revenue by proposing new tax schemes. Despite the vast social gap between the nobility and commoners, many nobles were perfectly happy to form working relationships with useful social inferiors, and in some cases, real friendships emerged in the process.

Some aspects of life at Versailles seem comic today. The palace is so huge that the food was usually cold before it made it from the kitchens to the dining room. In fact, on one occasion Louis' wine froze en route. Due to the distances of the privies, some of the nobles would use the hallways to relieve themselves. The palace had been designed for display, not comfort.

The costs of building and maintaining such an enormous temple to monarchical power were enormous. During the height of its construction, 60% of the royal revenue went to funding the elaborate court at Versailles itself. (The amount would drop to 5% under Louis XVI.) Louis delighted in life at court, refusing to return to Paris (which he hated) and dismissing the financial costs as beneath his dignity to take notice of. At Versailles, life orbited around his person and, by extension, his power, which was never seriously challenged during his lifetime.

Louis did not just preside over the ongoing pageant at Versailles. He was dedicated to glorifying French achievements in art, scholarship, and warfare. Thus, important theater companies and France's first scientific academy were founded. In addition, the throne supported the *Académie Française*, the body dedicated to preserving the purity of the French language. Indeed, during Louis XIV's reign, the Academy published the first official French dictionary. French literature, art, and science all prospered under his sponsorship, and French became the language of international diplomacy among European states.



Figure 7.3.2: The above martial portrait of Louis XIV depicts him, symbolically, in his role as a supreme military commander. He is dressed in full (ceremonial) armor, holding a sword, and presiding over a battle in the background.

To keep up with costs, Louis continued to entrust revenue collection to non-noble bureaucrats. The most important was **Jean Baptiste Colbert** (1619 – 1683), who doubled royal revenues by reducing the cut taken by tax collectors (only a quarter of revenue used to reach royal coffers; he got it up to 80% in some cases), increasing tariffs on foreign trade going to France, and greatly increasing France's overseas commercial interests. Colbert was the model of a powerful commoner despised by the nobility. He held the noble power in check, and was a shopkeeper's son.

Louis' practical policies were largely destructive to France. First, he relentlessly persecuted religious minorities, going after various groups of religious dissenters. In 1685, he officially revoked the **Edict of Nantes** that his grandfather had created to grant the Huguenots toleration. He offered them the choice of conversion to Catholicism or exile. While many did convert, over 200,000 fled

to parts of Germany, the Netherlands, England, and America. In one fell swoop, Louis crippled what had been among the most commercially productive sectors of the French population, ultimately strengthening his various enemies in the process.

Second, from 1680 – 1715, Louis launched a series of wars, primarily against Habsburg rivals. While small chunks of territory on France's borders were seized from various Habsburg lands, the monarchy was left saddled with enormous debts. Colbert repeatedly warned Louis that these wars were financially untenable. Yet, Louis simply ignored the question of whether he had enough money to wage them. England, the Netherlands, and the Habsburgs joined forces against Louis. After a lengthy war, the **Treaty of Utrecht** (1713) forced Louis to abandon further territorial ambitions. Furthermore, the government desperately sought new sources of revenue, selling noble titles and bureaucratic offices, instituting new taxes, and further trampling the peasants. When he died in 1715, the state was technically bankrupt.

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7.3: Prussia

Besides France, the most successful absolutist state in Europe was the small northern German kingdom of Brandenburg, the forerunner of the later German state of Prussia. In 1618, the king of Brandenburg inherited the kingdom of East Prussia, and in the following years smaller territories in the west on the Rhine River. From this geographically unconnected series of territories, the country now known as Germany evolved.

In 1653, the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm struck the “Great Compromise” with his nobles. In return for a military subsidy in the form of taxes, along with the right to make law independent of noble oversight, the nobility received confirmation that only nobles could own land and that they had total control over the peasants on their land. In essence, the already-existing status of serfdom on Prussian lands was made permanent. Serfs could not inherit property or even leave the land they worked on without the permission of their lord. One Prussian recalled being taught that “the king could cut off the noses and ears of all his subjects if he wished to do so, and that we owed it to his goodness and his gentle disposition that he had left us in possession of these necessary organs.”

Friedrich Wilhelm oversaw the creation of the first truly efficient state apparatus in Europe. Indeed, his tax collection agency (which grew out of the war office) operated at twice the efficiency of the French equivalent. The major state office was called General Directory Over Finance, War, and Royal Domains. His son, Frederick I (r. 1688 – 1713), further consolidated the power of the monarchy, built up the royal capital of Berlin, and received the right to claim the title of “King of Prussia” from the Holy Roman Emperor.

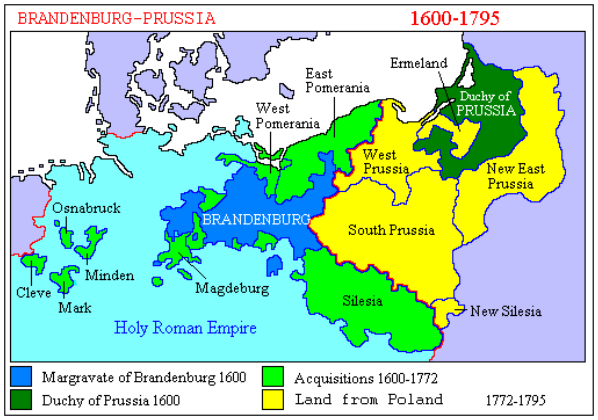


Figure 7.4.1: Prussia began as the union of Brandenburg and the Duchy of Prussia, eventually growing to become one of the most powerful German states.

His grandson, Friedrich Wilhelm I (r. 1713 – 1740) concentrated all state power on the military. As a result, the size of the Prussian army more than doubled (from 30,000 to 83,000, making it the fourth largest in Europe). During his rule, at least one person commented that “what distinguishes the Prussians from other people is that theirs is not a country with an army. They have an army and a country that serves it.” Most importantly, Frederick Wilhelm created formal systems of conscription (i.e. "the draft"), and established the first system of military reserves, with reservists drilling for two months a year during the summers. In short, Prussia became the most militarized society in Europe.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, Prussia was embroiled in a series of wars that confirmed its status as a European "great power." Its version of absolutism, centered on the authority of the king, the rights of the nobles, and an overwhelming focus on the military, proved effective in transforming the region into Austria's only serious rival for dominance in Central Europe. Notably, in 1772, Prussia joined Austria and Russia in dividing up the entire kingdom of Poland, extinguishing Polish independence until the twentieth century.

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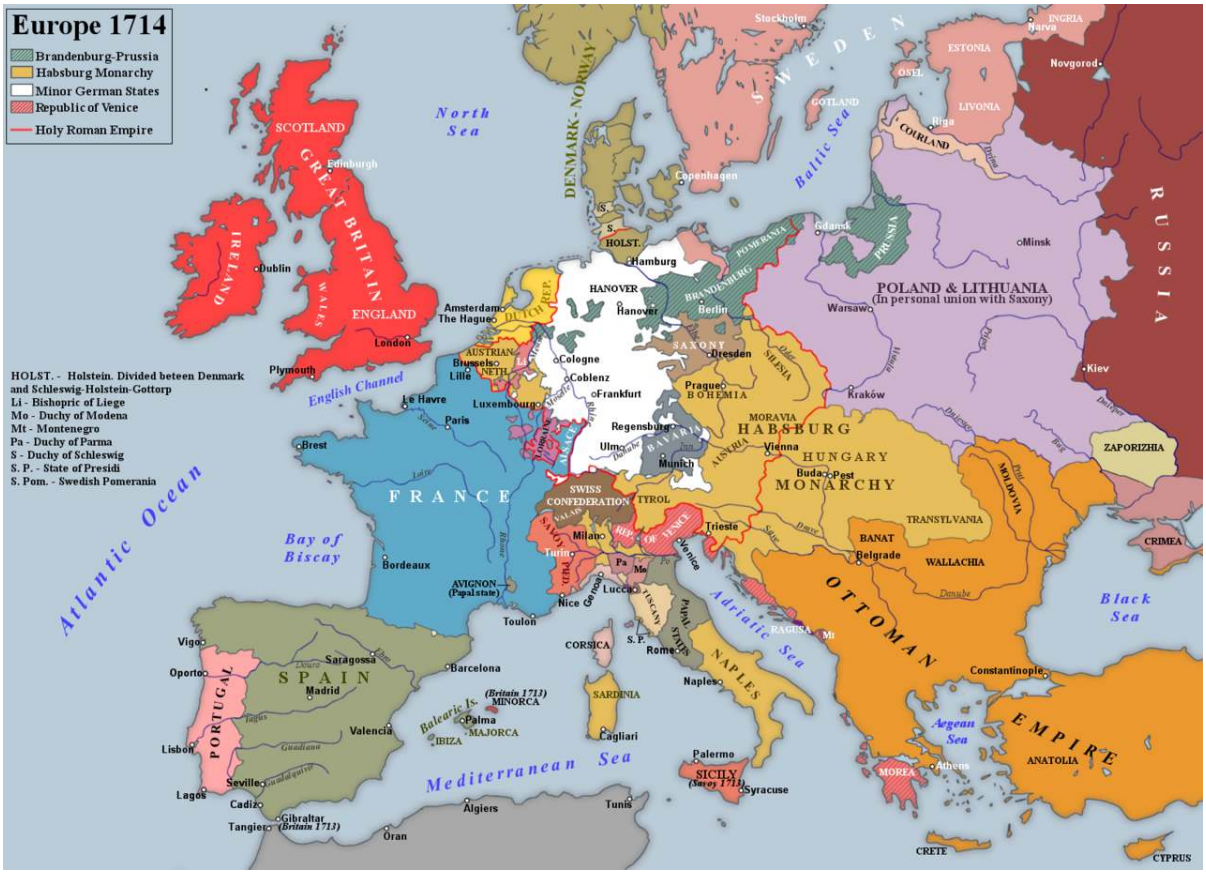
7.4: Austria

Austria, as the ancestral state of the Habsburgs, had always been the single most powerful German state within the Holy Roman Empire. The Habsburgs, however, found that the diversity of their domains greatly hampered their ability to develop along absolutist lines. In some cases, they were able to reduce the power of their nobles by supporting the onerous control of peasants. For example, in Bohemia, peasants were made to work three days a week for their nobles for free. In return, the Bohemian nobles allowed the emperor more control of the territory itself. In other territories like Hungary, nobles successfully resisted the encroachment of their Habsburg rulers.

After the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) rendered the political structure of the Holy Roman Empire virtually meaningless, “Habsburg” meant “Austrian.” The Habsburgs ruled Austria itself and exercised real control over the constituent kingdoms of their empire like Hungary and Bohemia, but had virtually no authority over the other Holy Roman states. With the Spanish branch of the family dying off in 1700, this identification was even stronger.

NOTE: The War of the Spanish Succession took place from 1701 to 1715. The death of childless Charles II of Spain in November 1700 led to a struggle for control of the Spanish Empire between his heirs, Philip of Anjou (France) and Charles of Austria, and their respective supporters, among them Spain, Austria, France, the Dutch Republic, Savoy, and Great Britain.

Western Europe in 1714 (after the War of Spanish Succession)



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7.5: Spain

Practically every other kingdom in Europe attempted to reorganize the state along the absolutist lines followed by France. Monarchs tried to consolidate royal power at the expense of their nobles and on the backs of their peasants. Those efforts were at least partly successful in places like Sweden and Denmark, but were disastrous failures in Spain and England.

In the 16th Century, Spain had been the most powerful kingdom in Europe. Enormous reserves of bullion came from its control over Central and South America. Shrew marriages by the Habsburgs aligned the country with the largest dynastic system in Europe. However, the failed invasion of England in 1588 and the ongoing debacle of the Dutch Revolt resulted in enormous losses of both wealth and prestige. By the 1620s, the monarchy was bankrupt and Spain was divided between numerous small independent kingdoms and territories. Resembling the Holy Roman Empire, the Spanish king only directly ruled the central territory of Castile. (It was the Castilian dialect, centered on Madrid, that became the official Spanish language).

Spanish nobles asserted their own sovereignty against the pretensions of the monarchy. Attempts by royal officials to enact reforms similar to those undertaken by Richelieu in France were met with failure. Even as Spain was losing the Dutch Revolt, it was trying to bankroll the Catholic forces of the Thirty Years' War, thereby undermining its own financial reserves and stretching its military power to the breaking point. As result, the regional parliaments of various Spanish territories revolted against the central monarchy, with Portugal achieving complete independence in 1640.

Simultaneously, there was little economic dynamism. With a small middle class, Spain's conservative nobility succeeded in preventing non-nobles from achieving positions of authority within the Spanish royal bureaucracy. Relatively little of the empire's wealth ended up in the coffers of the monarchy, and the sheer scale of the slave-based extraction of precious metals from the New World ran up against simple economic laws. By the 17th Century, the bullion-based system was in dire straits due to the inflation silver imports introduced to the European economy.

There was a strong mood of depression and nostalgia among elite Spaniards. These feelings are most memorably expressed in Miguel Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (published in two parts, 1605 and 1615), portraying a delusional minor nobleman trying to live out a glorious tale of fighting giants and dragons while actually attacking windmills.

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7.6: England's Civil War

England is an outstanding example of a state in which the absolutist form of monarchy resolutely failed during the 17th Century while emerging stronger. Ironically, in the 18th Century, the two most powerful states were absolutist France and its political opposite, the first major *constitutional* monarchy in Europe: the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

Historians often associate modernity with representative governments, capitalist economies, and relative religious toleration. All of those things first converged in England at the end of the seventeenth and start of the eighteenth centuries. Likewise, England would eventually evolve from secondary importance in terms of its power and influence to *the* most powerful nation in the world in the nineteenth century.

Tudors

At the start of the 17th Century, England was a relative backwater. Its population was only a quarter of that of France and its monarchy was comparatively weak. Precisely as France was reorganizing along absolutist lines, England's monarchy was beset by powerful landowners with traditional privileges they were totally unwilling to relinquish. The English monarchy ran a kingdom with various ethnicities and divided religious loyalties. It was an unlikely candidate for what would one day be the most powerful "Great Power" in Europe.

The English King **Henry VIII** had broken the official English church away from Roman Catholicism, renaming it the **Church of England.** In the process, he seized an enormous amount of wealth from English Catholic institutions and used it to fund his own military. Subsequently, his daughter **Elizabeth I** was able to build up an effective navy (based at least initially on converted merchant vessels) that fought off the Spanish Armada in 1588. While Elizabeth's long reign (r. 1558 – 1603) coincided with a golden age of English culture, the money plundered from Catholic coffers had run out by the end of it.

Despite Elizabeth's relative tolerance of religious differences, Great Britain remained profoundly divided. The Church of England was the nominal church of the entire realm, and only Anglicans could hold public office as judges or members of the British parliament, a law-making body dominated by the gentry class of landowners. In turn, the church was divided between a "high church" faction that was in favor of all of the trappings of Catholic ritual versus a "Puritan" faction that wanted an austere, moralistic approach to Christianity similar to Calvinism. Meanwhile, Scotland was overwhelmingly Presbyterian (Scottish Calvinist), and Ireland - which had been colonized by the English starting in the sixteenth century - was overwhelmingly Catholic. Within English society there were numerous Catholics as well, most of whom remained fairly clandestine in their worship out of fear of persecution.

Thus, the monarchy oversaw a divided society. It was also relatively poor, with the English crown overseeing a small bureaucracy and no official standing army. The only way to raise revenue was to raise royal taxes, which were resisted by the very proud and defensive gentry class (the landowners) as well as the titled nobility. The traditional right of parliament was to approve or reject taxes. However, an open question was whether it had the right to set laws. Simply put, English kings or queens could not force lawmakers to grant taxes without having to beg, plead, cajole, and bargain. In turn, the stability of government depended on cooperation between the Crown and the House of Commons, the larger of the two legal bodies in the parliament, which was populated by members of the gentry.

Stuarts

While her reign was plagued by these issues, Elizabeth I was a savvy monarch who was skilled at reconciling opposing factions and winning over members of parliament to her perspective. She also benefited from what was left of the money her father had looted from the English monasteries. This delicate balance started to fall apart with Elizabeth's death in 1603. She died without an heir (she had never married), so her successor was from the Scottish royal house of the Stuarts, a line that the Tudors had married into previously.

The new king was **James I** (r. 1603 – 1625). James was already the king of Scotland when he inherited the English crown, so England and Scotland were politically united and the kingdom of "Great Britain" was born. (It was later ratified as a permanent legal reality in 1707 with the "Act of Union" passed by parliament).

Inspired by developments on the continent, James tried to insist on the "royal prerogative," the right of the king to rule through force of will. He set himself up as an absolute monarch and behaved with noticeable contempt toward members of parliament. Still,

England was at peace and James avoided making demands that sparked serious resistance. While members of parliament grumbled about his heavy-handed manner of rule, there were no signs of actual rebellion.

His son, Charles I (r. 1625 – 1649), was a much greater threat from the perspective of parliament. He strongly supported the “high church” faction of the Anglican church just as Puritanism among the common people was growing. Also, he began to openly encroach on parliamentary authority. While styling himself after his relative Louis XIII of France, he came to be feared and hated by many of his own people. Charles imposed taxes and tariffs that were not approved by parliament, which was technically illegal, and then he forced rich subjects to grant the crown loans at very low-interest rates. In 1629, after parliament protested, he dismissed it and tried to rule without summoning it again. He was able to do so until 1636, then he tried to impose a new high church religious liturgy (set of rituals) in Scotland. That prompted the Scots to openly break with the king and raise an army. To get the money to fund an English response, Charles had to summon parliament.

The result was a civil war. The Scots were well-trained and organized. When the English parliament met, it declared Charles' various laws and acts illegal and dismissed his ministers, an act remembered as “**The Grand Remonstrance**.” Parliament also refused to leave, staying in session for years, which earned the moniker “the long parliament".

Meanwhile, a huge Catholic uprising took place in Ireland and thousands of Protestants were massacred. In 1642, war finally broke out, pitting the anti-royal “round-heads” (named after their bowl-style haircuts) and their Scottish allies against the royalist “cavaliers.” In 1645, a Puritan commander named **Oliver Cromwell** united various parliamentary forces in the “New Model Army,” a well-disciplined fighting force whose soldiers were regularly paid and did not need to live off the land, as did the king’s forces. Due to the effectiveness of Cromwell, the New Model Army, and the financial backing of the city of London, the roundheads gained the upper hand. In 1649, Charles was captured, tried, and executed by parliament as a traitor to his own kingdom.

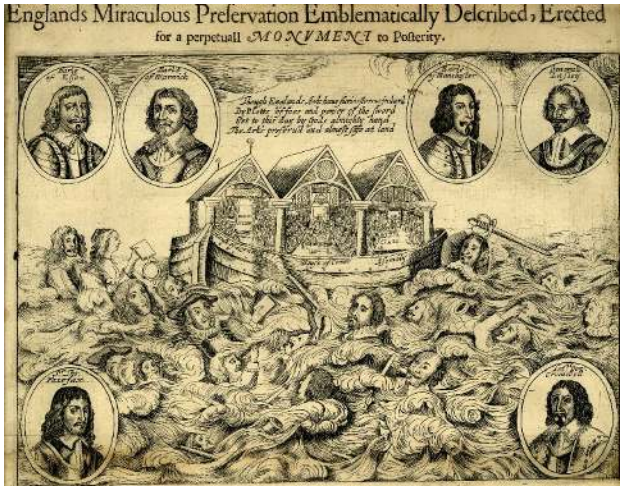


Figure 7.7.1: An engraving celebrating the victory of the parliamentary forces as “England’s Miraculous Preservation,” with the royalist forces drowning in the allegorical flood while the houses of parliament and the Church of England float on the ark.

During the English civil war, England became one of the most militarized societies. One in eight English men were directly involved in fighting, and few regions were spared horribly bloody fighting. Simultaneously, debates arose among the roundheads concerning what kind of government they were fighting for. **The Levelers** argued in favor of a people’s government, a true democratic republic. The radical **Diggers** wanted to set up a proto-communist society in which goods and land were held in common. Those more radical elements were ultimately defeated by the army. But the language they used in discussing justice and good government inspired later debates, ultimately informing the concept of modern democracy.

The Civil War resulted in an explosion of print in England. Various factions attempted to impose and maintain censorship, but were largely unsuccessful due to the political fragmentation of the period. Instead, there was an enormous growth of political debate in the form of printed pamphlets. Over 2,000 political pamphlets were published in 1642 alone. Ordinary people had begun in earnest to participate in political dialog, another pattern associated with modern politics.

After the execution of the king in 1649, England became a (technically republican) dictatorship under Cromwell, who assumed the title of **Lord Protector**. He ruled England for ten years, carrying out an incredibly bloody invasion of Ireland. Following his death

in 1658, parliament decided to reinstate the monarchy and the official power of the Church of England. None of the initial problems that brought about the civil wars were resolved, and Cromwell ended up being as authoritarian and autocratic as Charles had been.

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7.7: England's Glorious Revolution

In 1660, the son of the executed Charles I, **Charles II** (r. 1660 – 1685) took the throne. As a cousin of Louis XIV of France, he tried to adopt the trappings of absolutism even though he recognized that he could never achieve a Louis-XIV-like rule (nor did he try to dismiss parliament). Various conspiracy theories surrounded him, especially ones that claimed he was a secret Catholic. As it turns out, he *had* drawn up a secret agreement with Louis XIV to re-Catholicize England, and he proclaimed his Catholicism on his deathbed. Later in his reign, a parliamentary faction called the Whigs tried to exclude his younger brother, James II, from being eligible for the throne because he was openly Catholic. A rival faction, the Tories, supported the notion of the divine right of kings and of hereditary succession and won the legal contest.

When James II (r. 1685 – 1688) took the throne, he started appointing Catholics to positions of power, even though the law required all lawmakers and officials to be Anglicans. In 1688, James's wife had a son, which suggested that a Catholic monarchy might remain for the foreseeable future. A group of English lawmakers invited **William of Orange**, a Dutch military leader and lawmaker in the Dutch Republic, to lead a force against James. William was married to Mary, the Protestant daughter of James II. William arrived and the English army defected to him, forcing James to flee with his family to France. This series of events became known as the **Glorious Revolution** - "glorious" because it was bloodless and resulted in a political settlement that finally ended the better part of a century of conflict.

William and Mary were appointed as co-rulers by parliament and agreed to abide by a new Bill of Rights. The result was Europe's first **constitutional monarchy**: a government led by a king or queen, in which lawmaking was controlled by a parliament, and all citizens were held accountable to the same set of laws. Even as absolutism became the predominant mode of politics on the continent, Britain set forth on a different, and opposing political trajectory.

Consequences of the Glorious Revolution

Through a constitutional monarchy, British elites, through parliament, no longer opposed the royal government but instead *became* the government. After the Glorious Revolution, lawmakers felt secure enough from royal attempts to unlawfully seize power that increased the size and power of government, and levied new taxes. Thus, the English state grew very quickly.

After 1688, the English state *could* grow because parliament was willing to make it grow, especially because of war. Before coming to England, William of Orange had already been at war with Louis XIV. In 1690, Britain went to war with France over colonial conflicts and because of Louis's constant attempts to seize territory in the continent. The result was over twenty years of constant warfare, from 1690 – 1714.

To raise money for those wars, private bankers founded the **Bank of England** in 1694. Although not created by the British government, the Bank of England soon became the official banking institution of the state. This event allowed the government to manage state debt effectively. The Bank issued bonds that paid a reasonable amount of interest, and the British government stood behind those bonds. Thus, individual investors were guaranteed to make money and the state could finance its wars through carefully regulated sales of bonds. In contrast, Louis XIV financially devastated the French government with his wars, despite the efforts of his Intendants and other royal officials to squeeze every drop of tax revenue out of the huge and prosperous kingdom. Britain, meanwhile, remained financially solvent even as their wars against France grew larger every year. Ultimately, Britain transformed from a secondary political power to France's single most important rival in the eighteenth century.

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7.8: Introduction

“Absolutism” is a concept used to describe a shift in the governments of the major monarchies of Europe in the early modern period. In other words, while 17th and 18th Century monarchs knew they were doing something different than their predecessors, the term “absolutism” did not exist. In absolutism, the king or queen was the holder of (theoretically) absolute political power within the kingdom. Secondly, the monarch would preserve and guarantee the rights and privileges of his or her subjects, occasionally even including the peasants.

Absolutism was in contrast to medieval and Renaissance-era forms of monarchy in which the king was merely first among equals. They might hold formal feudal authority over elite nobles, but often had unequal or inferior authority and power. The French Wars of Religion is an excellent example, with numerous small states and territories rivaling larger ones in power.

This approach started changing in the early 17th Century, primarily in France. What emerged was a stronger, centralized form of monarchy in which more power was held by the monarch than the noblemen. Royal bureaucracies were strengthened, often at the expense of the decision-making power and influence of the nobility, as non-noble officials were appointed to positions of real power in the government. Armies grew as did taxation, both in sheer volume and more efficiency in collection techniques. In short, more real power and money flowed to the central monarch-based government than ever before. The expansion of military and colonial power, as well as a dazzling cultural show of that power exemplified by the French “sun king,” Louis XIV, forever left its mark on the era.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ABSOLUTISM

BASIC PRINCIPLE	Monarch rules by divine right and decides what is best for state.
POLITICAL	Ruler holds unlimited power; individuals are subjects owing loyalty and obedience.
SOCIAL	Ruler dominates upper classes, which in turn dominate lower classes. Ceremonies symbolize ruler’s power.
ECONOMIC	Ruler encourages industry and trade to strengthen the economy.
CULTURAL	Ruler dominates cultural life either as patron of arts or by censorship.

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7.9: Conclusion

As an aggregate, the states of Europe were transformed by absolutist trends. Royal governments grew roughly 400% in size (i.e. in terms of the number of officials they employed and the tax revenues they collected) over the course of the seventeenth century, and standing armies went from around 20,000 men during the sixteenth century to well over 150,000 by the late seventeenth century.

Armies were not just larger. They were better disciplined, trained, and "standardized." For the first time, soldiers were issued standard uniforms. Warfare, while still bloody, was nowhere near as savage and chaotic as it had been during the wars of religion. Now, war was waged by professional soldiers answering to noble officers, rather than mercenaries simply unleashed against an enemy and told to live off of the land (i.e. the peasants). Officers on opposing sides often considered themselves to be part of a kind of extended family. A captured officer could expect to be treated as a respected peer by his "enemies" until his own side paid his ransom.

Disparate examples of absolutism, such as France and Prussia, had a shared concept of royal authority. The theory of absolutism was that the king was above the nobles and not answerable to anyone in his kingdom. However, he still owed his subjects a kind of benevolent protection and oversight. “Arbitrary” power was not the point. Power exercised by the monarch was supposed to be for the good of the kingdom, always known as *raison d’etat*, right or reason of the state. Practically speaking, the whole range of traditional rights, especially those of the nobles and the cities, had to be respected. Louis XIV famously claimed that "*L'etat, c'est moi*" - I am the state. In other words, there was no distinction between his own identity and the government of France itself, and his actions were by definition for the good of France.

Peasants suffered under absolutism, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Freedoms that had originally been enjoyed before 1500 began to increasingly vanish as the newly absolutist monarchs allowed nobility complete control over the peasantry. Already in place in much of the east, during the 17th Century, serfdom was hardened, and the free labor, fees, and taxes owed by peasants to their lords grew harsher. For example, the Austrian labor obligation was known as the *robot*, and consisted of up to 100 days of labor a year. In the east, nobles answered to increasingly powerful kings or emperors, but they were “absolute” rulers of their own estates and over their serfs.

The growth of both royal power and royal tax revenue could not keep up with the cost of war. Military expenditures were enormous. In a state like France, the military took up 50% of state revenues during peacetime, and 80% or more during times of war. Thus, monarchs granted monopolies on products and then taxed them. Noble titles and state offices were sold to the highest bidder. For example, the queen of Sweden doubled the number of noble families in ten years. The peasantry was relentlessly taxed. Indeed, royal taxes doubled in France between 1630 – 1650, and the concomitant peasant uprisings were ruthlessly suppressed.

In the absolutist systems, the rights and privileges of nobility were codified into clear laws for the first time. “Tables of ranks” were created that specified exactly where nobles stood vis-à-vis one another as well as the monarch and “princes of the blood.” Louis XIV of France had a branch of royal government devoted entirely to verifying claims of nobility and stripping noble titles from those without adequate proof.

The process from decentralized and fairly loosely organized states to "absolutism" was a long one. Even in the late 18th Century, numerous aspects of government remained strikingly "medieval" in some ways, such as laws from town to town and region to region based on the accumulation of various royal grants and traditional rights over the centuries. That being noted, there is no question that things *had* changed significantly over the course of the seventeenth century: governments were bigger, better organized, and more explicitly hierarchical in organization.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Trade Empires

8.1: Prelude to Trade Empires

8.2: Overseas Expansion in the 17th and 18th Centuries

8.3: The Netherlands

8.4: 8.4 Britain and the Slave Trade

8.5: Around the Globe

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8.1: Prelude to Trade Empires

During the Renaissance Era (c. 1400-1700), wealth was measured through land and bullion (precious metals). With limited resources, if one society grew richer, by definition every other society grew poorer. According to this mindset, kingdoms could only increase wealth by seizing more territory, especially territory rich in precious metals. Trade surpluses were to be maintained, thereby ensuring that more bullion was flowing into the economy than was flowing out. Colonies abroad provided raw materials and, hopefully, bullion. As a whole, this concept was called **mercantilism**: an economic system consisting of a royal government controlling colonies abroad and overseeing landholdings at home. The ultimate example was the biggest owner of colonies that produced bullion: Spain.

Mercantilism worked well enough, but commerce fit awkwardly into its paradigm. Trade was not thought to generate new wealth, since it did not seize wealth from other countries. Trade did not "make" anything, according to the mercantilist outlook. Of all classes of society, bankers were despised by traditional elites, since they profited off of the wealth of others without producing anything.

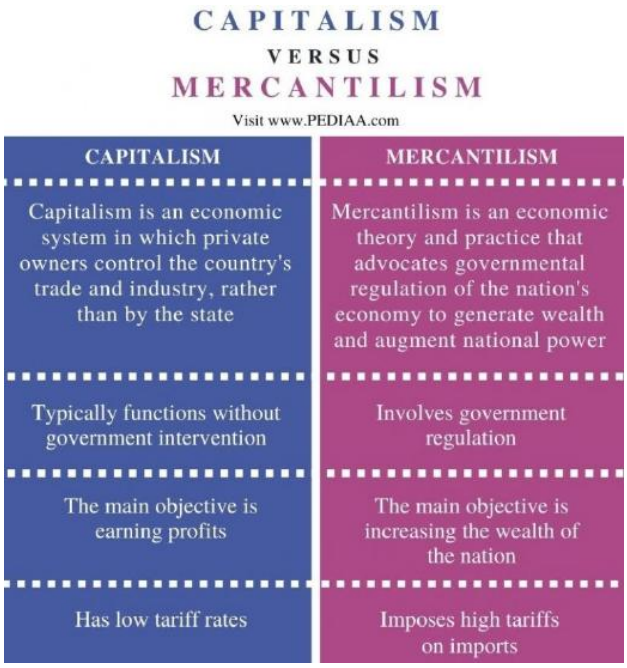
Attitudes went through significant changes in the 16th and 17th centuries, mostly as a result of the incredible success of overseas corporations, groups that generated enormous wealth outside of the auspices of mercantilist theory. Instead of noblemen, wealthy merchant townsfolk benefited, especially in places like the Dutch Republic. Later, in England, men amassed huge fortunes but did not fit neatly into the existing power structure of landholding nobles, the church, and the common people. These changes inspired an increasingly spirited battle over the rights of property, the idea that not just land but wealth itself was something that the state should protect and encourage to grow.

Early Capitalism

The growth of commercial wealth was closely tied to the growth of overseas empires. The initial wave of European colonization (mostly in the Americas) had been driven by a search for gold and a desire to convert foreigners to Christianity. By the 17th Century, the European powers pursued colonies and trade routes in the name of commodities. Because of the enormous wealth generated from gold, silver, sugar, tobacco, and coffee (as well as luxury commodities like spices), the states of Europe were willing to engage in war constantly, as well as to perpetrate the Atlantic Slave Trade.

The 17th and 18th centuries witnessed the first phase of **capitalism**: an economic system in which the exchange of commodities for profit generated wealth to be reinvested in the name of still greater profits. In turn, this economic system is dependent on governments that enforce legal systems that protect property and, historically, by wars that try to carve out bigger chunks of the global market from rivals. To reiterate, capitalism was (and remains) a combination of two major economic and political phenomena: enterprises run explicitly for profit and a legal framework to protect and encourage the generation of profit. The political power enjoyed by merchants, the political focus on overseas expansion for profit, and the laws enacted to encourage these processes *were* new.

A full-screen copy of the Capitalism versus Mercantilism image is found here.



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8.2: Overseas Expansion in the 17th and 18th Centuries

The development of early capitalism was intimately connected with overseas expansion. The original impulse behind oversea expansion was primarily commercial, focused on the search for commodities and profit. By the 18th Century, it would become a major political focus of all of the European powers. In other words, European elites actively sought to trade with, as well as conquer and control, overseas territories both for profit and for their own political "glory" and aggrandizement. The result was dramatic. By 1800, roughly 35% of the globe was directly or indirectly controlled by European powers. How did that happen?

The first part of the answer is simple: military technology and organization. During and after the Renaissance period, the evolution of gunpowder warfare resulted in highly-trained soldiers with the most advanced military technology in the world. As European powers expanded, they built fortresses in the modern style and defended them with cannons, muskets, and warships that often outmatched the encountered military forces and technology. For example, in the case of China, Japan, and the Philippines, local rulers learned that the easiest way to deal with European piracy was to cut off trade with European merchants until restitution had been paid, not engage in warfare.

European states also benefited from the relative political fragmentation of parts of the non-European world. There were powerful kingdoms and empires in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia that defied European attempts at hegemony, but much of the world was controlled by smaller states. A prime example is India, which was divided up into dozens of small kingdoms, along with a few larger ones. (The Mughal Empire that ruled much of the subcontinent early in the period of British expansion was in decline by the early eighteenth century). When the British and French began taking control of Indian territory, it was against the resistance of small Indian kingdoms, not an overall Indian state.

Meanwhile, this period saw the consolidation of European holdings in the New World and the beginning of empires in places like India. However, it did not include major land holdings in Africa, the Middle East, or East Asia. In places with powerful states like China, the Ottoman Empire, and Japan, even the relative superiority of European arms was not sufficient to seize territory. Likewise, not only were African states able to successfully fight off Europeans as well, but African diseases made it impossible for large numbers of Europeans to colonize or occupy much African territory. As the Slave Trade burgeoned, Europeans did launch slave raids, but most slaves had been captured by African slavers who enjoyed enormous profits from the exchange.

Likewise, European states and the supported corporations worked diligently to establish monopolies on trade with various parts of the world. It's important to note: "monopolies" in this case only meant monopolies in trade going to and from Europe. These included enormous, established, and powerful networks of trade between Africa, India, South Asia, Southeast Asia, China, Japan, and the Pacific, all of which were dominated by non-European merchants. To cite one example, the Indian Ocean had served as an oceanic crossroads of trade between Africa and Asia for thousands of years. Europeans broke into those markets primarily by securing control of goods that made their way back to Europe rather than seizing control of intra-Asian or African trade routes.

1700 AD: An illustrative map of the world in the early colonial period. Major European Powers' spheres of influence are denoted by color. (See the map key.) To see a full-screen version, click here.



Source: Wikipedia

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8.3: The Netherlands

In the late 16th century, the Dutch rebelled against Spain, and began to look to revenue generated from trade as an economic lifeline. Strategically located, they worked as the middlemen in European commerce, shipping and selling things like timber from Russia, textiles from England, and wine from Germany, as well as increasingly serving as Europe's bankers. The Dutch invented both formalized currency exchange and the stock market. Over time, Dutch commercial power replaced northern Italy as the heart of European trade.

In 1602, with the support of the state, Dutch merchants created the world's first corporation: the **Dutch East India Company** (VOC in its Dutch acronym). It was created to serve as the republic's official trading company, with a legal monopoly to trade with India and Southeast Asia. The VOC proved phenomenally successful in pushing out other European merchants in the Indies, through a combination of brute force and the careful deployment of legal strategies. A common approach was to offer "protection" from the supposedly more rapacious European powers like Portugal in return for trade monopolies from spice-producing regions. In many cases, the VOC simply used the promise of protection as a smokescreen for seizing complete control of a given area (especially in Indonesia, which eventually became a Dutch colony). Meanwhile, in other areas, local rulers remained in political control but lost power over their own spice production and trade. For the better part of the seventeenth century, the Dutch controlled an enormous amount of the hugely profitable trade in luxury goods and spices from the East Indies.

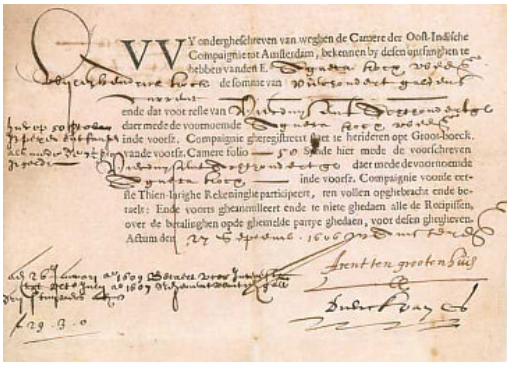


Figure 8.3.1: An early stock certificate from the VOC.

The Dutch merchants and investors received concomitantly high profits. As an example, all stockholders in the VOC received dividends of 30% on their investments within the first ten years, in addition to a dramatic boost in the value of the stocks themselves. Other states of Europe were both aghast at Dutch success and grudgingly admired it. In 1601, there were 100 more Dutch ships in the port of London at any given time than there were English ships. By 1620, about half of all European merchant vessels were Dutch.

In 1652, the Dutch seized control of the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. This location provided control of all shipping going around Africa en route to Asia. In addition, they exerted additional military force in the Indies to force native merchants to trade only with them (among Europeans). This Dutch takeover of the Cape of Good Hope was the historical origin of the modern nation of South Africa – these were the first permanent European settlers. The Dutch were also the only European power allowed to keep a small trading colony in Japan, which was otherwise completely cut off to westerners after a failed Portuguese-sponsored Christian uprising against the Japanese shogun.

The iconic moment of the Dutch golden age of early capitalism was the **tulip craze** of the 1620s – 1630s. Tulips grow well in the Netherlands and had long been cultivated by European elites. A tulip fad among Dutch elites drove up the price of tulip bulbs dramatically. Soon, enterprising merchants started buying and selling bulbs with no intention of planting them or even selling them to someone who would. They simply traded the bulbs as a valuable commodity for themselves.

In 1625, one bulb was sold for 5,000 guilders, about half the cost of a mansion in Amsterdam. The height of the craze was the winter of 1636 – 1637, when individual bulbs sometimes changed hands ten times a day for increasing profits. This idea of "flipping" bulbs had nothing to do with the actual tulips any longer. The Dutch moneyed classes were already embracing speculative market economies, in which the value of a given commodity has almost nothing to do with what it *does*. Rather, its value is measured by what people are willing to spend on it. In capitalist economies, this phenomenon often leads to "bubbles" of

rising values that eventually collapse. The tulip craze did indeed come crashing down in the winter of 1637 - 1638, but in the meantime, it presaged the emergence of commodity speculation for centuries to come.

Early forms of capitalism spread out from the Netherlands. One by one, the other major states of Europe started to adopt Dutch methods of managing finances: sophisticated accounting, carefully organized tax policy, and an emphasis on hands-on knowledge of finances up to the highest levels of royal government. For example, Louis XIV insisted that his son study political economy, and his Minister of Finance Colbert wrote detailed instructions on how a king should oversee state finances. Ultimately, at least among some kings and nobles in Western Europe, humanistic education and the traditional martial values of the nobility were combined with practical knowledge, or at least appreciation, of mercantile techniques.



Figure 8.3.2: One of the many self-portraits of the Dutch master Rembrandt, the most prominent painter associated with the golden age of Dutch culture in the seventeenth century.

When the Netherlands was dragged into the wars initiated by Louis XIV toward the end of the seventeenth century, it spelled the beginning of the end of its dominance. However, the Netherlands has remained a resolutely prosperous country to this day.

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8.4: 8.4 Britain and the Slave Trade

The British were the most successful at imitating the Dutch. In 1667, King Charles II officially designated the royal treasury as the coordinating body of British state finances and made sure that officials trained in the Dutch style of political economy ran it. The British parliament grew increasingly savvy with financial issues as well, with numerous debates emerging about the best and most profitable use of state funds.

In 1651, in an effort to seize trade from the Dutch and to fend off Britain's traditional enemies, France and Spain, parliament passed the **English Navigation Acts**, which reserved commerce with English colonies to English ships. As a result, extensive piracy and conflict between the powers of Europe in their colonial territories emerged, as they tried to seize profitable lands and enforce their respective monopolies. The British fought and defeated the Dutch in three wars, and seized the Dutch port of New Amsterdam in North America (which the English promptly renamed New York). Britain also fought Spain, ultimately acquiring Jamaica and Florida as colonies.

Due to its suitability for growing sugar, the major prize was the Caribbean. Sugar quickly became *the* colonial product, hugely valuable in Europe, and relatively easy to cultivate (compared to exotic products like spices, which were only available from Asian sources). In Europe, sugar consumption doubled every 25 years. It was the profits of sugar that helped bankroll the British growth in power in the seventeenth and, especially, the eighteenth centuries. Growing sugar efficiently required proto-industrialized plantations with rendering facilities built to extract the raw sugar from sugar cane. That, in turn, required an enormous amount of back-breaking, dangerous labor. Most Native American slaves quickly died off or escaped. Hence, in the early 17th Century, the Atlantic Slave Trade between Africa and the New World began in earnest.

The Slave Trade between Africa and the New World ripped millions of people from their homeland, transporting them to a foreign continent in atrocious conditions where many were either worked to death or murdered by their owners in the name of "discipline." The immense majority of slaves were sent to the Caribbean or Brazil, both areas in which working conditions were far worse than the (still abysmal) working conditions present in North America. The average life of a slave once introduced to sugar cultivation was seven years before he or she died from exhaustion or injury.

The slave trade was part of what historians have described as the "**triangle trade**" between Africa, the Americas, and Europe. Slaves from Africa were shipped to the New World to work on plantations. Raw goods (e.g. sugar, tobacco, cotton, coffee, etc.). were processed and shipped to Europe. Then, finished and manufactured goods were shipped to Africa to exchange for slaves. This cycle of exchange grew decade-by-decade over the course of two centuries.



Figure 8.4.1: The "triangle trade" led to tremendous profits in Europe, horrendous human suffering, and the eventual depopulation of much of West Africa over the centuries.

The Middle Passage connected Africa and the Americas, and mostly involved Brazil or the Caribbean. Slaves on board ships were packed in so tightly they could not move for most of the voyage. Historians estimate that over a million slaves died during the Middle Passage.

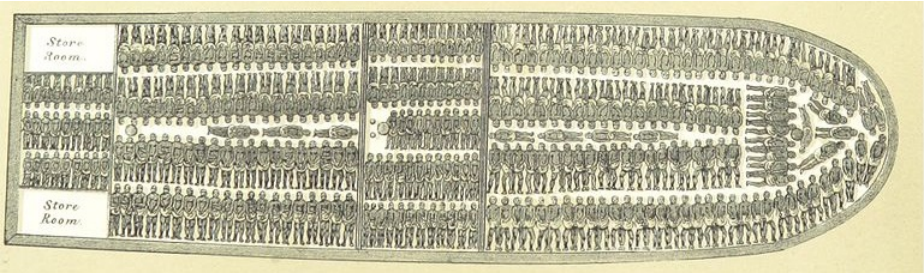


Figure 11.4.2: Illustration of a slave ship's human cargo under conditions that often saw more than 10% of the slaves on board perish.

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database suggests that well over twelve million people were enslaved and transported to the new world from the 16th to early 19th Centuries. That number is lower than the actual total since roughly 20% of transported slaves were undocumented (i.e. smuggled and technically "illegal" from the standpoint of the slave-trading states) voyages. Thus, the real number is probably closer to fifteen million. In turn, over 90% of slaves were sent to the Caribbean or Brazil, because the sugar crop, as well as coffee cultivation and mining in Brazil, demanded constant replacements as slaves perished from exhaustion or injury.

Slavery was a huge economic engine and a major part of life in the entire New World. It shaped the demography and the culture of every American society. Unlike other episodes of European slavery, the Atlantic Slave Trade was specifically racial in character. Because it was Africans who were enslaved to work in the Americas under the control of Europeans, Europeans developed a range of racist theories to excuse the practice. In fact, the whole idea of a human "race" is largely derived from the Slave Trade.

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8.5: Around the Globe

India

Even as the British were actively participating in the Slave Trade in the Atlantic region, they began the process of seizing control of territory in India. There, they set up self-contained merchant colonies (called factories) run by the English East India Company (EIC), which had a legal monopoly of trade just as its Dutch counterpart did in the Netherlands. The original impetus behind the EIC was profitable trade, not political power.

As of the mid-eighteenth century, British power in India was limited to its factories, which served as clearinghouses for trade with Indian merchants. In 1756, however, an Indian prince sent an army to Calcutta to drive out the British, resulting in the massacre of hundreds of English noncombatants and thousands of their Indian colleagues and allies. The next year, a small British force of 800 men with 2,000 Indian mercenary troops (called *sepoys*) defeated the prince at the Battle of Plassey. This event led to the process of taking over the entire province of Bengal.

The takeover of Bengal started the slow creep of British power. Tax revenue supplemented mercantile revenue, which allowed the British to hire tens of thousands of sepoys, who were armed with modern European weapons. These actions allowed the British to drive out the French from Indian territories and dominate Indian princes. In this patchwork fashion, the EIC expanded its power in India over the next century, directly controlling some territories, indirectly controlling others through Indian puppet princes, and economically dominating others. By the middle of the 19th Century, the EIC, a private corporation backed by the British state, controlled almost all of the Indian subcontinent.

Americas

Britain and France colonized areas of the eastern seaboard of North America. While initial attempts at colonization either failed or struggled to survive (e.g. almost all of the original settlers at Jamestown in Virginia were dead by the time more arrived in 1610), the survivors discovered that they could at least grow one cash crop: tobacco. Likewise, slaves were imported to work first the tobacco fields, and then later cotton fields, farther south. Simultaneously, a French explorer named Samuel de Champlain founded the colony of Quebec on the St. Lawrence river. This region became the center of New France, and its cash “crop” consisted of furs gained through barter with Native American groups or taken by French trappers.

Until the latter half of the 17th Century, the French and British had small-scale colonies compared to the vast states of Central and South America. Slowly but surely, colonists did arrive in North America, but not always for economic reasons. Britain came to boast the largest population of colonists among Europeans in North America as English religious dissenters, Puritans, fled persecution from the Anglican state and began to settle in Massachusetts by the thousands in the 1620s.

Spain still held the largest overseas empire, holding almost all of South America, all of Central America, and the American West as far north as Oregon, as well as the Pacific island chain of the Philippines. South American silver passed through both Spain and the Philippines en route to China, where it paid for luxury goods that were shipped back to Spain. The Spanish crown, especially under a branch of the Bourbon royal family, exercised direct control over colonial trade and taxation (rather than relying on a corporation as did the Dutch and English).



Figure 8.5.1: Spanish territories in the Americas in the eighteenth century, at the height of their territorial expanse.

The Spanish colonial system suffered from infighting between Spanish-born royal bureaucrats and the creole elites who dominated the Spanish New World itself. Many of these creole elites lived more like traditional nobles, dominating land-based economies, rather than overseers of more commercially-based agriculture like the plantations of the Caribbean or Brazil.

To be clear, South and Central America were important regions within the global trade network, but the Spanish state itself did not enjoy the same level of direct control over, or power derived from, its colonial possessions as did its European rivals. Instead, the vast Spanish empire was relatively fragmented, with regional elites exercising a high degree of local autonomy. Thus, even the vast wealth still generated within the Spanish empire did not translate into an equivalent degree of state or military power for the Spanish monarchy.

Meanwhile, the overseas empire of Portugal steadily shrank as its colonies and factories were seized or handed over to the Dutch and British in the 17th Century. The country was not able to compete with the better-funded and equipped forces of the Netherlands and Britain. Thus, most Portuguese colonies and trading posts were lost over time to rivals. The major exception was Brazil, which was hugely profitable. In 1888, Brazil became the last European state to outlaw slavery.

Finally, Russian explorers moved eastward across Siberia from the 15th through 18th centuries in search of furs. Indeed, furs were so critical to the Russian economy that they were often used in lieu of currency outside of the major cities. As a result, Russian fur trappers and traders arrived at the Pacific in the late seventeenth century. From there, they sailed across to Alaska and then down the west coast of North America, establishing small churches and forts but not colonizing territory (i.e. for the most part, they did not stay and establish families).

By the early eighteenth century, the various branches of European exploration and expansion converged in the Pacific Northwest. Russian fur trappers, French fur trappers, Spanish missionaries, and English explorers all arrived in what eventually became the U.S. states of Washington and Oregon.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Scientific Revolution

9.1: The Scientific Process
9.2: Astronomy
9.3: Mathematics
9.4: Medicine
9.5: Science and Society - Women
9.6: Scientific Institutions and Culture
9.7: The Philosophical Impact of Science

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9.1: The Scientific Process

The Scientific Revolution grew out of Renaissance humanism. By the late 16th century, humanistic scholars were increasingly dissatisfied with some ancient authors, who failed to explain everything. For example, while ancient authors wrote about astronomy, they did not adequately explain the observed movements of the stars and planets. Likewise, with the explosion of new translations of classical works, it became clear that ancient scholars had actively debated and even rejected the teachings of figures like Aristotle.

Even to scholars who respected and deferred to ancient authors, much of ancient astronomy was based on some fairly questionable speculations, like the idea that the Earth sits on top of a giant sea that occasionally sloshes around, causing earthquakes. Thus, the first major discoveries in the Scientific Revolution had to do with astronomy, as scholars started carrying out their own observations and advancing theories to explain what they saw happening in the heavens. This process is known as inductive reasoning: starting with disparate facts, then working toward a theory to explain them.

Deductive reasoning starts with a known theory and then tries to prove that observations fit into it. This system allows for proofs. For instance, in mathematics, one can start with a known principle and then use it to prove more complex formulas.

Mathematics played a key role in the Scientific Revolution. Many thinkers insisted that mathematics was part of a divine language that existed apart from, but was as nearly important as, the Christian Bible itself. God had designed the universe in such a way that mathematics offered the possibility of real scientific certainty. The close relationship between math, physics, and engineering is obvious in the work of people like Da Vinci, Galileo, and Isaac Newton, all of whom combined an advanced understanding and practical applications of math.

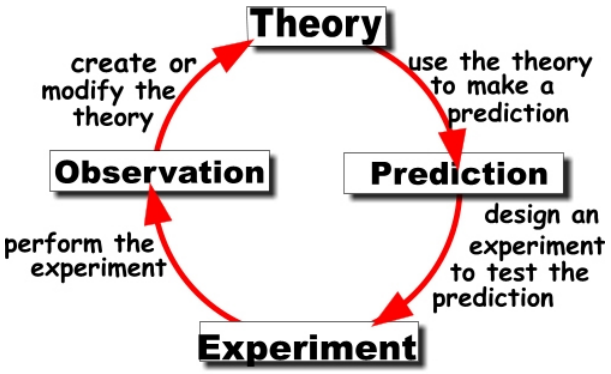
A word of caution: It would be wrong to claim that the Scientific Revolution sparked a completely objective, recognizably "modern" form of science. Isaac Newton was a scientist, but also an alchemist, devoting considerable time and effort to trying to figure out how to "transmute" base metals like lead into gold. Likewise, many thinkers were intensely interested in the works of an ancient (and fictional) philosopher and magician named Hermes Trismagistus, Hermes the "Thrice-Blessed," who had supposedly discovered a series of magical formulas that explained the universe. Crossover between what we might think of as magic and spirituality on the one hand and "real" science on the other occurred. Ultimately, the interest in discovery was piqued by the idea of probing the universe's secrets leading to genuine scientific discovery.

Codifying and popularizing the new empirical, inductive process was led by Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626), an English nobleman. Bacon is best remembered for "creating" the **scientific method**: advancing a hypothesis to explain observed data, but then trying to disprove the hypothesis rather than trying to force the facts to prove it. Over time, the scientific method came to include a corollary requirement: the results of an experiment had to yield the same results consistently in order for a hypothesis to be considered viable.

It's interesting to note that Bacon was not a scientist himself. He was fired as the Lord Chancellor of King James I after accepting bribes. Then, he died after catching a cold stuffing snow into a dead chicken as some kind of ill-conceived biological experiment. Regardless, he codified the new methodology and worldview of the Scientific Revolution itself.

Simplified Scientific Method

The scientific method uses observation and experimentation to explain theories on the workings of the universe. This process removed blind adherence to tradition from science and allowed scientists to logically find answers through the use of reason. Over time, the method would be expanded to include more steps and accommodate different areas of study.



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9.2: Astronomy

Ptolemy and Aristotle were the most influential ancient sources of scientific knowledge. Both argued that the Earth was at the center of the universe, which consisted of a giant rotating crystal sphere studded with the stars. The sun, moon, and planets were suspended and rotated around the Earth. Ptolemy, who lived centuries after Aristotle, elaborated on the Aristotelian system. He claimed that there were close to eighty spheres, one within the other, which was why the different heavenly bodies did not all move in the same direction or at the same speed. The idea that the earth is at the center of the universe is known as *geocentrism*.

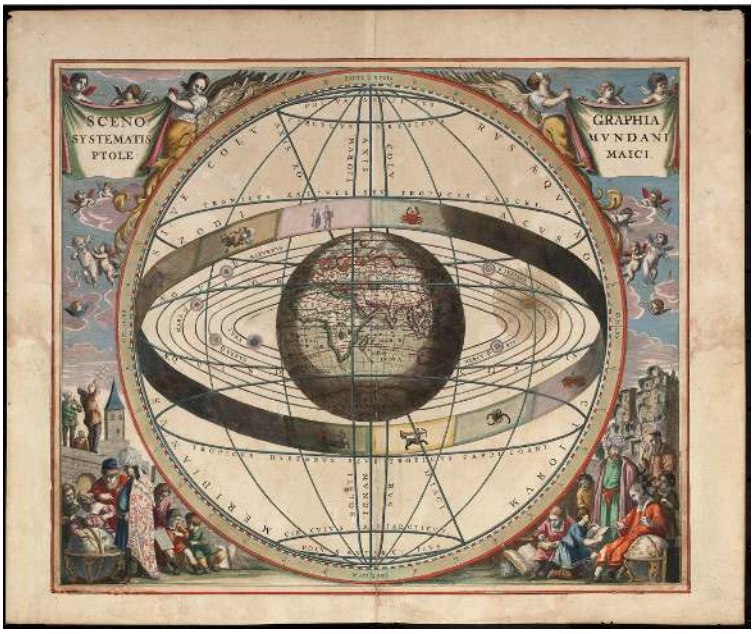


Figure 9.2.1: The geocentric universe illustrated, with the sun and planets revolving around the Earth. Interestingly, the illustration was created in 1660, a few decades after Galileo popularized the fact that heliocentrism was completely inaccurate.

In this model of the universe, the earth was imperfect, chaotic, and changing, while the heavens were perfect and uniform. Thus, Christian thinkers embraced the Aristotelian model because it fit Christian theology so well. Also, from this Christianized version came the concept that God and heaven are "up in the sky" and hell is "below the ground". When the astronomers of the Scientific Revolution started detecting irregularities in the heavens, this totally contradicted how most learned people thought about the essential characteristics of the universe.

Nicolaus Copernicus

The ancient model did not match the observed paths taken by the stars. Nor did it align with the different planets' regular, circular orbits. Thus, medieval astronomers created even-more-elaborate caveats and modifications to the idea of simple perfect orbits, positing the existence of hugely complex paths supposedly taken by various heavenly objects.

A Polish priest, Nicolaus Copernicus (1473 – 1543), was the first to argue that the whole system would match reality if the sun was at the center of the orbits instead of the earth. This concept is called heliocentrism. Interestingly, he retained the idea of the crystal spheres, and used Ptolemy's calculations in his own work. Copernicus was a quintessential Renaissance man; a medical doctor, an accomplished painter, fluent in Greek, and an astronomer.

Tycho Brahe

Copernicus's theory was little known outside of astronomical circles, with most astronomers expressing dismay and skepticism at the idea. A Danish astronomer named Tycho Brahe (1546 – 1601) tried to refute the Heliocentric theory by demonstrating that the Earth was indeed at the center of the universe but that the heavenly bodies followed monstrously complex orbits. He spent twenty years carefully observing the heavens from his castle on an island near Copenhagen. Brahe's work provided a wealth of data for later astronomers to work from, even though his central argument turned out to be inaccurate.

Johannes Kepler

German astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571 – 1630) ended up using Brahe's data to argue against Brahe's conclusion. Kepler noticed that there was some kind of force emanating from the sun that seemed to hold the planets in orbit. He concluded that some form of magnetism was likely the cause. (In fact, Kepler had noticed the role of gravity in space). Interestingly, Kepler was the official imperial mathematician of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II, who overlooked the fact that Kepler was a Protestant because he (Rudolph) was so interested in science - all against the backdrop of the Thirty Years' War.

Galileo Galilei

In the end, the most significant publicist of heliocentrism was an Italian, Galileo Galilei (1564 - 1642). Galileo built a telescope and discovered previously unknown aspects of the heavenly bodies, such as the fact that the moon and sun did not have smooth, perfect surfaces. His first major publication, *The Starry Messenger* (1610), conclusively demonstrated that the heavens were full of previously unknown objects (e.g. the moons of Jupiter) and that planets and moons appeared to be "imperfect" in the same manner as the earth.

In 1632, Galileo published the *Dialogue*, a work that quickly became much better known than Copernicus's or Kepler's. The Dialogue consisted of two imaginary interlocutors, one of whom presented the case for heliocentrism, the other for geocentrism. The supporter of heliocentrism wins every argument, and his debate partner, "Stupid" (*Simplicio*) is confounded. In publicizing his work, Galileo undermined the idea that the heavens were perfect, that the earth was central, and by extension, that ancient knowledge was reliable. All of these things were disruptive.

Galileo was accused of supporting a condemned doctrine, heliocentrism, not of heresy per se, and tried by the Inquisition in 1633. (In part because his former patron, the pope Urban VIII, thought that Galileo had been mocking him personally by naming the imaginary defender of the Ptolemaic view Stupid.) Galileo was forced to recant and his book was placed on the Catholic *Index* of banned books, where it would remain until 1822.

Galileo is less well remembered for his work in physics. Six years after the Dialogue was put on the Index, he published another work, *Two New Sciences of Motion and Mechanics*, that provided a theory and mathematical formulas of inertia and aspects of gravity. These theories refuted Aristotelian physics, which claimed that objects only stay in motion when there is a direct impetus.

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9.3: Mathematics

Sir Isaac Newton (1642 – 1727) was an English mathematician. In 1687, he published the *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, which posited a single universal law of gravitation that applied equally to enormous objects like the planet Earth and tiny objects that could barely be detected by human senses. The entire system of physics was mapped out and described in precise, and accurate, mathematical formulas that would replace the work of ancient authors like Aristotle.

Newton was one of the great intellectual over-achievers of all time. He correctly calculated the relative mass of earth and water, deduced that electrical impulses had something to do with the nervous system, and figured out that all colors are part of the larger spectrum of light. Further, he personally designed and built a new and more effective kind of telescope, and wrote the founding paper of the modern science of optics.

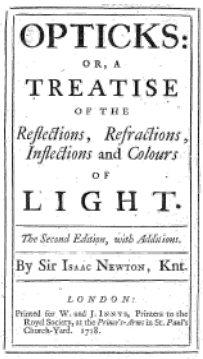

OPTICKS:
OR, A
TREATISE
OF THE
Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours
OF
LIGHT.
The Second Edition, with Additions.
By Sir Isaac Newton, Knt.
LONDON:
Printed for W. and J. Innys, Printers to the Royal Society, at the Prince's Arms in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1718.

Figure 9.3.1: Newton's treatise on the properties of light, the founding document of optics.

On a personal level, Newton was a humorless curmudgeon. He only reluctantly published his work after fearing that his self-understood "rivals" would steal it if he did not.

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9.4: Medicine

While astronomy and physics advanced by leaps and bounds, medical science and biology advanced much more slowly. At the time, there were a host of preconceived notions and prejudices, especially against work on human cadavers, that prevented large-scale experimentation. Most doctors continued to rely on the work of the Greek physician Galen (129-216 CE), who supported the Aristotelian idea of the four “humors” that supposedly governed health: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. According to this theory, illness was the result of an overabundance of one humor and a lack of another. Hence, the centuries-old practice of bleeding someone who was ill in hope of reducing the "excess" blood.

While the belief in humors continued to hold sway, important advances did occur in anatomy. The Italian doctor Andreas Vesalius (1514 – 1564) published a work on anatomy based on cadavers. Another doctor, William Harvey (1578 – 1657), conclusively demonstrated that blood flows through the body by being pumped by the heart, not emanating out of the liver as had been previously believed. Other doctors used a new invention, the microscope, to detect the capillaries that connect arteries to other tissues.



Figure 9.4.1: One of Vesalius’s illustrations, in this case of human musculature.

Many medical advances would not have been possible without the Renaissance. Renaissance artistic techniques made precise, accurate anatomical drawings possible, and print ensured that works on medicine could be distributed across Europe rapidly. Thus, scientists and doctors were adding their discoveries to a more widespread understanding of how the body worked. Even though the concept of the humors (as well as other ideas like miasmas causing disease) remained prevalent, doctors now had a better idea of how the body was designed and what its constituent parts actually did.

The new understanding of anatomy did not lead to an understanding of contagion. The Dutch scientist Antonie Van Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723) invented the microscope. In the 1670s, he was able to identify what was later referred to as bacteria. Unfortunately, he did not deduce that bacteria were responsible for illness. Indeed, it would take until the 1860s with the French doctor and scientist Louis Pasteur for definitive proof of the relationship between germs and sickness to be established.

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9.5: Science and Society - Women

An often-overlooked facet of the Scientific Revolution was the participation of aristocratic women. Noblewomen were often the collaborators of their husbands or fathers. For example, the Lavoisiers were a French husband and wife team that invented the premises of modern chemistry in the 18th Century. In some cases, women struck out on their own and conducted experiments and expeditions, such as the entomologist Maria Sibylla Merian, who took research trips to South America and did pioneering work on the life cycles of various insect species.



Figure 9.5.1: One of Merian's illustrations, depicting the life cycle of butterflies and moths.

A few male theorists supported proto-feminist outlooks. The French scholar François Poulain de la Barre (1647-1725) concluded that empirical observation demonstrated that male dominance in European society was just a custom. Nothing about pregnancy or childbearing made women inherently unsuitable to participate in public life. In addition, he applied a similar argument to non-European peoples, arguing that there were only cosmetic differences between what would later be called "races." His work was almost unprecedented in its egalitarian vision, anticipating the ideas of human universalism that came of age in the 19th Century and a dominant view in the 20th.

Despite the existence of highly-qualified and educated women scientists, informal rules banned them from joining scientific societies or holding university positions. In general, there was a marked tendency of male scientists to use the new science to reinforce rather than overthrow sexist stereotypes. Anatomical drawings drew attention to the fact that women had wider hips than men, which supposedly "destined" females for the primary function of childbearing. Likewise, they (inaccurately) depicted women as having smaller skulls, supposedly implying lower intelligence. In addition, male scientists and doctors increasingly pushed women out of important traditional social roles, such as midwifery, insisting on a male-dominated "scientific" superiority of technique.

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9.6: Scientific Institutions and Culture

Over time the center of scientific development shifted north and west away from Italy. At first many Protestants, including Luther, were just as hostile as Catholics to new scientific ideas. However, in the long term, Protestant governments proved more tolerant of ideas that seemed to violate the literal truth of the Christian Bible. Primarily, because Protestant institutions were less powerful and pervasive than the Roman church in Catholic countries.

In the Netherlands and England, it was possible to openly publish and/or champion scientific ideas without fear of a backlash. For example, Newton, became outright famous. In general, Protestant governments and elites were more open to the idea that God might reveal Himself in nature, not just in holy scripture. Thus, they were sympathetic to the piety of scientific research. Ultimately, this increased tolerance and support of science would see the center of scientific innovation in the northwest of Europe.

That being noted, France was not to be underestimated as a site of discovery, due in part to the cosmopolitanism of Paris and the traditional power of the French kings in holding the papacy at arm's length. The Royal Academy of Sciences (France) was opened in the same year as its sister organization, the Royal Society of England (1662). Both funded scientific efforts that were "useful" in the sense of serving shipping and military applications, as well as those more purely experimental approaches, as in astronomy. The English Royal Society was particularly focused on military applications, especially optics and ballistics, setting a pattern of state-funded science in the service of war that continues to this day.

The English and French scientific societies were important parts of the development of a larger "Republic of Science," the predecessor to present-day "academia." Learned men (and some women) from all over Europe attended lectures, corresponded, and carried out scientific experiments. Newton was the president of the Royal Society, which published Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, the forerunner to academic journals that remain the backbone of scholarship today.

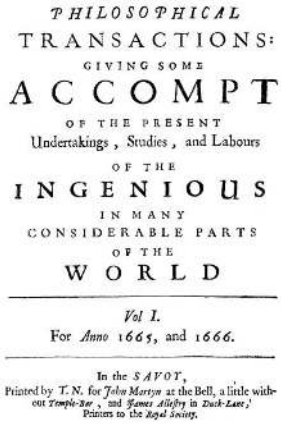

PHILOSOPHICAL
TRANSACTIONS:
GIVING SOME
ACCOMPT
OF THE PRESENT
Undertakings, Studies, and Labours
OF THE
INGENIOUS
IN MANY
CONSIDERABLE PARTS
OF THE
WORLD
Vol I.
For Anno 1665, and 1666.
In the SAVOY,
Printed by T. N. for John Martyn at the Bell, a little without Temple-Bar, and James Allestry in Duck-Lane,
Printers to the Royal Society.

Figure 9.6.1: The cover of the Philosophical Transactions, arguably the first formal academic journal in history.

The importance of the Republic of Science cannot be overstated. The ongoing exchange of ideas and fact-checking among experts allowed science to progress incrementally and continually. In other words, no scientist had to "start from scratch," because he or she was already building on the work of past scholars. Rather than science requiring an isolated genius like Da Vinci, now any intelligent and self-disciplined individual could hope to make a meaningful contribution to a scientific field. Newton explicitly acknowledged the importance of this incremental growth of knowledge when he emphasized that "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

The Republic of Science also inaugurated a shift away from the use of Latin as the official language of scholarship in learned European culture. Scientific essays were often written in the vernacular by scientists like Kepler and Galileo. Partially, because they wanted to differentiate their work from church doctrine which was traditionally written in Latin. Over the course of the 18th Century, Latin steadily declined as the practical language of learning, replaced by the major vernaculars, especially French and English.

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9.7: The Philosophical Impact of Science

During the 16th Century, a growing belief emerged that the universe itself operated according to regular, predictable, “mechanical” laws that could be described through mathematics. Within this idea, God could be seen as a great scientist or clockmaker: the divine intelligence who created a perfect universe and then set it in motion. In this sense, then, the new scientific discoveries did not undermine religious belief, despite the fact that they contradicted certain specific passages of the Bible. This kind of religious outlook became known as *deism*, and its proponent's deists, people who believed that God did not intervene in everyday life but instead simply set the universe in motion, then stepped back to watch.

French philosopher Rene Descartes (1596 – 1650) applied this new logical outlook to theology itself. He tried to subject belief and doubt to a thorough logical critique, asking what he could be absolutely sure of as a philosophical starting point. His conclusion was that the only thing he really knew was that he doubted, that there was something thinking and operating skeptically, which in turn implied that there was a thing, himself, capable of thought. This idea led to his famous statement “I think, therefore I am.” Descartes went on to follow a series of logical “proofs” to “prove” that God Himself existed as the original source of thought. This philosophical application combined a new mechanical and mathematical outlook, as well as deductive reasoning. Personally, he embraced the view that God was a benevolent and reasonable power of creation, but one who did not lower Himself to meddle in the universe.

As a result of the revolution, science acquired growing cultural authority. Galileo delighted onlookers by allowing them to use his telescope to look at the sky and buildings in Rome, thereby proving that his invention worked. The possibility that science could, and already had, disproved claims made in the Christian Bible laid the foundation for a whole new approach to knowledge that threatened a permanent break with a religiously-founded paradigm. In other words, scientific advances inadvertently led to the growth in skepticism about religion, sometimes up to and including outright atheism: the rejection of the very idea of the existence of God.

Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 1677), a Sephardic Jew who was born and raised in Amsterdam in the Netherlands, took the insights of the era and applied them wholeheartedly to religion itself. He argued that the universe of natural, physical laws was synonymous with God, and that the very idea of a human-like God with a personality and intentions was superstitious, unprovable, and absurd. He was excommunicated from Judaism, but continued publishing his works, in the process laying the groundwork for what was later known as “freethinkers” – people who may or may not have been actual atheists, but who rejected the authority of holy writings and churches.

Due to the controversial nature of Spinoza’s work, he was condemned as an atheist by the Jewish community, the Catholic church, and various Protestant churches. These religious groups found the claim that there was no such thing as “spirit” or “the soul” – all of the universe was merely matter, and the only way to truly learn about its operation was to combine empirical experimentation with mathematics - infuriating. This “materialism” was so close to outright atheism as to be almost indistinguishable.

The other side of skepticism dispensed with the emotional connection to God and reduced it to a simple act of spiritual insurance. The French mathematician Blaise Pascal (1623 – 1662), inventor of the field of probability, postulated “Pascal’s Wager.” In the Wager, he argued that either God does or does not exist, and each person can choose either to acknowledge Him or not. If He does exist, and one acknowledges Him, then one is saved. If He does exist, and one rejects Him, then one is damned. If He does not exist and one acknowledges Him, nothing happens. He does not exist and one does not acknowledge Him, nothing happens either. Thus, one might as well worship God in some way, since there is no negative fallout if He does not exist, but there is (i.e. an eternity of torment in hell) if He does.

Pascal applied an equally skeptical view to the existing governments of his day. He noted that “We see neither justice nor injustice which does not change its nature with change in climate. Three degrees of latitude reverse all jurisprudence; a meridian decides the truth. Fundamental laws change after a few years of possession...a strange justice that is bounded by a river! Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on the other side.” In other words, there were no fixed or eternal, or God-given royal decrees and laws; they were arbitrary customs enforced through the state.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: The Enlightenment

10.1: The Enlightenment Defined
10.2: Context and Causes
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
10.4: Politics and Society
10.5: The Radical Enlightenment
10.6: Implications of the Enlightement

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10.1: The Enlightenment Defined

The Enlightenment was a philosophical movement that lasted about one hundred years, roughly 1688 - 1789. It was centrally concerned with applying rational thought to almost every aspect of human existence, such as science, philosophy, morality, and society. At the same, there was an emergence of new forms of media and ways in which people exchanged information, along with new “sensibilities” regarding what was proper and desirable in social conduct and politics.

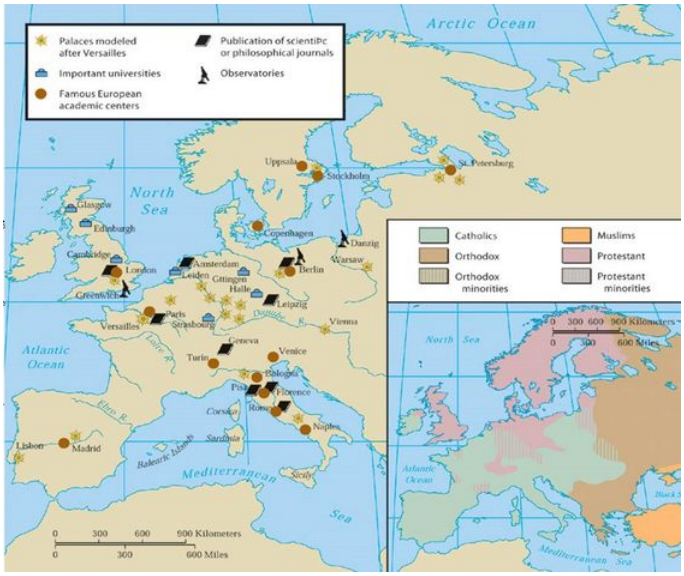
Many modern ideas come from this movement. Enlightenment thinkers argued that all citizens should be equal before the law. They claimed that the best forms of government were those with rational laws oriented to serve the public interest. In a major break from the past, they increasingly claimed that there was a real, physical universe that could be understood using the methods of science, in contrast to the false, made-up universe of “magic” suitable only for myths and storytelling. In short, Enlightenment thinkers proposed ideas that were novel at the time, but were eventually accepted by almost everyone in Europe (and many other places, including the inhabitants of the colonies of the Americas).

The Enlightenment introduced themes of thought that undermined traditional religious beliefs. including the rejection of “superstitions” or things that simply could not happen according to science. They argued that the “real” natural universe was governed by natural laws, all watched over by a benevolent but completely remote “supreme being” - reminiscent of Deism that had emerged from the Scientific Revolution. Many thinkers decried church practices, and what they perceived as the ignorance and injustice behind church (especially Catholic) laws.

The Enlightenment was also against “tyranny,” which meant the arbitrary rule of a monarch indifferent to the welfare of his or her subjects. They did not openly reject monarchy as a form of government. Indeed, some thinkers befriended powerful kings and queens. But, they roundly condemned cruelty and selfishness among individual monarchs. The perfect state was one with an “enlightened” monarch at its head, presiding over a set of reasonable laws. Great Britain's constitutional monarchy was the best extant model of enlightened rule.

Behind both the scientific worldview and the rejection of tyranny was a focus on the human mind’s capacity for reason. (Reason is the mental faculty that takes sensory data and orders it into thoughts and ideas.) To these thinkers, reason is universal and inherent to humans. If society could strip away the pernicious patterns of tradition, superstition, and ignorance, humankind would arrive naturally at a harmonious society. Thus, almost all of the major thinkers of the Enlightenment tried to get to the bottom of just that task: what is standing in the way of reason, and how can humanity become more reasonable?

Europe During the Enlightenment



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10.2: Context and Causes

The Scientific Revolution directly contributed to the start of the Enlightenment. For example, Newton's *Mathematical Principles* (1687) demonstrated the existence of eternal, immutable laws of nature (ones that may or may not have anything to do with God) that were completely rational and understandable by humans. Thus, the idea that the universe was rational had been established.

One of the major themes of the Enlightenment was the search for equally immutable and equally rational laws that applied to everything else in nature, most importantly *human* nature. How do humans learn? How might a government be designed to ensure the most felicitous environment for learning and prosperity? If humans are capable of reason, why do they deviate from reasonable behavior so frequently?

Among the other causes of the Enlightenment was the significant growth of the urban literate classes, most notably what was called in France the ***bourgeoisie***: the mercantile middle class. Ever since the Renaissance era, elites increasingly acquired basic literacy. By the eighteenth century, even artisans and petty merchants in the cities of Central and Western Europe sent their children (especially boys) to schools for at least a few years. A real reading public eagerly embraced the new ideas of the Enlightenment and provided a book market for both the official, copyrighted works of Enlightenment philosophy and pirated, illegal ones. The same group also embraced the quintessential new form of fiction: the novel, with the reading of novels becoming a major leisure activity of the period.

Enlightenment thought took place in the midst of what historians call the “growth of the public sphere.” Newspapers, periodicals, and cheap books became very common, which in turn helped the ongoing growth of literacy rates. Simultaneously, there was a full-scale shift away from the sacred languages to the vernaculars (i.e. from Latin to English, Spanish, French, etc.). For the first time, large numbers of people acquired at least a basic knowledge of the official language of their state rather than using only their local dialect. Those official languages allowed the transmission of ideas across entire kingdoms. For example, by the time the French Revolution began in the late 1780s, an entire generation of men and women was capable of expressing shared ideas about justice and politics in the official French tongue.

Groups of self-styled "enlightened" men and women gathered to discuss the new ideas of the movement. The most significant were coffee houses in England and **salons** in France, Germany, and Central Europe.

- Coffee houses charged an entry fee, but then provided unlimited coffee to their patrons. The patrons were from various social classes, and would discuss the latest ideas and read the periodicals provided by the coffee house.
- Salons were more aristocratic gatherings in which major philosophers would often read from their latest works. Then, the assembled group would engage in debate and discussion. Salons were noteworthy for being led by women. Aristocratic, educated women were thought to be the best moderators of learned discussion by most Enlightenment thinkers, men and women alike.



Figure 10.2.1: One of the best-known salons, run by Marie Thérèse Rodet Geoffrin, seated on the right. All of the men pictured are their actual likeliness. Seated under the marble bust is Jean le Rond D’Alembert. The bust is of Voltaire, whose work is being read to the gathering in the picture.

The ideas and themes of the Enlightenment reached most of the reading public through the easy availability of cheap print. Even regular artisans were conversant in many Enlightenment ideas. (For example, French glassworker, Jacques-Louis Menetra, left a memoir in which he demonstrated his own command of the ideas of the period and even claimed to have chatted over drinks with the great Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau). The major Enlightenment thinkers considered themselves to be part of a “republic of letters,” similar to the "republic of science" that played such a role in the Scientific Revolution. They wrote voluminous correspondence and often sent one another unpublished manuscripts. Thus, from the republic of letters down to pirated copies of enlightenment works, the new ideas of the period permeated much of European society.

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10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes

Enlightenment thinkers are offered referred to as *philosophe*, meaning simply "philosopher" in French. The most prominent philosophers were French, English, Scottish, and Prussian.

John Locke: 1637 – 1704

Locke was a great political theorist during the English Civil Wars and Glorious Revolution eras, arguing that sovereignty was granted by the people to a government but could be revoked if that government violated the laws and traditions of the country. He was also a major advocate for religious tolerance. Indeed, he was even bold enough to note that people tended to be whatever religion was prevalent in their family and social context, so it was ridiculous for anyone to claim exclusive access to religious truth.

Locke was also the founding figure of Enlightenment educational thought, arguing that all humans are born “blank slates” – ***Tabula Rasa*** in Latin. Hence access to the human faculty of reason had entirely to do with the proper education. Cruelty, selfishness, and destructive behavior were because of a lack of education and a poor environment, while the right education would lead anybody and everybody to become rational, reasonable individuals. This idea was hugely inspiring to other Enlightenment thinkers, because it implied that society could be perfected if education was somehow improved and rationalized.

Voltaire: 1694 – 1778

The greatest novelist, poet, and philosopher of France during the height of the Enlightenment period, François-Marie Arouet, also known as Voltaire, became famous across Europe for his wit, intelligence, and moral battles against what he perceived as injustice and superstition.

In addition to writing hilarious novellas lambasting everything from Prussia's obsession with militarism to the fanaticism of the Spanish Inquisition, Voltaire publicly intervened against injustice. He wrote essays and articles decrying the unjust punishment of innocents and personally convinced the French king Louis XV to commute the sentences of certain individuals unjustly convicted of crimes. He was also an amateur scientist and philosopher, and wrote many important articles in the "official" handbook of the Enlightenment, the Encyclopedia (described below).



Figure 10.3.1: Voltaire

It is important to note the ambiguities of Voltaire's philosophy. He was a deep skeptic about human nature, despite believing in the existence and desirability of reason. He acknowledged the power of the ignorant and outmoded traditions to govern human behavior, and expressed considerable skepticism that society could ever be significantly improved. For example, despite his personal disdain for Christian (especially Catholic) institutions, he noted that “if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him,” because without a religious structure shoring up morality, the ignorant masses would descend into violence and barbarism.

Emilie de Châtelet: 1706 - 1749

Châtelet published works on subjects as diverse as physics, mathematics, the Christian Bible, and the very nature of happiness. Perhaps her best-known work was an annotated translation of Newton’s *Mathematical Principles*, which explained the Newtonian concepts to her (French) readers. Despite the gendered biases of most of her scientific contemporaries, she was accepted as an

equal member of the “republic of science.” In Châtelet, the link between the legacy of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment is clearest. While her companion Voltaire was keenly interested in science and engaged in modest efforts at his own experiments, Châtelet was a full-fledged physicist and mathematician.

The Encyclopedia of Diderot and D’Alembert (1751)

The **Encyclopedia** was a full-scale attempt to catalog, categorize, and explain all of human knowledge. While its co-inventors, Jean le Rond D’Alembert and Denis Diderot, wrote many of the articles, the majority were written by other philosophes, including Voltaire. The first volume was published in 1751. In the end, the Encyclopedia consisted of 28 volumes containing 60,000 articles with 2,885 illustrations. While its volumes were far too expensive for most of the reading public to access directly, pirated chapters ensured that its ideas reached a much broader audience.

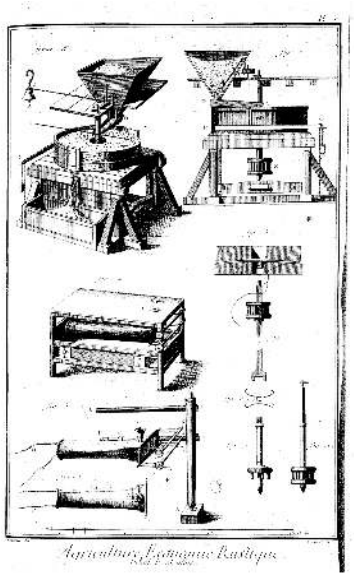


Figure 10.3.2: One of the illustrations from the Encyclopedia: diagrams of (at the time, state of the art) agricultural equipment.

The Encyclopedia was explicitly organized to refute traditional knowledge provided by the church and (to a lesser extent) the state. It attempted to be a technical resource for would-be scientists and inventors, describing aspects of science as well as providing detailed technical diagrams of everything from windmills to mines. In short, the Encyclopedia was intended to be a kind of guide to the entire realm of human thought and technique - a cutting-edge description of all of the knowledge a typical philosophe might think necessary to improve the world.

David Hume: 1711 – 1776

Hume was the major philosopher associated with the Scottish Enlightenment, centered in Edinburgh. He was one of the most powerful critics of all forms of organized religion. To him, any religion based on "miracles" was automatically invalid, since miracles do not happen in an orderly universe knowable through science. In fact, Hume went so far as to suggest that belief in a God who resembled a kind of omnipotent version of a human being, with a personality, intentions, and emotions, was simply an expression of primitive ignorance and fear early in human history, as people sought an explanation for a bewildering universe.

Hume also expressed enormous contempt for the common people. Most surprisingly, he did *not* champion the rights, let alone anything like the right to political expression, of regular people. To a philosopher like Hume, the average commoner (whether a peasant or a member of the poor urban classes) was so mired in ignorance, superstition, and credulity that he or she should be held in check and ruled by his or her betters.

Adam Smith: 1723 - 1790

Smith was another Scotsman who worked in Edinburgh. He is generally credited with being the first real economist: a social scientist devoted to analyzing how markets function. In his most famous work, *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith argued that a free market, (one that operated without the undue interference of the state), would naturally result in never-ending economic growth and

nearly universal prosperity. He argued that if states dropped the monopolies and protectionist taxes and tariffs that limited trade, the market itself would increase wealth as if the general prosperity of the nation was lifted by an "invisible hand."

Smith applied precisely the same kind of Enlightenment ideas and ideals to market exchange as did the other philosophes to morality, science, and so on. He also insisted that something in human affairs - economics - operated according to rational and knowable laws that could be discovered and explained. His ideas, along with those of David Ricardo, an English economist a generation younger than Smith, are normally considered the founding concepts of “classical” economics.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778)

Rousseau was the great contrarian philosophe of the Enlightenment. He rose to prominence by winning an essay contest in 1749, penning a scathing critique of his contemporary French society and claiming that its so-called “civilization” was a corrupt facade that undermined humankind’s natural moral character. He went on to write both novels and essays that attracted enormous attention both in France and abroad, claiming among other things that children should learn from nature by experiencing the world, allowing their natural goodness and character to develop. He also championed the idea that political sovereignty arose from the “general will” of the people in a society, and that citizens in a just society had to be fanatically devoted to both that general will and to their own moral standards. Rousseau’s concept of a moralistic, fanatical government justified by a “general will” of the people would go on to become the ideological bases of the French Revolution that began a decade after his death.

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10.4: Politics and Society

The political implications of the Enlightenment were surprisingly muted. Almost every society in Europe exercised official censorship. Thus, many philosophes had to publish their more provocative works using pseudonyms. Or at times resorting to illegal publishing operations and book smugglers in order to evade that censorship and avoid personal arrest. Philosophes tended to openly attack the most egregious injustices they perceived in royal governments and organized churches. However, at the same time, skepticism about the intellectual abilities of the common people was such that almost no one advocated for a political system besides a better, more rational version of a monarchy.

In turn, various monarchs and nobles were attracted to Enlightenment thought. They came to believe in the essential justice of the arguments of the philosophes and did not see anything contradictory between the exercise of their power and enlightenment ideas. That said, monarchs tended to see “enlightened reforms” in terms of making their governments more efficient. Kings and queens certainly did not renounce their actual power. Although some did at least ease the burdens on the serfs who toiled on royal lands.

The Enlightenment had an unquestionable impact on European (and early American) politics in the realm of justice. A Milanese, **Cesare Bonesana**, wrote *On Crimes and Punishment* (1764) arguing that the state’s essential duty was the protection of the life and dignity of its citizens, which included those accused of crimes. He argued that

- the rich and poor should be held accountable before the same laws
- the aim of the justice system should be as much to prevent future crimes as to punish past ones
- torture was both barbarous and counter-productive.

By the end of the 18th Century, several monarchs had banned torture in their realms, and "rationalized" justice systems had slowly evolved in many kingdoms.

The notable “enlightened monarch” was **Frederick II** (the Great) of Prussia (r. 1740 – 1786). A great lover of French literature and philosophy, he insisted only on speaking French whenever possible, and redecorated the Prussian royal palace in the French style, in which he avidly hosted Enlightenment salons. Indeed, Voltaire came to live at his palace for two years. Inspired by Enlightenment ideas, he freed the serfs on royal lands and banned the more onerous feudal duties owed by serfs to his nobles. He also rationalized the royal bureaucracy, making all applicants pass a formal exam, which provided a limited path of social mobility for non-nobles.

Tsarina **Catherine the Great** (r. 1762 - 1796) was a correspondent of French philosophes and actively cultivated Enlightenment-inspired art and learning in Russia. Hoping to increase the efficiency of the Russian state, she expanded the bureaucracy, reorganized the Russian Empire’s administrative divisions, and introduced a more rigorous and broad education for future officers of the military. She also created the first educational institution for girls in Russia, the Smolny Institute, admitting the daughters of nobles and, eventually, well-off commoners. Her enthusiasm for the Enlightenment was dampened considerably when the French Revolution began in 1789. While Russian nobles found their own privileges expanded, the vast majority of Russian subjects remained serfs. Like Frederick of Prussia, Catherine’s appreciation for “reason” had nothing to do with democratic impulses.

One major political theme to emerge from the Enlightenment that did not require the goodwill of monarchs was the idea of **human rights** (or “the rights of man” as they were generally known at the time). Emerging from a combination of rationalistic philosophy and new “sensibilities” - the recognition of the shared humanity of different categories of people -the concepts of human rights spread rapidly in the second half of the eighteenth century. In turn, they fueled demands for political reform and helped to inspire vigorous abolitionist (anti-slavery) movements. The idea of human rights would inspire the American and French Revolutions. Britain would ban the slave trade in 1807 and slavery itself in 1833, although it would take the American Civil War in the 1860s to end slavery in the United States.

Political borders in Europe between 1783 and 1792

Found in Wikipedia, this European map shows the westward expansion of Russia after the Russo-Turkish Wars of 1768–1774 and 1787–1792. The red line marks the borders of the Holy Roman Empire.



Source: Wikipedia

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10.5: The Radical Enlightenment

Historians have created a term to describe the ideas too scandalous for mainstream philosophes to support: **Radical Enlightenment**. One example is the emergence of **Freemasonry**, a "secret" group of like-minded Enlightenment thinkers who gathered in "lodges" to discuss philosophy, make political connections, and socialize.

Some Masonic lodges were associated with the vast underground world of illegal publishers and smugglers. In areas with relatively relaxed censorship like the Netherlands and Switzerland, numerous small printing presses operated throughout the 18th Century, cranking out illegal literature. Some of this literature consisted of the banned works of major philosophes, but much of it was simply pirated and "dumbed-down" versions of things like the Encyclopedia. This illegal industry supplied the reading public, especially those people with little money to spend on books, with their essential access to Enlightenment thought.

For example, an actual volume of the Encyclopedia was much too expensive for a common artisan or merchant to afford. However, such a person *could* afford a pamphlet-sized, pirated copy of several of the articles that might interest him/her. Likewise, many written works outside of the acceptable bounds of legal publishing (including outright attacks on Christianity as well as pornography) were published and smuggled into places like France, England, and Prussia using underground publishing houses.

Generally, the Radical Enlightenment made mainstream Enlightenment ideas more accessible to more of European society as a whole than they would have been otherwise.

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10.6: Implications of the Enlightement

Philosophes rarely attacked members within their own social hierarchy. The abuses of the church, the ignorance of the nobility, and even the injustices of kings might be fair game for criticism. However, the better-known philosophes did not call for or support a political revolution. Only Rousseau was bold enough to advocate a republican form of government as a viable alternative to a monarchy. Even Kant celebrated the “public use of reason” while defending the authoritarian power of the Prussian king to demand that his subjects “obey!”

Most of the major figures of the Enlightenment were social elites, whose thoughts were ultimately disruptive to the Christian society of orders. In their minds, the legitimacy of a monarch was based on their rule coinciding with the prosperity of the nation and the absence of cruelty and injustice in the laws of the land. Yet, people have the right to judge the monarch based on his or her competence and rationality. The philosophes *did* attack the nobles for enjoying vast legal privileges but having done nothing to deserve those privileges besides being born a member of a noble family. They were quick to point out that many members of the middle class were far more intelligent and competent than the average nobleman.

In addition, despite the inherent difficulty of publishing against the backdrop of censorship, philosophes contributed to the undermining of organized religion. All major Enlightenment thinkers agreed that “revealed” religion - a religion whose authority was based on miracles - was nonsense. According to the philosophes, the history of miracles could be disproved. Plus, contemporary miracles were usually experienced by lunatics, women, and the poor (and thus automatically suspect from their elite, male perspective). Basically, miracles violated natural law, which according to the very core principles of Enlightenment thought was simply not possible.

The Enlightenment did more to disrupt the social and political order than most of its members ever intended. Obvious and spectacular expressions are found in a pair of political revolutions: first in the American colonies of Great Britain in the 1770s, then in France starting in the 1780s. Ideas that had remained in the abstract during the Enlightenment were made manifest in the form of new constitutions, laws, and principles of government, and in both cases, one of the byproducts was violent upheaval.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: The Society of Orders

11.1: Prelude to The Society of Orders

11.2: Social Orders Divisions

11.3: The Great Powers--First Four

11.4: Great Powers--Russia

11.5: Wars

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11.1: Prelude to The Society of Orders

The 18th Century witnessed the end of absolute monarchical power, the aristocratic control of society in Europe, and the early modern period. Industrialism and revolution would mark the next phase of the modern period. Ironically, the enormous changes that happened were totally unanticipated at the time. No one, even the most radical political philosopher, believed that the political order or the basic technological level of their society would be fundamentally changed.

In 1781, philosopher and writer, Louis-Sébastien Mercier, published *The Painting of Paris*, which depicted a more orderly and perfect French society, where an enlightened king oversees a rationally-governed society and extends personal audiences to his subjects. The streets are clean, orderly, well-lit, and (unlike the Paris of his day) houses are numbered. Religious differences are calmly discussed and never result in violence. Strangely, there is no new technology to speak of, and the political and social order remains intact: a king, nobility, clergy, and commoners occupy their respective places in society - they simply interact more "rationally."

The *Painting of Paris* was an idealized version of Mercier's contemporary society. With the exception of Britain's constitutional monarchy and strong parliament, the monarchs of the major states of Europe succeeded in controlling governments that were at least "absolutist" in their pretensions, even though the nobility and local assemblies had a great deal of real power almost everywhere. In turn, the social orders were starkly divided, by wealth, law, and custom. This set of divisions was summarized in the system of "Estates" in France, the societal descendants of "those who pray, those who fight, and those who work" in the Middle Ages.



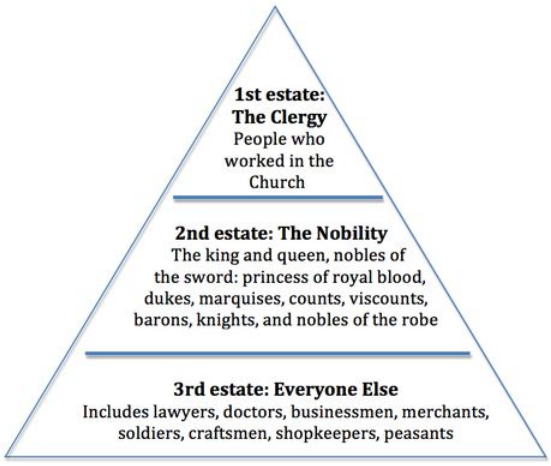
Figure 11.0.1: A late-medieval portrayal of the three orders or estates. A reasonably accurate take on social divisions in the Middle Ages, but one that was increasingly out of date by the 18th Century.

The **First Estate**, consisting of the clergy, oversaw the churches, education, enormous tracts of land held by the church and the monasteries, orders like the Jesuits and Benedictines, while holding great influence in royal government. In Protestant lands, the equivalent was in the form of the official Lutheran or Anglican churches. However, the political power of the clergy in Protestant countries was generally weaker than the Roman Church in Catholic countries.

The **Second Estate**, the nobility, was divided into the elite with hereditary lordships of various kinds (Dukes, Counts, etc.) and a larger group of lesser nobles who owned land but were not necessarily very wealthy. In Britain, the latter was called the gentry and controlled the House of Commons in parliament. Meanwhile, the House of Lords was occupied by the "peers of the realm," the elite families of nobles often descended from the ancient Normans. Generally, as a whole, the nobility represented no more than 4% of the overall population. Exceptions could be found in Poland and Hungary, which had large numbers of nobles, most of whom were scarcely wealthier than peasants.

The **Third Estate** was everyone else, from rich bankers and merchants without titles down to the destitute urban poor and landless peasant laborers. During the Middle Ages, the Third Estate was represented by wealthy elites from the cities and large towns. Despite being the majority of the population, the peasantry enjoyed no representation. By the 18th Century, the Third Estate was far more diverse, dynamic, and educated, though still had little political representation. As the century went on, a growing number of members of the Third Estate, especially those influenced by Enlightenment thought, came to chafe at a political order that remained resolutely medieval in its basic structure.

Composition of the Three Estates in 18th Century France



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11.2: Social Orders Divisions

Nobility

In most countries, the nobility maintained an almost complete monopoly of political power. The higher ranks of the clergy were drawn from noble families, so the church did not represent any kind of check or balance of power. The king was still fundamentally the first among equals, often a member of the richest and most powerful family: the royal dynasty of the kingdom.

Despite the social and political changes of the preceding centuries, European nobles continued to enjoy tremendous legal and social privileges. Nobles owned a disproportionate amount of land. In some kingdoms, such as Russia, only nobles *could* own land. Generally, nobles would

- serve as officers in the army, reaping the spoils of war and generous salaries in the process
- provide/receive political representation in various parliamentary bodies, with the notable caveat that cities still held privileges of their own. (For example, the *parlement* of Paris wielded a great deal of meaningful power in French politics)
- have their own courts, be tried by their peers, and be subjected to more humane treatment than were commoners
- pay few taxes, especially in comparison to the taxes, fees, and rents that beleaguered the peasantry

A whole system of status symbols was maintained by both law and custom. Only members of the aristocracy could wear masks at masquerade balls, lead processions in towns, and sit in special places at operas and churches. Further, nobles could wear swords during peacetime. Legal privileges and visible status symbols constantly reminded non-nobles of their inferior status.

By the 18th Century, the nobility actively cultivated learning and social grace, hearkening back to the glory days of the Renaissance courtier and bypassing the relatively uncouth period of the religious wars. As education, music, and art became fashionable in Europe, being witty, well-dressed, musically talented, and well-read became a status symbol almost as important as owning a lavish estate. Thus, the 18th Century was the height of the so-called “polite society” among the nobility: a legally-reinforced elite that fancied themselves possessed of true "good taste."

Common People

Historians classify the rural common people into two general groups: peasants in the west and serfs in the east. Landowning lords had the right to extract financial dues, fees, and rents from peasants in the west. In the east, serfs were required to perform long periods of unpaid labor on behalf of their lords. In its most extreme manifestations, serfdom was essentially the same thing as slavery. Russian estates were even sold according to the number of serfs (“souls”) they contained rather than the physical size of the plot.

Starting in the late 17th Century and culminating in the 18th, some kingdoms gradually eliminated the common lands that had been an essential economic safety net for the peasantry. The nobility reorganized agriculture along more capitalistic lines, which prompted laws of “enclosure", especially in Britain. The result was ongoing, sometimes debilitating, pressure on the peasants. Many peasant families had to sell their small plots of land to rich nobles and became landless agricultural laborers or fled to the cities in search of either work or church charity.

Peasants often fought back, especially when the nobility tried to impose new fees or tried to cut off access to the commons. In rare cases, peasants hired lawyers and took their lords to royal courts. Enormous peasant uprisings occurred in both the Austrian Empire and Russia, which succeeded in killing thousands of nobles, only to be eventually put down by brutal government suppression. Thus, the nobility was in increasing conflict with the peasantry, largely because the former was trying to extract more wealth from the latter.

Another new factor was the rise of the bourgeoisie, the non-noble urban mercantile class. The bourgeoisie became especially important in the west, yet it did not “fit” into the society of orders. Some wealthy members of the bourgeoisie blended in with and sometimes married into the nobility. Others were more distinct, celebrating a life of productive work and serious education over what they saw as the foppery and excess of the aristocracy. This latter self-conscious bourgeoisie would play an important role in the revolutions of the end of the century. The literate and urban members were also among those most keenly interested in Enlightenment ideas.

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11.3: The Great Powers--First Four

During the 18th Century, five monarchy-based states emerged, that would eventually be referred to as the Great Powers. Each one had a strong ruling dynasty, a large and powerful army, and relative political stability. Over the next two centuries, they jockeyed for position and power in Europe and overseas. Indeed, whole wars were fought between the Great Powers thousands of miles from Europe itself.

France

Historically, France had the largest population, the biggest armies, the richest economy, and the greatest international prestige. Despite the fact that the crown was hugely debt-ridden, following Louis XIV's wars and the mismanagement of the next two kings, the French monarchy was admired across Europe for its sophistication and power. By the 18th century, French was the international language. When a Russian nobleman encountered an Austrian and an Englishman, all three would speak French with one another.

In fact, European nobles largely thought of themselves in terms of a common aristocratic culture based in France. Russian nobles often spoke Russian very poorly, and German nobles often regarded the German language as appropriate for talking to horses or commoners. (Supposedly, Frederick the Great of Prussia claimed that he used German to speak to his horse and other languages to speak to people). The French dynasty of the Bourbons, the descendants of Henry IV, continued the practice of keeping court at Versailles and only going into Paris when needing to browbeat the Parisian city government into ratifying royal laws.

Great Britain

As a constitutional monarchy, Great Britain was a major exception to the continental pattern of absolutism. While still exercising considerable power, the German-born royal line of the Hanovers deferred to parliament on matters of law-making and taxation. A written constitution reigned in anything smacking of "tyranny". Indeed, the Enlightenment philosophe Voltaire looked to Britain as the model of a more rational, fair-minded political system against which to contrast the abuses of other states.

The British government also focused on the expansion of its commercial overseas empire. Thus, France and Britain fought repeatedly over their colonial possessions. Eventually, Britain enjoyed great success, pushing France aside as a rival in North America and India. By the time of the French Revolution (1789-1799) and Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), Britain was poised to become *the* global powerhouse.

Austria

France's traditional rival was the Habsburg line of Austria. In 1558, when the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V abdicated, his Spanish possessions went to his son, and the Holy Roman imperial possessions to his younger brother. In 1700, the last Spanish Habsburg, Charles II, died without an heir, which prompted the War of the Spanish Succession. The Bourbons of France fought to put a French prince on the Spanish throne and practically every other major European power rallied against them.



Figure 11.3.1: The Holy Roman Empire in 1789. Habsburg territories are depicted in dark yellow. Blue marks the kingdom of Prussia, the great rival of Habsburg Austria. Note: the Kingdom of Poland would be partitioned out of existence, with its territory divided between Prussia, Russia, and Austria. That process was completed in 1795.

The Holy Roman line of Habsburgs remained strongly identified with Austria and its capital of Vienna. The Austrian Empire was a political unit that united Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, and various other territories in the southern part of Central Europe. Its nominal control of the Holy Roman Empire was for political window dressing. The Austrian Empire was by far the most significant German state, and the Habsburgs of Austria were often the greatest threat to French ambitions on the continent.

Prussia

Prussia was the other great German state. As noted in a previous chapter's discussion of absolutism, the Prussian royal line, the Hohenzollerns, oversaw the transformation of a poor and backward set of lands in northern Germany into a major military power, essentially by putting all state spending into the pursuit. By the middle of the 18th century, the Prussian army was a match of the much larger Austrian force, with the two states emerging as military rivals.

Russia

Russia is the fifth great power. Its history will be discussed on the next page.

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11.4: Great Powers--Russia

Before the late fifteenth century, there was no unified state called "Russia". Originally populated by Slavic tribal groups, Swedish Vikings called the Rus colonized and mixed with the native Slavs over the course of the ninth century. The Rus were led by princes who ruled towns that eventually developed into small cities, the most important of which was Kyiv in the present-day country of Ukraine. Eventually, the Rus converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity, largely due to the influence of Byzantium missionaries. However, Mongol invasions undermined historical development. Russian History still refers to this period as the "Mongol Yoke" (1237 – 1480).

The “Mongol yoke” was loosened due to the efforts of the Grand Princes Ivan III (r. 1462 – 1505) and his grandson Ivan IV – “the Terrible” (r. 1533 – 1584). Ivan III was the prince of Muscovy, the territory around the city of Moscow. His ruthless militarism led to the expansion of Muscovy’s influence to the Baltic Sea, fighting the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth to the west and conquering the prosperous city of Novgorod and its territories. He also overthrew the authority of the Mongol Golden Horde and began the process of permanently ending Mongol control in Russia. For the first time, a Russian prince had carved out a significant territory through conquest.

Two generations later, Ivan IV came to power in Muscovy. Under his rule, Muscovy conquered a large part of the Mongol Golden Horde’s territory and pushed back Turkic khans in the south. He dispatched explorers and hunters into Siberia, beginning the long process of conquest over the region. Further, Ivan was the first Russian ruler to claim the title of Tsar (also anglicized as Czar), meaning "Caesar." Because Russia had adopted Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Constantinople (the last remnant of the *actual* Roman Empire) fell to the Turks in 1453, Russian rulers after Ivan claimed that *they* were the true inheritors of the political power of the ancient Roman emperors. Just as the Holy Roman Emperors in the west claimed to be the political descendants of Roman authority (the German word “Kaiser” means “Caesar”) so did the Tsars of Russia.

Ivan IV asserted his authority through sheer brutality and terror. Thus, the moniker "the Terrible". For example, he had the beggars of Novgorod burned to death, nobles that displeased him ripped apart by wolves and dogs, and whole noble families slaughtered when he thought they posed a threat to his authority or were simply slow to respond to his demands. His overall goal was the transformation of the Russian nobles – called *boyars. As* servants of the state, their power would only be based on their loyalty to the Tsar.

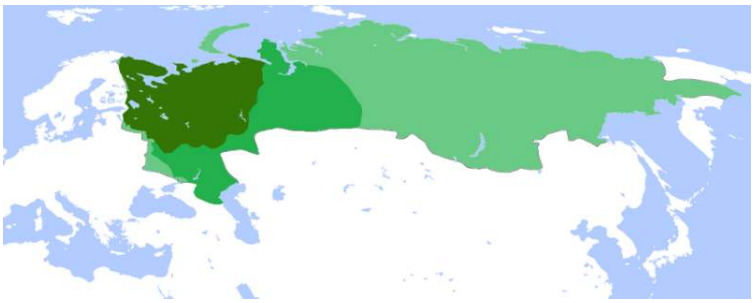


Figure 11.4.1: The expansion of Russian imperial control from the early sixteenth century until 1700.

After Ivan’s death, Russia was plunged into the Time of Troubles (1598 – 1613), a period of anarchy in which no one reigned as the recognized sovereign. The 'troubles' ended when an assembly of nobles elected the first member of the Romanov family as Tsar Michel I. For the next few decades, the subsequent tsars remained weak, plagued by the resistance of nobles and huge peasant uprisings.

When times were hard for Russian peasants, they frequently fled to the frontier, either Siberia or the Ukraine (meaning “border region”). This action exacerbated an ongoing labor shortage problem. Unlike in the west, there was more than enough land in Russia, just not enough peasants to work it. In 1649, the institution of serfdom was formally cemented by the tsarist state. This policy made peasants legally better than slaves, who were forced to work the land and serve the state in war when conscripted.

Under Tsar Peter I (the Great), r. 1682 – 1725, Russia’s transformation and engagement with the rest of Europe began in earnest. (Up to that point, the west knew so little about Russia that Louis XIV once sent a letter to a Tsar who had been dead for twelve years.) Russian nobles tended to be uneducated and uncouth compared to their western counterparts. Further, the Russian Orthodox Church had little emphasis on learning, which was an important role in the West's Catholic and Protestant churches.



Figure 11.4.2: The young Peter the Great in a portrait he presented to the English King William III (whom he was visiting during his travels around Western Europe).

Peter decided to travel to Western Europe, disguised as a normal workman. In the process, he personally learned about shipbuilding and military organization. Upon returning, he started to transform the Russian state and military.

- Russian nobility was forced to dress and act more like Western Europeans.
- Russian noble children were sent abroad for their education.
- An enormous navy and army were built to fight the Swedes and the Turks.
- Using semi-slave labor, the new port city of St. Petersburg was created as the new imperial capital.
- Military conscription was required and one out of every twenty serfs had to serve for life in his armies.
- New taxes and royal monopolies were instituted, with over two-thirds of state revenues going to the military.
- Boyars were forced to undergo military education and serve as army officers.
- After 1722, all male nobles were required to serve the state either as civil officials or military officers.

In 1711, Peter fought an ultimately-unsuccessful war against the Ottomans, while capturing some territories in the process. Likewise, he seized the Baltic territories of Livonia and Estonia from what was then the unified kingdom of Poland – Lithuania. His major enemy, Sweden, was a powerful late-medieval and early-modern kingdom. By the 1650s, Sweden ruled Denmark, Norway, Finland, and the Baltic region. King Charles XI (r. 1660 – 1697) successfully imitated Louis XIV's absolutism by pitting lesser nobles against greater ones, forcing the nobles to serve him directly. His son Charles XII (r. 1697 – 1718) was so arrogant that he snatched the crown from the hand of the Lutheran minister at his own coronation and put it on his head. He also refused to swear the normal coronation oath.

In 1700, Denmark, joined with the German princedom of Saxony, attempted to reassert its sovereignty. During this **Great Northern War** (1700 – 1721), Peter the Great joined in, intent on seizing Baltic territory for a permanent port. Rather than invade Russia, Charles shifted his focus to Poland and Saxony. In 1703, the Russians captured the mouth of the Neva River and Tsar Peter ordered the construction of his new capital city, St. Petersburg. The war dragged on for years, with Charles XII dying fighting a rebellion in Norway in 1718, leaving no heir. By 1721, the Swedish forces were finally and definitively beaten, leaving Russia dominant in the Baltic region.

When Peter died in 1725, (after contracting pneumonia or the flu from diving into the freezing Neva to save a drowning man), the Russian Empire was six times larger than it had been under Ivan the Terrible. While Russia suffered from a period of weak rule after Peter's death, it was simply so large and the Tsar's authority so absolute that it remained a great power.

In 1762, the Prussian-born empress Catherine (who later acquired the honorific "the Great") seized power from her husband in a coup. Catherine would go on to introduce reforms meant to

- improve the Russian economy
- create the first state-financed banks
- welcome German settlers to the region of the Volga River to modernize farming practices
- modernize the army and the state bureaucracy to improve efficiency.

Despite being an enthusiastic supporter of "Enlightened" philosophy, Catherine was focused on Russian expansion, seizing the Crimean Peninsula from the Ottoman Empire, expanding Russian power in Central Asia, and extinguishing Polish independence

completely, with Poland divided between Russia, Prussia, and Austria in 1795. By her death in 1796, Russia was more powerful than ever.



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11.5: Wars

During the 17th century, war was focused on raw economics, where rival commercial European empires fought over territory and trade routes, not just glory and dynastic lines. From 1652 – 1675, the Dutch and British fought repeatedly, leading to the loss of Dutch territory in North America (hence the city of New York instead of New Amsterdam). The British also fought the Spanish over various territories. For example, the formerly-Spanish territory of Florida was handed over to the British in return for the Cuban port of Havana.

The most significant conflicts of the 18th century occurred between two great powers: Britain and France. Although Britain had established naval dominance by 1700, the French state was richer, its army much larger, and its navy almost Britain's match. The French monarchy was also the established model of absolutism. Despite the financial savvy of the British government, most Europeans looked to France as the ideal glorious state.

Under Louis XIV (r. 1638 – 1715), France became a highly aggressive power, with territorial gains essential to the king's own glory. His "grand strategy" was to seize territory from Habsburg Spain and Habsburg Austria by initiating a series of wars. Conquered populations would be forced to help pay for the wars. Ultimately, he hoped that France would expand to the Pyrenees in the south and the Rhine in the east. These wars drove the other European powers into a defensive alliance against France, since the king's actions threatened everyone's interests. (At one point, Louis even tried to unsuccessfully invade England.)

One such conflict was the **War of the Spanish Succession** (1701 – 1713). In 1700, the last Spanish Habsburg died without an heir. Louis' grandson Philip had a claim to the throne through the line of descent. The Austrian Habsburgs rejected the legitimacy of the claim, and soon recruited the British to help defeat France. Over the next decade, more European powers were drawn in. Finally, with France teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, the powers agreed to negotiate. As result, Britain acquired additional territory in the Americas and a member of the Bourbon line was confirmed as the new Spanish king. However, the French and Spanish branches of the Bourbons were to be permanently distinct from one another. France would not control Spain. In addition, the Austrian Habsburgs absorbed the remaining Spanish possessions in Italy and the Hapsburg-controlled parts of the Netherlands. This last action meant Spain was now bereft of its last European territories outside of the Iberian peninsula.

The next major conflict was the **Seven Years' War** (1756 – 1763), also known in U.S. History as the **French and Indian War**. The war began when Prussia attempted a blatant land grab from Austria, which quickly led to the involvement of the other Great Powers. Traversing continents, this particularly bloody conflict pulled in the Native American tribes that allied with French or British colonial forces in North America. At the conclusion,

- Britain won.
- France lost its Canadian possessions, including the entire French-speaking province of Quebec.
- France lost almost all of its territories in India.
- Britain achieved dominance in commercial shipping to the Americas.

While France was still the most powerful kingdom on the European continent, there were no serious rivals to Britain on the oceans.

In turn, the Seven Years' War directly led to the American Revolution (1775 – 1783). The British Parliament tried to impose unpopular taxes on the American colonists to help pay for the British troops garrisoned during and after the Seven Years' War. In 1775, an open revolt broke out, which led to the Declaration of Independence being signed in 1776. Starting in 1778, the French provided military aid to the Americans. Eventually, in 1783, Britain was finally forced to concede American independence.

Ironically, the American Revolution was the only war that France 'won' in the 18th century. However, it gained nothing but the satisfaction of having finally beaten its British enemy. The American colonists went on to create an independent nation, e.g. the United States of America.

NOTE: European wars often have different names in U.S. History. For example, the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748) is called King George's War, and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701 – 1713) is called Queen Anne's War.

Map of Political Borders in Europe 1792



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: The French Revolution

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12.1: The Causes of the Revolution

12.2: Events of the Early Revolution

12.3: "Equality"

12.4: The Radical Phase and the Terror

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12.1: The Causes of the Revolution

After a century of war against Great Britain, and the use of an outdated system of taxation, France found itself in dire financial straits. As noted previously, almost all of the conflicts between the two nations were fought overseas, e.g. India, the Caribbean, and North America. With the noteworthy exception of the American Revolution, Britain won every single war. Even as Britain funded its wars through the sale of bonds from the official national bank, the French state struggled to raise revenue. Loans had to be found from private banks, traders, and wealthy individuals, and the interest rates were punishingly high.

France lost much of its empire in Canada, the Caribbean, and India to the British. The state's debt consumed 60% of tax revenues each year in interest payments. In addition, there was no way to raise more money. Taxes were tied to land and agriculture rather than commerce. Plus, nobles and the church were exempt from taxation. Since the Middle Ages, taxes were drawn almost entirely from peasant agriculture, supplemented by a few special taxes on commodities like salt. Further, since the nobility and church were tax-exempt, there was a lot of wealth that the crown simply could not access through taxation.

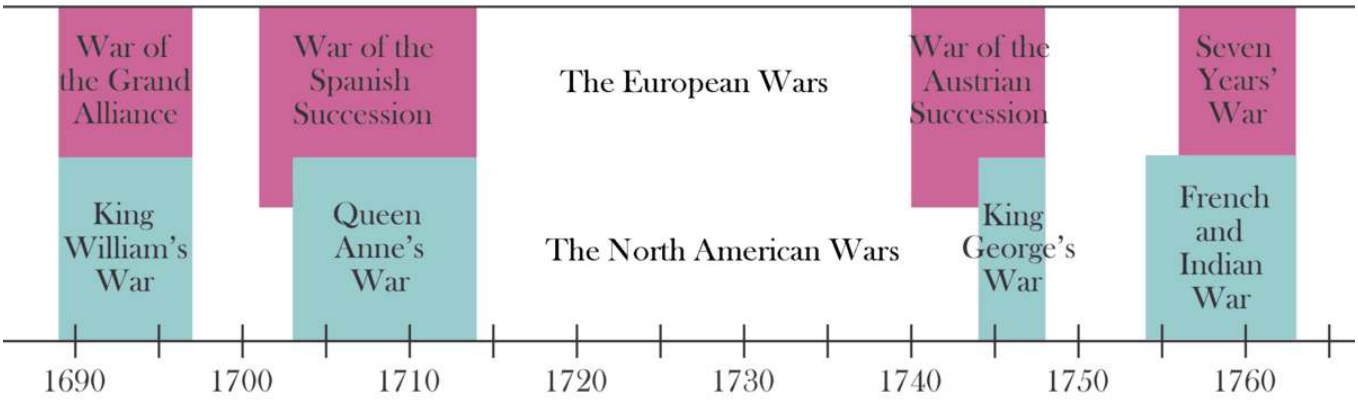
As a result, the power of the nobility ensured that any dream of far-reaching reform was out of the question. Out of a population of 26 million, 200,000 were nobles. All senior members of the administration, the army, the navy, and the Catholic Church were nobles. Almost one-third of the land was owned by the nobles outright, and they had lordly rights over most of the rest of it. Nothing could change the fact that noble wealth remained largely off-limits to the state and nobles exercised a great deal of real political power.

France defeated Britain in the American Revolutionary War of the 1770s and early 1780s. France subsidized the conflict through weapons, advisers, and naval support. There was no direct economic benefit to France from the American victory. Traditionally, the French kings dismissed financial concerns as being beneath their royal dignity, but the situation had reached such a point of desperation that even the king had to take notice.

In the early 1780s, the French King Louis XVI (great-great-great grandson of Louis XIV) appointed a series of finance ministers to wade through the mountains of reports and ledgers to determine how much the state owed, to whom, and how paying it back would be possible. Attempts to overhaul the tax system were shouted down by the major city governments and powerful nobles. By 1787, the financial situation was simply untenable and the monarchy had to secure more revenue, somehow. The king reluctantly came to realize that only taxing the nobility and, perhaps, the church could possibly raise the necessary revenue. Thus, Louis XVI was up against the entrenched interests of the most powerful classes of his kingdom.

Wars for Empire (1689-1763): Generations of Warfare

Major European conflicts that preceded the French Revolution are included on this timeline.



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12.2: Events of the Early Revolution

Louis XVI called an Assembly of Notables, consisting of the most powerful noblemen in France who outright refused to grant new revenues to the crown. Next, Louis reluctantly agreed to revive France's ancient representative assembly, the Estates General. For the first time in the history of French absolutism, a king was required to formally negotiate with his subjects simply to stave off bankruptcy.

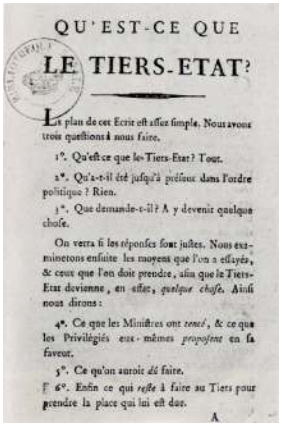
Like the British parliament, the Estates General served as a venue for the French king to raise money, almost always in the service of war. The Estates General contained representatives from the Three Estates - clergy, nobility, and everyone else. In return for tax revenue, the French king would make bargains and promises. The Estates General had not met since 1614. Thus, no living French person had any experience of what to expect.

The spring of 1789 witnessed a surprisingly democratic election, with the majority of the male population voting for delegates to the Estates General. Before the estates met, many voters and their representatives drew up lists of grievances demanding relief from unfair financial burdens imposed by the nobility, better representation of townsfolk and peasants, and royal intervention on behalf of the people of France, among other things. At the same, the price of bread skyrocketed as a result of very poor harvests in 1787 and 1788. There was widespread fear of outright famine. As members of the Third Estate drew up their lists of grievances, rumors spread that nobles and wealthy merchants were hoarding grain to drive up prices.

In the past, the Estates General had consisted of three separate groups:

- clergy (the First Estate)
- the nobility (the Second Estate)
- prosperous townsfolk (the Third Estate).

Voting was done by the estate, not by proportional representation. Generally, the first and second estates joined together to outvote the third. Thus, a small minority of the population (nobles and clerics) could always outvote the majority of the population (townfolk). Political stability was jeopardized because French society had changed enormously since the last meeting of the Estates General. Many of the Third Estate thought of themselves as the representatives of France *itself*, since the immense majority of the population consisted of commoners and laypeople. If the king allowed voting to follow the number of representatives, the Third Estate would have a clear majority. Or he could insist on the old model in which the clergy and nobility dominated.



QU'EST-CE QUE

LE TIERS-ETAT?

Le plan de cet Ecrit eſt aſſez ſimple. Nous avons trois queſtions à nous faire.

1°. Qu'eſt-ce que le Tiers-Etat? Tout.

2°. Qu'a-t-il été juſqu'à préſent dans l'ordre politique? Rien.

3°. Que demande-t-il? A y devenir quelque choſe.

On verra ſi les réponſes ſont juſtes. Nous examinerons enſuite les moyens que l'on a eſſayés, & ceux que l'on doit prendre, afin que le Tiers-Etat devienne, en effet, *quelque choſe*. Ainſi nous dirons:

4°. Ce que les Miniſtres ont *tenté*, & ce que les Privilégiés eux-mêmes *propoſent* en ſa faveur.

5°. Ce qu'on auroit *dû* faire.

6°. Enfin ce qui *reſte* à faire au Tiers pour prendre la place qui lui eſt due.

A

Figure 12.2.1: The cover of What Is The Third Estate?, a highly influential pamphlet written by a liberal clergyman, the Abbe Abbé Sieyès, in the lead-up to the meeting of the Estates General. His argument: the Third Estate was “everything,” representing the nation of France as a whole.

After weeks of contemplation, the king confirmed that voting would be by estate in June of 1789. This action prompted a spontaneous, peaceful act of defiance on the part of the Third Estate, joined by some sympathetic nobles and priests. First, they declared themselves to be representatives of France itself as a whole. In other words, they were the “National Assembly”, in whom the will of the French people would be expressed. On the morning of June 20, this group discovered their meeting hall was locked (by accident, as it turned out, although they feared royal interference). So, they occupied the tennis court of Versailles and pledged not to leave until they had drafted a constitution and the king had accepted it. This meeting became known as the Tennis Court Oath, and marks the start of the French Revolution.



Figure 12.2.2: The greatest painter of the revolutionary era, Jacques-Louis David, captured the moment in which the Tennis Court Oath was declared. Note the Catholic priest, Protestant minister, and agnostic “freethinker” embracing in the front of the crowd. Religious divisions were to be laid aside in the name of national unity.

The King was unsure of how to proceed. A few days later, he addressed representatives of all three estates, promising reform. When faced with continued defiance, he ordered the representatives of all three estates to join together in the National Assembly. However, as the crucial weeks of late June and early July unfolded, a faction of conservative nobles and the queen tried to persuade Louis to use force to eliminate what they correctly perceived to be a fundamental challenge to royal authority, and he cautiously moved forward with a plan to summon troops to watch over the proceedings.

In Paris, about twenty miles away, rumors spread that the king was going to crush the new National Assembly with force. As a result, on July 12, crowds took to the streets. On the 14th, a crowd searching for weapons overwhelmed the Bastille, a royal prison and arsenal, and murdered its guards. Soon, royal troops started abandoning their posts and joining the rebels. (This event remains the national holiday of the French Republic to this day, commemorated as Bastille Day.) On July 16, the war minister advised the king that the army could no longer be relied upon. The king accepted the appointment of a liberal nobleman, Lafayette, as commander of a new "National Guard" and, reluctantly, committed to working with the National Assembly.

Meanwhile, rioting had spread to the countryside as peasants, learning of the developments in Versailles and Paris, sought to feed themselves and lash out against the nobility who, they thought, were driving them into destitution. Rumors spread that nobles were hoarding stores of grain, driving up prices, and starving the peasants into submission. The resulting “Great Fear,” saw peasants attacking and looting noble manors. Their main target was the debt ledgers, which the peasants gleefully burned. (Thereby, erasing the peasants' debts entirely since there was no such thing as a "backup copy" in 1789).

With anarchy occurring in the countryside, the National Assembly needed to do something dramatic to maintain control of the situation. On August 4, 1789, it voted to end feudal privilege (the landlords' rights to coerce labor and fees of various kinds from the peasantry). On August 14, the selling of offices was abolished. On August 26, a Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen was issued, partially modeled on the United States Constitution's Bill of Rights. In October, the Assembly seized church lands and property, selling them at auction to fund the Revolutionary state. Finally, in early 1790, it abolished noble titles altogether.

The abolition of privilege meant that government should treat people as individual citizens rather than as members of social classes, especially in the matter of taxation and law. People differed quantitatively in the amount of wealth owned, but not qualitatively according to social rank or estate. In a shockingly short amount of time, the French state was forced to accept that legitimate power belongs to the nation as a whole, not to the king, and that every citizen should be equal before the law. The Revolutionaries summarized their ideals with the motto of “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” - to this day, the official credo of the French state.

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12.3: "Equality"

Of the three elements of the Revolutionary motto, “equality” was in some ways the most fraught with implications. All of the members of the National Assembly were men. Almost all were Catholic, a few were Protestants, but none were Jews. Despite the existence of a large population of free blacks and mixed-race inhabitants of the French colonies (especially in the Caribbean), all members of the assembly were white. The initial claim that all citizens ought to be equal before the law seemed straightforward enough until the Assembly had to decide if that equality extended beyond property-owning male Catholics.

Some early Revolutionaries had spoken in favor of extending rights to Protestants. However, few had spoken on behalf of France’s Jewish minority. Despite misgivings from Catholic conservatives in the Assembly, in 1789, Protestants saw their rights recognized, partially because of their existing political rights in parts of Southern France. The idea of legal equality for Jews was practically unthinkable before the Revolution. As the logic of equality gained momentum, French Jews obtained their rights as French citizens in September of 1791.

The members of the Assembly concluded that religious faith was essentially a private matter that did not directly impact one’s ability to exercise political rights. Having already broken with the Catholic church - and seized much of its property - the Assembly now created a momentus precedent for religious tolerance. Religion was officially stripped of its political valence for the first time in European history. This concept went beyond a “separation of church and state”. Now, religious belief was irrelevant to political loyalty and public conduct.

The Assembly showed little interest in extending any form of political rights to the blacks and mixed-race peoples of the French colonies. Several members of the Assembly argued that slavery should be abolished, but they were in the minority. France’s Caribbean colonies, especially the sugar-producing plantation colony of St. Domingue (present-day Haiti), produced enormous wealth for the French state, numerous slave-based plantation owners, and French business partners. Thus, even those in favor of major reforms in France often balked at the idea of meddling with the wealth of the slave economies of the Caribbean. Once again, however, the logic of equality worked inexorably to upset centuries-old political hierarchies. Upon hearing of events in France, free blacks and mixed-race inhabitants of the colonies swiftly petitioned to have their own rights recognized. In addition, the slaves of St. Domingue (who comprised approximately 90% of the population) learned of the Revolution and of its egalitarian promise.

As a result, in the summer of 1791, a slave uprising in St. Domingue occurred. The Assembly desperately hoped to win over the colony's free people of color to fight alongside white plantation owners to maintain control. Between 1791-1804, the rebellion in St. Domingue saw French authority destroyed, plantations overrun, and hundreds of thousands of slaves seizing their freedom. Having already lost control, the Assembly finally voted to abolish slavery entirely in February 1794. Thus, unlike the cases of Protestant and Jewish enfranchisement, racial equality was only “granted” by the Assembly because it could not be maintained by force.



Figure 12.3.1: The slave rebellion in St. Domingue, soon to be the nation of Haiti, was led by Toussaint L’Ouverture, a former slave himself.

Missing from the emancipatory logic entirely were women. There were no debates on the floor of the Assembly having to do with women’s rights. French men simply took it for granted that women were incapable of exercising political independence. Some women both in France and abroad forcefully drove home the implication of the Revolution’s promise of “equality.” Playwright Olympe de Gouges issued a *Declaration of the Rights of Woman* (1791) in parallel to the Assembly’s 1789 *Rights of Man and Citizen*. In England, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote one of the founding texts of modern feminism, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

(1792), which claimed that the liberation of women would play a key role in the disintegration of unwarranted social and political hierarchy for all.

Unfortunately, neither work inspired sympathy among the vast majority of the male population of France (or Britain). As the Revolution grew more radical, the Assembly members grew even more hostile to the demand for rights for women. Eventually, De Gouges was executed on orders from the Assembly as a “counter-Revolutionary.” Political women's clubs that had sprung up since 1789 were shut down. Indeed, although some political rights were offered in 1848, full women's suffrage would not occur until 1944.

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12.4: The Radical Phase and the Terror

Even as it faced increasing hostility among the great powers of Europe, along with problems with inflation and hunger in the countryside, the National Assembly tried to build a constitutional monarchy. In June 1791, the king and his family fled Paris, but were caught on the border. (Supposedly by a postal worker who recognized the king from his portrait on coins.). Soon, it was discovered that the royal family had been corresponding with foreign monarchs and nobles, hoping to inspire an invasion from abroad to restore the king to the throne and end the Revolution. The situation rapidly radicalized as the prestige of the king was destroyed overnight. In October 1791, the new French Constitution was formally passed, making France a constitutional monarchy. Meanwhile, the king was under house arrest.

The kings of Austria and Prussia called upon the monarchs of Europe to fully restore Louis XVI to control of France. Although the countries did not officially declare war, fearful radical elements of the National Assembly convinced the Assembly to declare a preemptive war on Austria in April 1792. Soon, Prussia joined in an alliance with Austria against France. The Assembly dispatched the new National Guard and a hastily-assembled army, many were former soldiers of the royal army, against the forces of Austria and Prussia along the French border.

In September 1792, as the war began in earnest and the king languished in prison. The new constitution had abolished the monarchy and made France into a republic with universal manhood suffrage. For the first time in European history, every adult male was allowed the right to vote regardless of wealth or status. In just over three years, France had transformed from an absolute monarchy to the first major experiment in democracy since the days of the Roman Republic nearly two thousand years earlier.

In January 1793, after heated debate and a close vote in the Assembly, Louis XVI was executed as a traitor to the republic. Now, Britain and the Dutch Republic joined with Prussia and Austria, further increasing the military pressure on the French borders. The middle part of 1793 saw the fear of foreign invasion and food shortages, along with royalist uprisings in parts of France. In response, a dictatorial emergency committee, the Committee for Public Safety, headed by twelve of the most radical members of the republican government, was established.

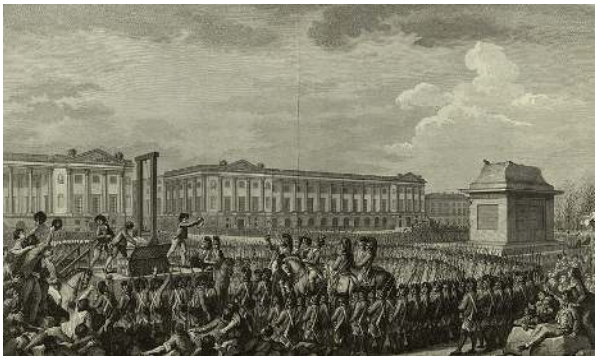


Figure 12.4.1: The aftermath of the execution of Louis XVI, with his head displayed to the crowd. He was executed by guillotine, the newly-invented ‘humane’ method of execution favored by the Revolutionary government.

This committee would rule France from September 1793 to July 1794, charged with defending the Revolution from both its external enemies and internal rebels. First, the committee issued a *levée en masse*, or total mobilization for war, which swelled the ranks of the French forces and held the Austrian and Prussian armies in check. Meanwhile, the Revolutionary government set up a subsistence committee to develop a system of price controls, requisitions, and currency regulation, backed by police power. The committee restored order to rebellious areas by sending its members on missions with instructions for ruthless repression backed by violence.

Just five years after the Revolution had begun, control was in the hands of a small dictatorial committee of radicals who used violent repression to hold the nation together, continue the war against almost all of Europe, and pass even more radical measures. The group also made extensive use of the guillotine, a new “humane” technology of execution.

Led by the (in)famous **Maximilien Robespierre**, whom his followers called "the Incorruptible" for his single-minded focus on seeing the Revolution succeed, the Committee for Public Safety attempted to reorganize and "rationalize" French society as a whole. Of all the changes instituted by the Revolutionary government during its radical phase, the creation of a metric system was

to be the most successful and long-lasting. From an unsystematic smattering of different standards of weights and measures across France, the Revolutionary government oversaw the invention and use of a simple, unified system based on increments of ten (i.e. 100 centimeters is equal to 1 meter, 1,000 meters is equal to one kilometer, 1,000 grams is equal to 1 kilogram, etc.).

Since the members of the committee believed that France and the rest of the world were on the threshold of a new era, they proclaimed the creation of a new calendar that began on September 22, 1792 (Day 1, Year 1). All of history was to follow from the first day that the republic had been declared. Likewise, new ten-day weeks were introduced. Four-week months were named after weather rather than arbitrary historical figures (e.g. the month of August, named after Augustus Caesar, was renamed "Thermidor," which means "hot." February became "Brumaire," which means "foggy," and April became "Prairial," meaning "springlike.") Year-end celebrations were planned to pay tribute to the Revolution itself in quasi-religious ceremonies presided over by republican officials.

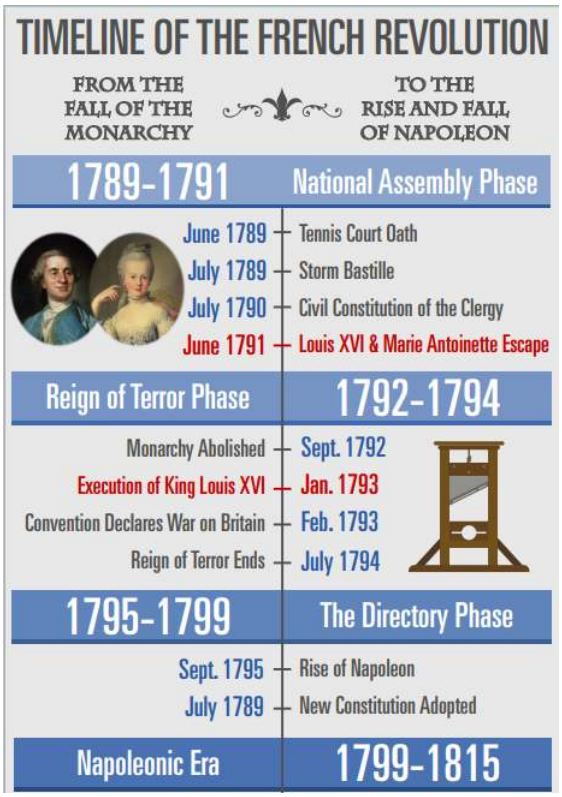
In perhaps the most astonishing campaign, the Revolutionary state launched a major attempt to “de-Christianize” the nation, removing crosses from buildings and graveyards, and renaming churches “temples to reason.” The cathedral of Notre Dame was stripped of its Christian iconography, and Robespierre oversaw new ceremonies meant to worship a newly invented supreme being of reason. These actions were the culmination of the anticlerical measures that had begun in the first year of the Revolution, with the seizure of church lands and property. In something of a symbolic parallel, the committee had the bodies of dead French kings disinterred and dumped into a common grave. For example, the corpse of Louis XIV landed on that of his grandfather, Henry IV.

To enforce its will and ensure “security,” the Committee for Public Safety oversaw what was later dubbed "**The Terror**". Suspected traitors were arrested, interrogated, and confronted with the possibility of imprisonment or execution. Estimates vary considerably. However, somewhere between 35,000 - 55,000 accused enemies of the Revolution were executed or died in prison during the Terror. Widespread imprisonment totaled half a million people, or 3% of the adult population. To impose its policies on grain procurement and prices, the government had to rely largely on local organizations of militants who often terrorized the peasants they were supposed to represent. Likewise, the most significant battles fought by French troops were against royalist (French) rebels, not foreign soldiers.

The bloodiest repression seen during the Terror happened far from Paris in the western region of France. The Vendée was the site of the largest royalist insurrection against the Revolution in early 1793, featuring a rebel army of conservative peasants. After months of fighting, and in the aftermath of the peasant's defeat, the revolutionary army inflicted a form of revenge against the people of the region that came close to outright genocide. Men and women were slaughtered regardless of whether or not they had participated in the uprising, villages were burned to the ground, and the death toll easily exceeded 100,000 people.

Against the backdrop of the Terror, many members of the Revolutionary government began to fear for their lives. Likewise, the mandate for the committee’s very existence - protecting the Revolution against its foreign and domestic enemies - was made somewhat obsolete when French forces won major victories against Prussia and Austria in the summer of 1794. Meanwhile, Robespierre continued to inspire revulsion and fear because of his fanatical devotion to the Revolutionary cause and his overt attachment to using terror to achieve his ends. Thus, in July 1794 a conspiracy of worried Revolutionaries succeeded in arresting, briefly trying, and executing Robespierre as a tyrant. The Committee of Public Safety was dissolved.

After the fall of Robespierre, the Revolution began to slide away from its most radical positions. In 1795, a government of property owners took over under a new “Directory”, which rescinded price controls and ended the abortive attempt to de-Christianize the nation. A wave of reprisals against former radicals known as the “white terror” saw tens of thousands murdered. Indeed, historians believe that as many died in the white terror as had under the Committee of Public Safety’s campaigns of persecution. France remained at war with most of Europe, even as royalist uprisings continued in areas across the nation. In this world of violence and insecurity, a young, accomplished general named Napoleon Bonaparte would put down a royalist insurrection in Paris and come to the attention of ambitious politicians within the Directory.



Source: YourDictionary.com

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: Napoleon

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13.1: The Rise of Napoleon's Empire
13.2: Military Strategy
13.3: Civil Life
13.4: The Fall of Napoleon's Empire
13.5: Russia, Elba, and Waterloo
13.6: The Aftermath

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13.1: The Rise of Napoleon's Empire

Napoleon Bonaparte was born on the island of Corsica in the Mediterranean. Since Corsica had been won by France as a prize in one of its many wars, Napoleon was a French citizen. Although his family was not rich, they did have a legitimate noble title, which made Napoleon eligible to join the officer corps of the French army. Thus, as a young man, his parents sent him to France to train as an artillery officer. There, he endured harassment and hazing from the sons of "real" French nobles, who belittled his Corsican accent and treated him as a foreign interloper. Already pugnacious and incredibly stubborn, he became determined to someday arrive at a position of unchallenged authority.

As of 1795, a five-man committee called the Directorate held power in revolutionary France. The war against the foreign coalition, which had grown to include Russia and the Ottoman Empire, ground on endlessly even as the economic situation in France kept getting worse. Into this picture arrived Napoleon, who put down a royalist insurrection in Paris. In 1796 and 1797, he led French armies to major victories in Northern Italy against the Austrians. He also led an attack on Ottoman Turkish forces in Egypt. While initially victorious, the French fleet was sunk by the British. This event led to his recall to France, which required leaving behind most of his army. Even in defeat, Napoleon proved brilliant at crafting a legend of his exploits through a large propaganda campaign.

In 1799, Napoleon was hand-picked to join a new three-man conspiracy that succeeded in seizing power in a coup d'etat. The new government was called the Consulate, and its members "consuls". Soon, Napoleon dominated the other two members completely. In 1802, he was declared Consul for Life, assuming total power. In 1804, as his forces pushed well beyond the French borders, he crowned himself (the first ever) emperor of France. In his mind, he was the spiritual heir to Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, declaring that, as a member of the "best race of the Caesars," he was a founder of empires.



Figure 13.1.1: Napoleon on his imperial throne. He was not one for subtlety.

While cementing his hold on political power, Napoleon was leading the French armies to victory against the foreign coalition, paying for the wars and new troops with loot from his successful conquests. By 1812, he had control of a million soldiers, the largest armed force ever seen. From 1799 to 1802, he defeated Austrian and British forces and secured a peace treaty from both powers. This action provided time to organize a new grand strategy to conquer all of continental Europe and Britain. In 1805, the treaty fell apart, and a new coalition of Britain, Austria, and Russia formed.

In October 1805, at the Battle of Trafalgar, a British fleet destroyed a larger French and allied Spanish fleet. The British victory was so decisive that Napoleon was forced to abandon his hope of invading Britain and had to try to indirectly weaken it instead. Even the failed plan of invasion did not slow his momentum.

Despite the setback at Trafalgar, 1805 and 1806 saw stunning victories for Napoleon. In a series of major battles in 1805, Napoleon defeated first Austria and then Russia. The Austrians were forced to sign a treaty and Vienna was occupied by French forces for a short while, while the Russian Tsar Alexander I worked on raising a new army. In 1806, the last major continental power, Prussia,

went to war. Its army was no match for Napoleon, who defeated the Prussians at the Battle of Jena and then occupied Berlin. An estimated 96% of the over 170,000 soldiers in the Prussian army were lost, the vast majority (about 140,000) taken prisoner by the French. In 1806, following his victories over the Austrians and Prussians, Napoleon formally dissolved the 1,000-year-old Holy Roman Empire, replacing it with a newly-invented puppet state he called the Confederation of the Rhine.

After another less successful battle with the Russians, Napoleon negotiated an alliance with Tsar Alexander in 1807. Although he controlled much of Europe, the powerful British navy continued to dominate the seas. His empire stretched from Belgium and Holland in the north to Rome in the south, covering nearly half a million square miles and boasting a population of 44 million. In some places, Napoleon simply expanded French borders and ruled directly. In other regions, he set up puppet states that ultimately answered to him or were ruled by an appointed family member. Despite some setbacks, Napoleon's forces continued to dominate continental Europe through 1813.

Europe in 1800



Source: EuroAtlas

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13.2: Military Strategy

Napoleon was a genius in his powers of memory, his tireless focus, and his mastery of military logistics. He memorized things such as the movement speed of his armies, the amount of and type of supplies needed by his forces, the rate at which they would lose men to injury, desertion, and disease, and how much ammunition they needed to have on hand. He was so skilled at map-reading that he could coordinate multiple army corps to march separately, miles apart, and then converge at a key moment to catch his enemies by surprise. He was indifferent to luxury and worked relentlessly, often sleeping only four or five hours a night. Further, his intellectual gifts made him capable of effectively micro-managing his entire empire through written directives to underlings.

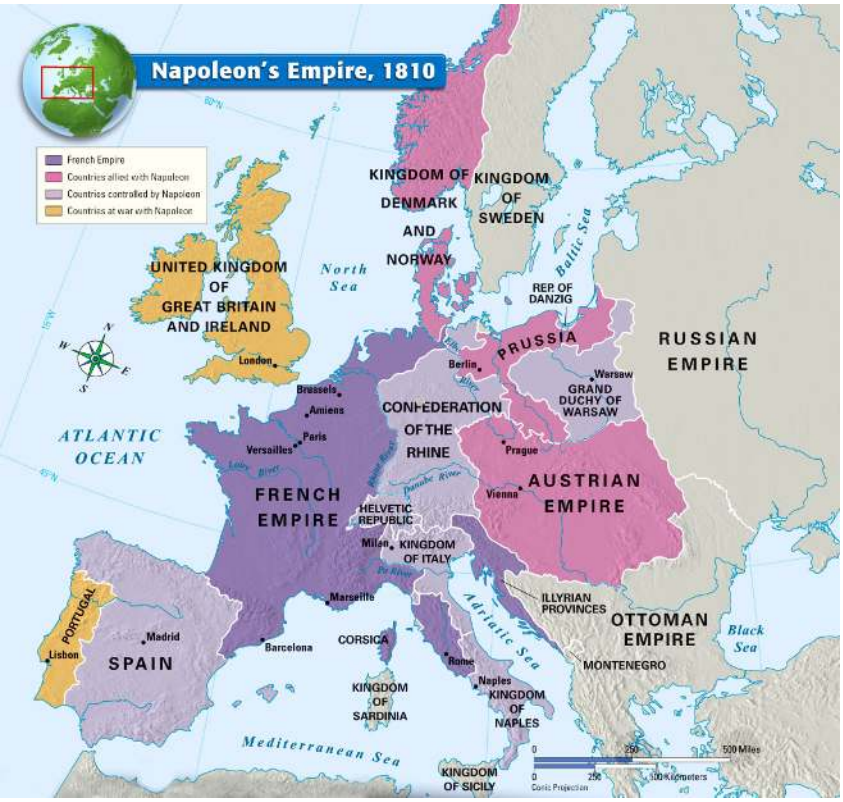
Unlike past revolutionary leaders, Napoleon faced no dissent from within his government or his forces, especially the army. Simply put, Napoleon was always able to rely on the loyalty of his troops. In a step towards independent authority, in the spring of 1796, he announced that his army would be paid in silver rather than the paper money issued by the French Republic that had lost almost all of its value. Napoleon led his men in most of the important battles and lived like a soldier. These actions caused his men to adore him. His victories kept morale high both among his troops and among the French populace, as did the constant stream of pro-Napoleonic propaganda that he promoted through imperial censorship.

Napoleon’s military record matched his ambition. In his two decades of power, he fought sixty battles, winning all but eight. Most of these were towards the end of the reign. His victories were a combination of his own command of battlefield tactics, as well as changes introduced by the French Revolution. The elimination of noble privilege enabled the French government to impose conscription and increase the size and flexibility of its armies. It also turned the officer corps into a true meritocracy. Now, a capable soldier could rise to command regardless of his social background. Mass conscription allowed the French to develop permanent divisions and corps, each combining infantry, cavalry, artillery, and support services. On campaign, these large units of 10,000 to 20,000 men usually moved on separate roads, each responsible for extracting supplies from its own area, but capable of mutual support. This kind of organization multiplied Napoleon's operational choices, facilitating the strategies of dispersal and concentration that bewildered his opponents.

In some ways, his strengths came with related weaknesses. In hindsight, his greatest problem was that he could never stop. He always seemed to need one more victory. While supremely arrogant, he was also self-aware and savvy enough to recognize that his rule depended on continued conquests. For the first several years of his rule, Napoleon appeared to his subjects as a reformer and a leader who had ended the war with the other European powers and imposed peace settlements with the Austrians and the British which were favorable to France. However, by 1805, it was clear that he intended to create a huge empire far beyond the original borders of France.

Napoleon's Empire, 1810

For a full-screen version, click here.



Source: Mr. Green's Weebly

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13.3: Civil Life

Despite the rapacity of the initial invasions, French domination brought certain beneficial reforms to its puppet states, such as single customs areas, unified systems of weights and measures, written constitutions, equality before the law, the abolition of archaic noble privileges, the secularization of church property, the abolition of serfdom, and religious toleration. Thus, in the early years of the Napoleonic empire, many conquered peoples experienced French conquest as part of a liberation.

In addition to being a brilliant general, Napoleon was a serious politician with keen ideas on how to reform the government for better efficiency. He addressed the chronic problem of inflation by improving tax collection and public auditing, creating the Bank of France (1800), and substituting silver and gold for the almost worthless paper notes. The Civil Code of 1804 (also known as the Code Napoleon) preserved some of the legal egalitarian principles of 1789.

In education, his most noteworthy invention was the *lycée*. As a secondary school, it used a secular curriculum for the training of an elite of leaders and administrators, while offering scholarships for the sons of officers and civil servants and the most gifted pupils of ordinary secondary schools. In 1801, a Concordat (agreement) with the Pope restored the position of the Catholic Church in France. However, it did not return Church property, nor did it abandon the principle of toleration for religious minorities. Napoleon's most revolutionary principle was *efficiency*. He wanted a well-managed, efficient empire that supported power. For example, he did not care what religion his subjects professed so long as they worked diligently for the good of the state.

Napoleon imposed strict censorship of the press and had little time for democracy. Following the leading politicians of the Revolutionary period, he explicitly excluded women from the political community. The Civil Code of 1804 made women the legal subjects of their fathers and then their husbands, stating that a husband owed his wife protection and a wife owed her husband obedience. In other words, women had the same legal status as children. From all of his subjects, men and women alike, Napoleon expected obedience.

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13.4: The Fall of Napoleon's Empire

After the Battle of Trafalgar, Napoleon tried to economically strangle Britain with a European boycott of British goods, creating what he hoped would be a self-sustaining internal European economy: the “Continental System.” By late 1807, all continental European nations, except Denmark, Sweden, and Portugal, had closed their ports to British commerce. Instead of buckling under the strain of the Continental System, Britain was getting richer, seizing the remains of the French Empire in the Caribbean and smuggling cheap but high-quality manufactured goods into Europe. Napoleon's own quartermasters (i.e. the officers who purchased supplies) bought the French army's uniforms from the British!

Napoleon demanded that Denmark and Portugal comply with his Continental System. Britain countered by bombarding Copenhagen and seizing the Danish fleet. This action encouraged the Portuguese to defy Napoleon and protect their profitable commerce with Britain. In 1808, Napoleon responded with an invasion of the Iberian peninsula. Initially, the Spanish monarchy was an ally. Then, Napoleon summarily booted the king from his throne and installed his own brother Joseph as the new monarch. In turn, an insurrection was sparked in deeply conservative Spain. The British sent a small effective expeditionary force under the Duke of Wellington to support the insurrection, and Napoleon found himself tied down in a guerrilla war. The term “*guerilla*,” meaning “little war”, was invented by the Spanish during the conflict.

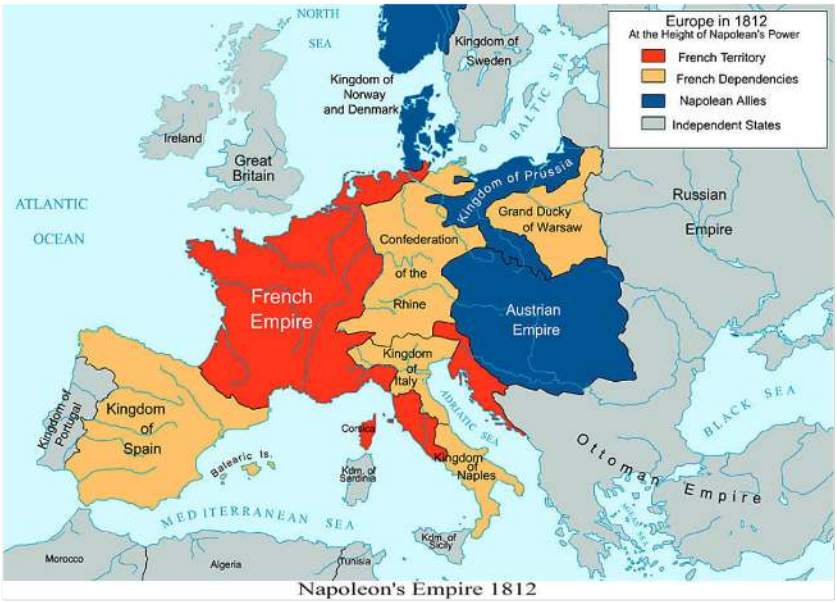
Napoleon's forces ended up trapped in a new kind of war, one without major battles or a clear enemy army. The financial costs of the invasion and occupation were enormous. Over the next seven years, almost 200,000 French soldiers lost their lives in Spain. Even as Napoleon envisioned the further expansion of his empire, most of his best soldiers were stuck in Spain. Napoleon came to refer to the occupation as his "Spanish ulcer," a wound that would not stop bleeding.



Figure 13.4.1: Francisco Goya’s “The Third of May,” commemorates the massacre of Spanish villagers by French troops.

French forces had consistently defeated enemies in large open battles, but warfare in Spain was different. The Spanish did not field an army against them. Instead, the *guerrillas* mastered the art of "asymmetrical warfare," in which a weaker but determined force defeats a stronger one by whittling them down over time. The French controlled the cities and most of the towns. Yet, if they stepped a few feet outside of a French camp, they could fall victim to a sudden ambush. In retaliation, the French massacred villagers suspected of collaborating with the guerrillas. As Napoleon poured hundreds of thousands of men into Spain, he found his best troops caught in a war that refused to play by his rules.

Meanwhile, Napoleon faced other setbacks. In 1810, he divorced his wife (who had not produced a male heir) and married the princess of the Habsburg dynasty, Marie-Louise. As a result, suspicion, muted protest, and military desertion bloomed. His actions appeared to be an open betrayal of anti-monarchist revolutionary principles. Instead of defying the kings of Europe, he was trying to create his own royal line by marrying into one! In the same year, Napoleon annexed the Papal States in central Italy, prompting Pope Pius VII to excommunicate him. Predictably, many of his Catholic subjects became alienated.



Napoleon's Empire 1812

Source: Brigham Young University, 2004

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13.5: Russia, Elba, and Waterloo

Meanwhile, Russia remained outside of French rule. Despite the obvious problem of staging a full-scale invasion, Russia was geographically far from France, absolutely enormous, and remained militarily powerful. Napoleon saw Russia as the last remaining major power on the continent that opposed him. Perhaps with its conquest, he would regain lost inertia and popularity. His ultimate goal was to conquer Russia and the European part (i.e. Greece and the Balkans) of the Ottoman Empire. Eventually, he hoped to control Constantinople and the Black Sea, Thereby, re-creating most of the ancient Roman Empire under French rule. To do so, he gathered an enormous army, 600,000 strong; and in the summer of 1812, it marched for Russia.

Napoleon faced problems several problems from the beginning.

- His best troops were fighting in Spain.
- More than half of the "Grand Army" created to invade Russia was recruited from non-French territories, mostly in Italy and Germany.
- Many of the recruits were insufficiently trained and had no military background.

He chased the Russian army east, fighting two actual battles. Yet, he never pinned the Russians down or received the anticipated negotiations from the Tsar for surrender. In September, when the French arrived in Moscow, they found it abandoned and largely burned by the retreating Russians. They simply refused to engage in the "final battle" Napoleon always sought. As the first snowflakes started falling, the French held out for another month. By October, Napoleon was forced to turn back as supplies began running low.

The French retreat was a horrendous debacle. The Russians attacked weak points in the French line and ambushed them at river crossings. Disease swept through the ranks of the malnourished French troops. The weather got steadily worse. Tens of thousands starved outright, and desertion was ubiquitous. Of the 600,000 who had set out for Russia, only 40,000 returned to France. In the aftermath of this colossal defeat, the anti-French coalition of Austria, Prussia, Britain, and Russia reformed.



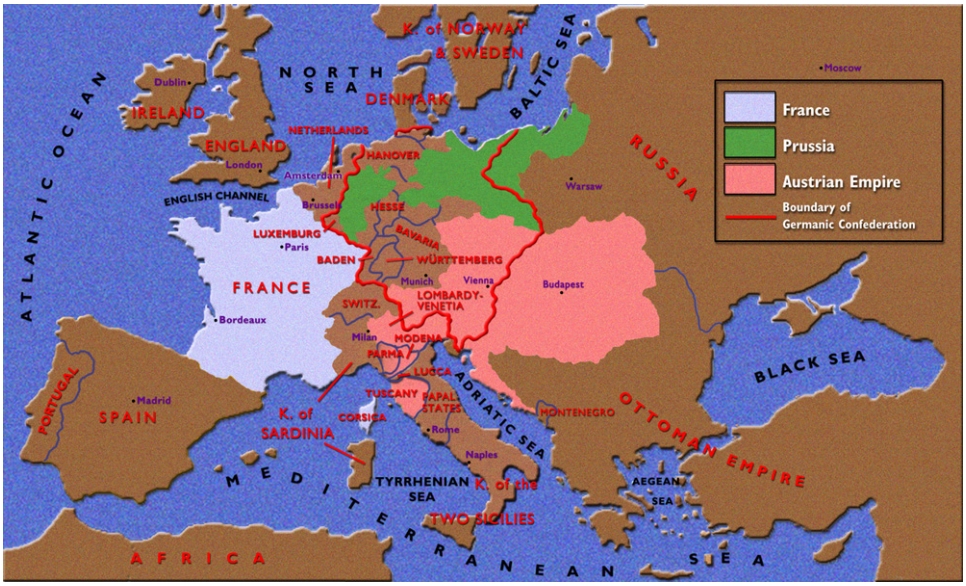
Figure 13.5.1: Napoleon’s retreat.

Amazingly, Napoleon succeeded in raising still more armies, and France fought on for two more years. Increasingly, the French lost, since the coalition armies were trained and equipped along French lines, as well as able to anticipate French strategy. In April of 1814, as coalition forces closed in, Napoleon finally abdicated. He attempted suicide, drinking the poison he had carried for years. But, the poison was mostly inert from its age and it merely sickened him. After his recovery, his self-confidence quickly returned. Fearing that his execution would make him a martyr to the French, the coalition’s leadership opted to exile him. He was sent to a manor on the small Mediterranean island of Elba, near his native Corsica.

He stayed less than a year. In March of 1815, bored and restless, Napoleon escaped and returned to France. The anti-Napoleonic coalition had restored the Bourbons to the throne in the person of the unpopular Louis XVIII, younger brother of the executed Louis XVI. When a French force sent to capture Napoleon defected to him, the coalition realized that they had not won. Napoleon's final army was defeated by a coalition force of British and Prussian soldiers in June of 1815 at the Battle of Waterloo. Thereafter, Napoleon was imprisoned on the cold, miserable island of Saint Helena in the South Atlantic, where he finally died in 1821 after composing his memoirs.

Europe in 1815

This map depicts Napoleonic France, Prussia, the Austrian Empire, and the boundary of the Germanic Confederation in 1815.



Source: "Map of Europe in 1815," in World History Commons, https://worldhistorycommons.org/map-europe-1815 [accessed March 30, 2023]

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13.6: The Aftermath

What were the effects of Napoleon’s reign? Despite the manifest abuses of occupied territories, the Napoleonic army still brought with it significant reform. His rule created a desire for a more egalitarian social system, a law code based on rationality instead of tradition, and a major weakening of the nobility. It also directly inspired a growing sense of nationalism, especially since the Napoleonic Empire was so clearly *French* despite its pretensions to universalism. Napoleon's tendency to loot occupied territories led many of his subjects to recognize the hypocrisy of his "egalitarian" empire. In the absence of their old kings, they began to think of themselves as Germans, Italians, or Spaniards rather than just subjects to a king.

The myth of Napoleon blossomed. Despite his own decidedly unromantic personality, he became a great romantic hero, a modern Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great. He gave France its greatest hour of dominance in European history; and, for more than fifty years, the rest of Europe lived in fear of another French invasion. In 1815, at the Congress of Vienna, Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria gathered to try to rebuild the European order. However, they were not able to undo all of Napoleon’s legacy. Thus, the course of European and the world's history was changed by a single unique man from Corsica.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: The Industrial Revolution

14.1: Big Changes
14.2: Geography of the Industrial Revolution
14.3: Transportation and Communication
14.4: Social Effects
14.5: Cultural Effects

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14.1: Big Changes

One of the most vexing questions for historians is: how does one explain the simple fact that Europe controlled a staggering amount of territory all around the globe by 1900? The old Eurocentric viewpoint indicated something unique about European culture that gave it a competitive edge globally. Popular among Europeans was openly racist and chauvinistic, it claimed that European civilization was the bearer of critical thought itself, of technological know-how, of piercing insight and practical sense. All other civilizations were, in this model, regarded as either hopelessly backward or stuck in a previous stage of cultural or even biological evolution. The explanation was self-serving and inaccurate. This inflated view and dominance were extremely short-lived. The technological lead lasted for less than a century.

In about 1750, the Industrial Revolution began in England, and took almost a century to spread to other parts of western Europe. The process began in earnest around 1830, and reached maturity by the 1850s and 1860s. In turn, European industrial power was overwhelming in cocompared to the rest of the world, except the United States starting from about 1860 - 1914. After that, Europe's competitive edge began a steady decline, one that coincided with the collapse of its global empires after World War II.

A more satisfying explanation for the explosion of European power has to do with energy. For about a century, Europe and, eventually, the United States, had almost exclusive access to what amounted to unlimited energy in the form of fossil fuels. The iconic battles toward the end of the century between rifle-wielding European soldiers and the people they conquered in Africa and parts of Asia were not just about the rifles. They were about the factories that made those rifles, the calories that fed the soldiers, the steamships that transported them there, the telegraph lines that conveyed orders for thousands of miles away, the medicines that kept them healthy, and so on, all of which represented an epochal shift from the economic and technological reality of the people trying to resist European imperialism. All of those inventions could be produced in gigantic quantities thanks to the use of coal and, later, oil power.

Many historians have taken issue with the term "revolution" for an event that was a slow *evolution* at the time. There is no question that the changes industrial technology brought about really were revolutionary. The Industrial Revolution fundamentally transformed almost everything about how human beings live, perhaps most strikingly including humankind's relationship with nature. Whole landscapes can be transformed, cities constructed, species exterminated, and the entire natural ecosystem fundamentally *changed* in a relatively short amount of time.

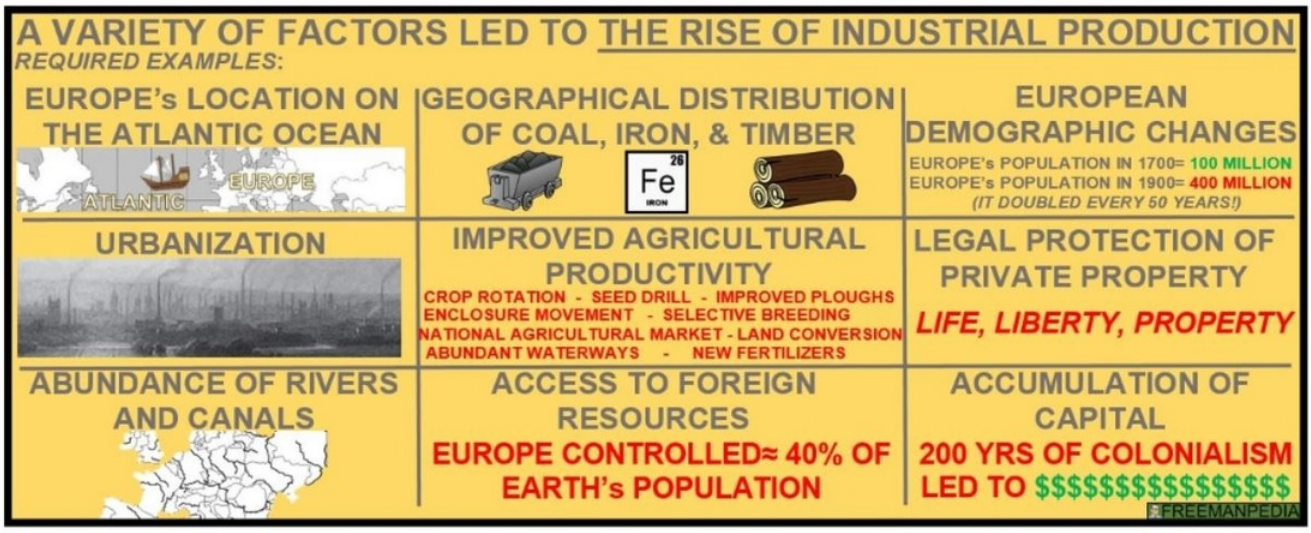
Likewise, "the" Industrial Revolution was really a linking together of distinct "revolutions". Technology started it, but the *effects* of those technological changes were economic and social. All of society was eventually transformed, leading to the phrase "industrial society," one in which everything is in large part based on the availability of a huge amount of cheap energy and an equally huge number of mass-produced commodities (including people, insofar as workers can be replaced). To sum up, the Industrial Revolution was as momentous in human history as was the agricultural revolution that began civilization back in about 10,000 BCE. Even if it was a revolution that took over a century to come to fruition, from a long-term world-historical perspective, it still qualifies as revolutionary.

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14.2: Geography of the Industrial Revolution

Britain was well positioned to serve as the cradle of industrialism. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, Britain became the single most powerful European country of the 19th Century. What caused the Industrial Revolution?



Source: amessocialstudies

Population and Agriculture

- Rapidly increasing populations
- More efficient agriculture, which provided more calories to feed the population
- Fairly rudimentary improvements in sanitation in the first half of the eighteenth century resulted in lower infant mortality rates and lower disease rates in general

The Little Ice Age (1303 – 1850) ended, increasing crop yields. Despite the fact that more commercially-oriented agriculture was often experienced as a disaster by peasants and farmers, it did increase the total caloric output of crops at the same time. In short, agriculture definitively left the subsistence model behind and became a commercial enterprise in Britain by 1800. Thus, there was a "surplus population" (to quote Ebenezer Scrooge of *A Christmas Carol*, speaking of the urban poor) of peasants who were available to work in the first generations of factories.

Natural Resources

Britain has abundant coal deposits concentrated in northern England. In a very lucky coincidence, the same region was the heart of the existing British textile industry, which became the key commercial force in the early period of industrialization. The northern English underground coal deposits reach across to Beligium, eastern France, and western Germany. This stretch of land would become the industrial heartland of Europe. (One can draw a line from England stretching across the English Channel toward the Alps and trace most of the industrial centers of Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century.)

The English and Scottish had long known you could burn it and produce heat. However, for centuries, it was an unpopular fuel source. Coal produces a noxious, toxic smoke, along with heaps of black ash. It has to be mined, and coal mines in northwestern Europe tended to rapidly fill with water as they dipped below the water table, requiring cumbersome pumping systems. In turn, conditions in those mines were extremely dangerous and difficult. Thus, coal was only used in small amounts in England until well into the Renaissance period.

What changed was, simply, Britain ran out of forests. Thanks to the need for firewood and charcoal for heat, as well as timber for building (especially shipbuilding; Britain's navy consumed a vast quantity of wood in construction and repairs), Britain was forced to import huge quantities of wood from abroad by the end of the 17th Century. As firewood became prohibitively expensive, British people increasingly turned to coal. Already by the 17th Century, former prejudices against coal as dirty and distasteful had given way to the necessity of its use as a fuel source for heat. As the Industrial Revolution began and a series of key inventions evolved,

the vast energy capacity of coal was unleashed for the first time. By 1815, annual British coal production yielded energy equivalent to what could be garnered from burning a hypothetical forest equal in area to all of England, Scotland, and Wales.

Technology

Technological breakthroughs powered the expansion of the Industrial Revolution, all of which originated in Britain. In 1763, an engineer named James Watt developed an efficient steam engine. Steam engines were originally used to pump water out of mines. Soon it was discovered that they could be used to substitute for water power at mills. Thermal energy unleashed by burning a fossil fuel like coal could be transformed into other forms of energy - such as kinetic energy (the energy of movement) - through steam power. With a steam engine, coal did not just provide heat, it provided *power*. Watt personally invented the term “horsepower” to explain to potential customers what his machine could do. Almost anything that moved could now be tied to coal power instead of muscle power. Thus began the vast and dramatic shift toward the modern world’s dependence on fossil fuels.

The first industry to benefit from coal power was the northern English textile industry, which harnessed steam power to drive new machines that processed and transferred cotton into finished cloth. Building on various other machine breakthroughs, Edmund Cartwright developed the power loom in 1787, the first large-scale textile machine that could process an enormous amount of cotton fiber. By the end of the 1800s, a single “mule” (a spinning invention linked to steam power) could produce thread 200 to 300 times as fast as could be done by hand. By 1850, Britain was producing 200 times as much cotton cloth than it had in 1780.

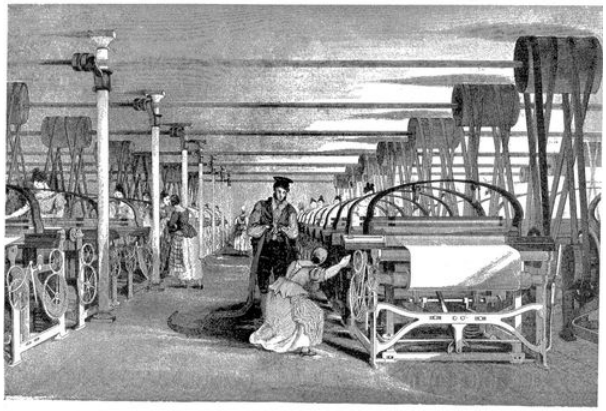


Figure 14.2.2: Power looms in 1835. Factory owners preferred female labors who could be paid less than men for doing the same work.

Textiles were the basis of the Industrial Revolution for two reasons:

- raw material was available from the southern United States and its slave labor
- an *endless* market for textiles existed all across Europe

British cloth processed by the new machines was of very high quality. Due to the vast quantity that British mills could produce, machines manufactured textiles were cheaper than being produced by hand. Thus, British cloth rapidly cornered the market everywhere in Europe, generating tremendous profits for British industrialists. The impact on Britain’s economy was enormous, and its textile industry dominated European rivals. Initially, France tried to keep British fabric out of its own markets. But in 1786, the two kingdoms negotiated the Eden Treaty, which allowed the importation of British manufactured goods. The result was a tidal wave of British cloth in French markets, which forced French manufacturers to implement industrial technology in their own workshops.

Britain

Other major factors driving industrial expansion in Britain were political and cultural. Britain became the leading industrial power because its parliament was full of believers in the principles of free trade, which meant that archaic restrictions or cultural prejudices did not hamper commercial enterprises. The country was also the richest society in Europe in terms of available capital: money was available through reliable, trustworthy banking institutions. Thus, investors could build up a factory after securing loans with fair interest rates under a legal system that favored enterprise. Finally, taxes were not arbitrary or extremely high (as they were in most parts of Spain and Italy, for example).

The other major reason for the early and long-lasting lead in industrialization is that British elites, especially the powerful gentry class of landowners, were not hostile to commercial enterprise. In many kingdoms on the continent, members of the nobility were banned from actively practicing commerce until the period of the French Revolution. Even after the Napoleonic wars, when noble titles could no longer be lost by engaging in commerce, banking, or factory ownership, there remained deep skepticism and arrogance among continental nobles about the new industries. In short, nobles often looked down on those who made their wealth not from land, but from factories. This attitude helped to slow the advent of industrialism for decades.

Other Parts of Europe

Before the 1840s, the southern swath of the Netherlands was the only continental region to industrialize in earnest. After 1830, this region became the newly-created nation of Belgium. In addition to being a close ally of Great Britain, the area had usable waterways, coal deposits, and a skilled artisanal workforce. By the 1830s, the newly-minted country was rapidly industrializing.

Despite its large population and considerable overall wealth, Belgium's neighbor to the southwest, France, was comparatively slow to follow. The traditional elites who dominated the restored monarchy were deeply skeptical of British-style commercial and industrial innovations. Despite Napoleon's having established the first national bank in 1800, the banking system as a whole was rudimentary, and capital was restricted. The transportation of goods was prohibitively expensive due to the lack of navigable waterways and the existence of numerous tolls.

In addition, important cultural factors impeded industrial expansion in France. Whereas Britain's large population of landless rural laborers and poor peasants had little option but to seek factory work, most French peasants were independent farmers who had no interest in going to cities to work in miserable conditions. Second, French industry had always concentrated on high-quality luxury goods, and French artisans fiercely resisted the spread of lower-quality and lower-skilled work and goods. Industrialization was thus limited to the northeastern part of the country, which had coal deposits, until the second half of the century.

In the German lands, it was not until the establishment of the Zollverein, a customs union, in 1834, that trade could flow freely enough to encourage industrial growth. Following its creation, railroads spread across the various kingdoms of northern Germany. Western Germany had extensive coal deposits. By 1850, German industry was growing rapidly, especially in the Ruhr valley near the border with France.

Meanwhile, outside of Western Europe, there was practically no large-scale industry. In the late 19th Century, the Industrial Revolution "arrived" in places like northern Italy and the cities of western Russia, with some countries like Spain missing out entirely until the twentieth century.

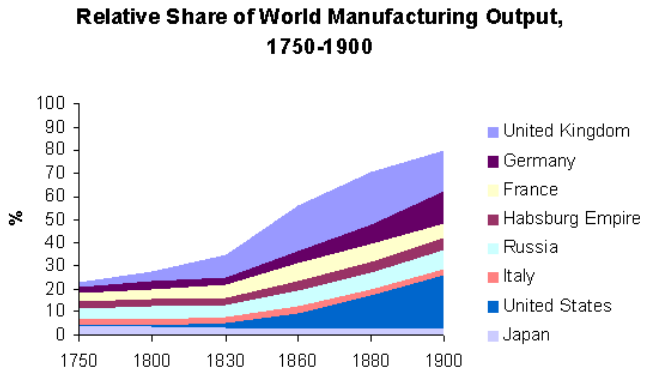


Figure 14.2.3: While the UK enjoyed the early lead in industrial manufacturing, its share of global output had dropped by 1900. From 1900-1920, the United States became the major industrial power of the world.

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14.3: Transportation and Communication

Although the Industrial Revolution began with mining and textiles, the most dramatic effect was in transportation. In 1820, the first experimental railroad was put in use, followed by the first passenger railroad (1830) traveling between the industrial cities of Manchester and Liverpool in northern England. By the middle of the century, some trains could go 50 MPH! Between 1830-1850, approximately 6,500 miles of rail were built in Britain. Railroad expansion soon followed suit on the continent. The construction of railroads became a massive industry unto itself, fueling both profitable investment and the occasional disastrous financial collapse.

Above and beyond their economic impact, railroads had a myriad of social and cultural effects. The British developed the system of time zones, based on Greenwich (part of London) Mean Time as the “default,” because the railroads had to be coordinated to time departures and arrivals. Now a whole country, and soon a whole continent, had a precise shared sense of timing.

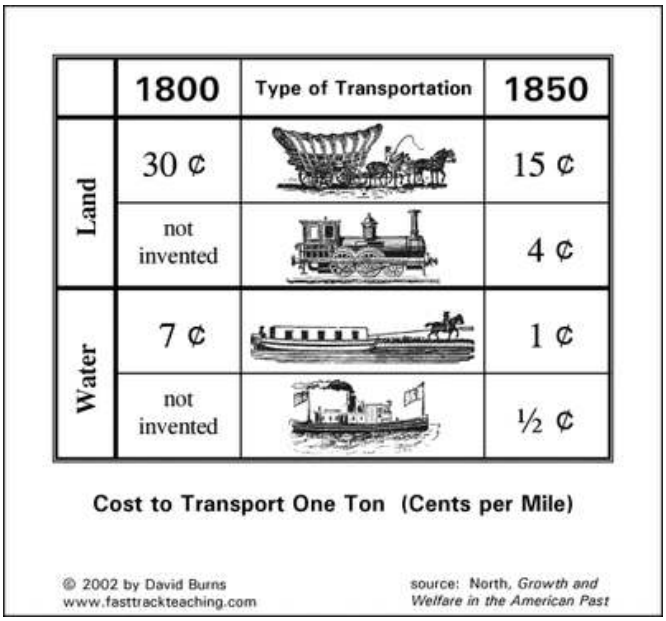
Likewise, in 1830, the telegraph was invented and used initially to warn train stations when multiple trains were on the track. Telegraphs allowed almost instant communication over huge distances, sending a series of electrical impulses over a wire as "long" and "short" signals. The inventor of the telegraph, Samuel Morse, invented a code based off on those signals that could be translated into letters and, as a result, be used to send messages. Morse Code enabled the first modern mass communications device, vastly increasing the speed by which information could be shared and disseminated.

Simultaneously, steamships were transforming long-distance commerce. Sailing in 1816, the first one went about twice as fast as the fastest sailing ship could. Soon, it became cheaper to transport basic goods via steamship than it was to use locally-produced ones. Thus, this improvement had greatly impacted culture and forestry, among other industries. Shipping grain from the United States or Russia across oceans to reach European markets became economically viable. Two steamships raced across England and New York in 1838. Over time sailing vessels became what they are today: archaic novelties.

Two other advances in transportation are often overlooked: paved roads and canals. A Scottish engineer invented a way to cheaply pave roads in the 1830s, and in the 1850s an overland, pan-European postal service was established that relied on “post roads” with stations for changing horses. Thus, well before the invention of cars, road networks were being built in parallel to railroads. Likewise, even though canals had been around since ancient times, there was a major canal-building boom in the second half of the eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth. Canals linked Manchester to coal fields, the Erie Canal was built in the US to link the great lakes to the eastern seaboard, and even Russia built a canal between Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The net effect of these innovations was that travel was vastly cheaper, simpler, and faster than it *had ever been in human history*. In essence, every place on earth was closer together than ever before.

NOTE: This image displays the cost of transportation in the United States.



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14.4: Social Effects

Urbanization absolutely exploded in the nineteenth century. In northern England, Manchester was the quintessential example of an industrial city. It was close to major coal deposits, had a large textile industry, was linked to the sea via a canal, and had an army of artisans and laborers because of its historic role as a site of wool production. The population bloomed, experiencing a 200% increase in a century.

- 1750--20,000 people
- 1775--40,000 people
- 1831--250,000 people
- 1850--400,000 people



View of Manchester in 1840. While the painting is in the Romantic style, with the nature scene in the foreground, the masses of factory smokestacks are visible in the distance.

The living conditions were abysmal. Whole families were crammed into one-room cellars, hovels, and cheap apartments. The pollution produced by the new factories streamed unfiltered into the air and water. Soot and filth covered every surface. (Early evolutionary biologists noted that certain moths had a mutation that made them soot-brown while their normal lightly-colored cousins died off. To deal with the pollution, factory owners simply started building taller smokestacks, which spread the pollution further. Waste from mining was simply left in “slag heaps,” through which rainwater ran and from which toxic runoff reached water supplies. A coal miner who entered the mines as a teenager would almost certainly die by “middle age,” (40 at the oldest) since his or her lungs were ridden with toxic coal dust.

City-based landlords took advantage of the influx of laborers and their families by building cheap tenements where several families often lived in a single room. There was no running water, and sanitation was utterly inadequate. Food was expensive, partly because of the Corn Laws (1815) that banned the importation of grain into Britain that kept the prices up (the wealthy, land-owning gentry class had pushed the law through parliament). Given the incredible squalor, epidemics were frequent. In turn, wages were paid at a near-subsistence level until after 1850. Whenever there was a market downturn, (e.g. 1839 – 1842), workers were summarily fired to cut costs, and some starved as a result.

The English poet William Blake famously referred to the factories as “satanic mills.” Likewise, the English novelist Charles Dickens used the grim reality of cities as inspiration and setting for his novels like *Hard Times* and *Oliver Twist*. Since real wages did not increase among working people until fairly late in the century, the actual living conditions of the majority of the population generally *worsened* in industrial regions until the second half of the century. In Britain, laws were passed to protect horses before they were passed to protect children working in mines and factories.

The major cause of this misery: the ruthless pursuit of profit by factory owners and manufacturers, who wanted to simplify the stages of the manufacturing process so that they could be executed by cheap, unskilled labor. For many skilled workers or artisans, the factory system was a disaster, with harsh work discipline, the degradation of craft skills, long hours, cheap wages, and the abuse of young women and children (who worked under the same conditions as did adult men).

While they had little reason to consider it, the industrial workers of northern England lived in a state of misery tied to the slave-based cotton economy of the southern United States, which provided the raw material. Despite the British ban on the trans-Atlantic

slave trade in 1807, the existing population of African-American slaves was sustained by natural reproduction and remained locked in a position of complete legal subservience. In a startling parallel, the efficiency of cotton production increased to keep pace with textile manufacturing in Britain despite the absence of major new technologies. The increase was due to the application of ever-increasing degrees of brutality, as slaves were forced to pick and process cotton at unprecedented speed, spurred on by raw violence at the hands of overseers.

Back in Europe, one unforeseen effect of the Industrial Revolution was the creation of social classes. Until the modern era, “class” was usually something one was born into; it was a legally-recognized and enforced “estate.” With industrialization, the enormous numbers of dirt-poor industrial workers began to recognize that their poverty and working conditions defined their social identity. Likewise, rich industrialists and tenement-owning slumlords recognized that they were united by their wealth and their common interest in controlling the workers. The non-noble rich and middle class came to distinguish themselves both from the working class and the old nobility by taking pride in their morality, sobriety, work ethic, and cleanliness. They had little regard for the workers, and considered the old nobles corrupt, immoral, and increasingly archaic.

The middle classes consisted of engineers, foremen, accountants, and bureaucrats that were in great demand for building, overseeing, and running new industrial and commercial operations. Some were genuine “self-made men” who worked their way up, but a majority came from families with at least some wealth to begin with. The most vulnerable group was the so-called “petty bourgeoisie,” shop-owners and old-style artisans, whose economic life was precarious and who lived in constant fear of losing everything and being forced to join the working class.

From this context, socialism, the political belief that government should be deeply invested in the welfare of the common people, emerged. Before mass socialist parties existed, there were struggles and even massacres over working conditions. One notorious event was the Peterloo Massacre (1819), where hundreds of protesting workers in Manchester were gunned down by middle-class volunteer cavalry. Another famous group, the Luddites, destroyed factory equipment in a vain attempt to turn back the clock on industrialization and go back to hand-work by artisans.

Appalled more by the sexual impropriety of young girls and women being around male workers in mines and factories than by the working conditions, the British parliament did pass some laws mandating legal protections.

- The Factory Act of 1833 limited child labor in cotton mills.
- The Miners Act of 1842 banned the employment of girls and women (and boys under 10) underground.
- The Ten Hour Law (1847) limited the workday for women and children.

Although these were exceptional laws, further legal protections for workers took decades and constant struggle by the emerging socialist groups and parties to achieve.

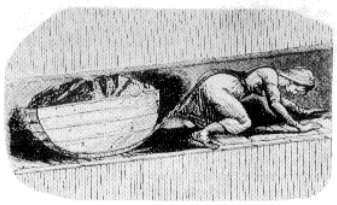


Figure 14.4.1: Image of a girl hauling a “tub” of coal up a narrow mine shaft. The image originates with the British parliament’s investigation of working conditions in mines.

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14.5: Cultural Effects

The Industrial Revolution was responsible for enormous changes in people's everyday lives. Two specific areas are noteworthy: transportation and communication.

In transportation, the speed of railway travel made everything "closer" together, and started tying together distant regions. People could travel to the capital cities of their kingdom or, later, their "nations". As a result, the intense localism of the past started to fade. For the first time, members of the middle classes could travel just for fun. In other words, middle-class vacations were an innovation made possible by the railroad. The first beneficiaries were the English middle class, who "went on holiday" to the seashore whenever they could.

Simultaneously, new, more advanced printing presses and cheaper paper made newspapers and magazines available to a mass reading public. This event encouraged the spread of information and news, as well as the promotion of shared written languages. People had to be able to read the "default" language of their nation, which encouraged the rise of certain specific vernaculars at the expense of the numerous dialects of the past. For example, "French" was originally the language spoken in the area around the city of Paris, just as "Spanish" was just the dialect spoken around Madrid. Rulers had unsuccessfully fought to impose their language as the daily vernacular in the regions over which they ruled. However, most people continued to speak regional dialects that often had little in common with the language of their monarch. With the centers of newspaper production often being in or near capital cities, and written in the official language of state, more people acquired a decent working knowledge of those languages over time.

Those capital cities grew enormously, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. Industry, finance, government, and railroads all converged on capitals. Former suburbs were simply swallowed up as the cities grew. Further, cultural elites thought the only places that *mattered* were the capitals: London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, etc. As a result, political revolutions often began as revolutions of a single city. For example, if a crowd could take over the streets of Paris, they might well send the king running for the proverbial hills and declare themselves to be a new government (which happened in 1830 and 1848). In some cases, the rest of the nation would read about the revolution in their newspapers or via telegraph after the revolution had already succeeded.

The cultural effects of the Industrial Revolution are too numerous to detail here. Yet, one other effect should be noted: the availability of food. With cheap and fast railway and steamship transport, food could travel hundreds or even thousands of miles from where it was grown or farmed or caught to where it was consumed. In addition, the daily diet underwent profound changes. Tea grown in India became cheap enough for even working people to drink it daily. The same was true of South American coffee on the continent. Fruit appeared in markets half a world from where it was grown, and the long term effect was a more varied (although not always more nutritious) diet. Whole countries sometimes became economic appendages of a European empire, producing a single product. For a time, New Zealand (which became a British colony in 1840) was essentially the British Empire’s sheep ranch.

The great symbol of changes in the history of food brought on by the Industrial Revolution is that quintessential English invention: fish and chips. Caught in the Atlantic or Pacific, packed on steamships, and transported to Britain, the more desirable fish parts were sold at prices the upper and middle classes could afford. The other bits - tails, fins, etc.- were fried up with chunks of potato, heavily salted, and wrapped in the now-cheap newspaper. The result was the world's first greasy, cheap, and wildly popular fast food.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: Political Ideologies and Movements

15.1: After the Revolution
15.2: Conservatism
15.3: Ideologies
15.4: Romanticism
15.5: Nationalism
15.6: Liberalism
15.7: Socialism
15.8: Social Classes

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15.1: After the Revolution

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars profoundly shook Europe. The European great powers saw the French Revolution as both threatening and, increasingly as it progressed, morally repulsive, but at least it had largely stayed confined to France. From the perspective of elites, Napoleon's conquests were even worse because everywhere the French armies went, the traditional order of society was overturned. France was the greatest economic beneficiary. But, Napoleon's Italian, German, and Polish subjects also had their first taste of a society in which one's status was not defined by birth. The kings and nobles of Europe witnessed a social order that had lasted for roughly 1,000 years disintegrate in the course of a generation.

After Napoleon's defeat, there had to be a reckoning. Only the most stubborn monarch or noble thought it possible to completely undo the Revolution and its effects. Yet, there was a shared desire among the traditional elites to re-establish stability and order based on the political system that had worked in the past. Some concessions to a generation of people who had lived with equality under the law would need to be made. At the same time, the elite wanted to reinforce traditional political structures while only granting limited compromises.

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15.2: Conservatism

How did elites understand their own role in society? How did they justify the power of kings and nobles over the majority of the population? This idea was not just about wealth. After all, there were many non-noble merchants who were as rich, or richer, than many nobles. Nor was it viable for most nobles to claim that their rights were logically derived from their mastery of warfare, since only a small percentage of noblemen served in royal armies (and those that did were not necessarily very good officers!) Instead, European elites explained their own social role in terms of peace, tradition, and stability. Their ideology came to be called *conservatism*.

Conservatism held that the old traditions of rule were the best and most desirable principles of government, having proven themselves relatively stable and successful over the course of 1,000 years of European history. It was totally opposed to the idea of universal legal equality or suffrage (i.e. voting rights), and basically amounted to an attempt to maintain a legal political hierarchy to go along with the existing social and economic hierarchy of European society.

According to conservatives, the French Revolution and Napoleon had proved that too much change and innovation in politics was *inherently* destructive. The French Revolution had started out by arguing for the primacy of the common people, but it quickly and inevitably spun out of control. During the Terror, the king and queen were beheaded, French society was riven with bloody conflict, tens of thousands were guillotined, and the revolutionary government launched a blasphemous crusade against the church. Napoleon's takeover - itself a symptom of the anarchy unleashed by the Revolution - led to almost twenty years of war and turmoil across the map of Europe. These events *proved* to conservatives that while careful reform might be acceptable, rapid change was not.



Figure 15.2.1: Images from the French Revolution were used by conservatives to illustrate the violence and bloodshed they claimed were an intrinsic part of revolutionary change.

Many conservatives believed that human nature is basically bad, evil, and depraved. Joseph de Maistre, a conservative French nobleman, argued that human beings are not enlightened. As a staunch Catholic, he believed that all human souls are tainted by original sin. Left unchecked, humans with too much freedom would always indulge in depravity. Only the allied forces of a strong monarchy, a strong nobility, and a strong church could hold that inherent evil in check. De Maistre wrote outside of France itself during the revolutionary period, first in the small Italian kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia (he was a noble in both France and Piedmont) and then in Russia. His message resonated strongly with the arch-conservative Russian Tsar Alexander I.

A more pragmatic conservative take was exemplified by a British lord, Edmund Burke. He argued that, given the complexity and fragility of the social fabric, only the force of tradition could prevent political chaos. As the French Revolution had demonstrated, gradual reforms had the effect of unleashing a tidal wave of pent-up anger and foolish decisions by people who had no experience in making political decisions. In his famous pamphlet *Reflections On The Revolution in France*, he wrote, "It is said, that twenty-four millions ought to prevail over two hundred thousand. True; if the constitution of a kingdom be a problem of arithmetic." To Burke, the common people were a mob of uneducated, inexperienced would-be political decision-makers, the last people you wanted running a country. Instead, it was far wiser to keep things in the basic form that had survived for centuries, with minor accommodations as needed.

De Maistre’s ideas may have harkened back to the social and political thought of past centuries, but Burke was a very grounded and realistic thinker. He simply believed that “the masses” were the last people one wanted running a government, because they were an uneducated, uncultivated, uncivilized rabble. Meanwhile, the European nobility had been raised for centuries to rule and had

developed both cultural traditions and systems of education and training to form leaders. Not all of them were very good at it, but according to Burke, there was simply no comparison between the class of nobles and the class of the mob – to let the latter rule was to invite disaster. And, of course, conservatives had all of their suspicions confirmed during the Terror, when the whole social order of France was turned upside down in the name of a perfect society. (Burke was particularly aggrieved by the execution of the French queen Marie Antoinette, whom he saw as a perfectly innocent victim).

At its best, conservatism was a coherent critique of the violence, warfare, and instability that had accompanied the Revolution and Napoleonic wars. In practice, however, conservatism all too often degenerated into the stubborn defense of corrupt, incompetent, or oppressive regimes. Despite the practical impossibility of doing so in most cases, after the defeat of Napoleon, there were real attempts on the part of many conservative regimes to completely turn back the clock, to try to sweep the reforms of the revolutionary era under the collective rug.

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15.3: Ideologies

Following Napoleon’s final defeat in 1815, conservatives faced the daunting task of creating a new political order and holding in check the political ideologies unleashed during the revolutionary era. Enlightenment thinkers had proposed the ideas of social and legal equality that came to fruition in the American and French Revolutions. Likewise, these revolutions, and the work of thinkers, writers, and artists helped create a new concept of national identity that was poised to take European politics by storm. Finally, the political, social, and economic chaos of the turn of the 19th century (including the Industrial Revolution) created the context out of which socialism emerged.

An "ideology" is a set of beliefs, often having to do with politics. What is the purpose of government? Who decides the laws? What is just and unjust? How should economics function? What should be the role of religion in governance? What is the legal and social status of men and women? All of these kinds of questions have been answered differently from culture to culture since the earliest civilizations. In 19th-century Europe, a handful of ideologies came to predominate: conservatism, nationalism, liberalism, and socialism. Three of those ideologies had one thing in common: they opposed the fourth. Socialists, nationalists, and liberals all agreed that the conservative order had to be disrupted or even dismantled entirely, although they disagreed on how that should be accomplished and, more importantly, what should replace it.

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15.4: Romanticism

The seeds of nationalism were planted in the hearts and minds of many Europeans as an aspect of the Romantic Movement (circa 1798 to 1837). Romanticism was a movement of the arts, not of politics. Its central idea: there were great, sometimes terrible, and literally “awesome” forces in the universe that exceeded humankind’s rational ability to understand. Instead, all that a human being could do was attempt to pay tribute to those forces – nature, the spirit or soul, the spirit of a people or culture, or even death – through art.

To romantics, nature was a vast, overwhelming presence, against which humankind's activities were ultimately insignificant. At the same time, romantics celebrated the organic connection between humanity and nature. They often identified peasants as being the people who were "closest" to nature. In turn, it was the job of the artist (whether a writer, painter, or musician) to somehow gesture at the profound truths of nature and the human spirit. A "true" artist was someone who possessed the real spark of creative genius, something that could not be predicted or duplicated through training or education. The point of art was to let that genius emanate from the work of art, and the result should be a profound emotional experience for the viewer or listener.

Thanks to its ties to the folk movement, Romanticism helped plant the seeds of nationalism. The folk movement believed that the essential truths of national character had survived among the common people despite the harmful influence of so-called civilization. Traditions, from folk songs to fairytales to the remnants of pre-Christian pagan practices, were the “true” expression of a national spirit that had, supposedly, laid dormant for centuries. By the early eighteenth century, educated elites attracted to Romanticism set out to gather those traditions and preserve them in service to an imagined national identity.

The iconic examples of this phenomenon were the Brothers Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm, who were both expert philologists and avid collectors of German folk tales. The Brothers Grimm collected dozens of folk (“fairy”) tales and published the first definitive collection in German. Many of those tales, from Sleeping Beauty to Cinderella, are best known in U.S. culture due to their adaptation as animated films by Walt Disney in the 20th Century. The Brothers Grimm also undertook an enormous project to compile a comprehensive German dictionary, containing every German word and detailed etymologies. Unfortunately, they did not live to see its completion. The third volume E – Forsche - was published shortly before Jacob’s death.

Many Romantics believed that nations had spirits, which were invested with the core identity of their “people.” The Grimm brothers' work reached back into the remote past to grasp the "essence" of what it meant to be "German." At the time, there was no country called Germany. Yet, romantic nationalists like the Grimms believed that a kind of German soul lived in old folk songs, the German language, and German traditions. They worked to preserve those things before they were further "corrupted" by the modern world. Thus, they are an example of quintessential Romanic nationalists.

In many cases, romantic nationalists did something called "inventing traditions." One iconic example is the Scottish kilt. Since the 16th Century, Scots had worn kilts, but there was no such thing as a specific color and pattern of plaid (a "tartan") for each family or clan. The British government ultimately assigned tartans to a new class of soldiers recruited from Scotland: the Highland Regiments. The wider identification of tartan and clan only emerged in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. The point was to install nationalist pride in a specific group of military recruits, not celebrate an “authentic” Scottish tradition.

Likewise, in some cases, folk tales and stories were simply made up in the name of nationalism. The great epic *Kalevala* was written by a Finnish intellectual in 1827. It was based on actual Finnish legends, but it had never existed as one long story before.



Figure 15.4.1: British soldiers of the Highland Regiments in government-issued kilts in 1744.

Instead of emphasizing the falseness of the folk movement or invented traditions, historians try to consider *why* people were so intent on discovering (and, if necessary, inventing) them. Romanticism was, among other things, the search for stable points of identity in a changing world. Likewise, folk traditions - even those that were at least in part invented or adapted - became a way for early nationalists to identify with the culture connotated with the nation.

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15.5: Nationalism

Romantic nationalism was an integral part of the nationalist political movements, which emerged in the immediate aftermath of the Napoleonic wars. Although the process took over a century in some cases (like those of Poland and Ireland,the movements would ultimately succeed in seeing their goals realized almost without exception. Central to nationalist movements was the concept that the state should correspond to the identity of a "people". However, who or what defines the identity of "the people" proved a vexing issue on many occasions.

The French Revolution provided the model for all subsequent nationalisms. From the onset, the revolutionaries declared that they represented the whole "nation," not just a certain part of it. They erased the legal privileges of the nobles over others and made religion subservient to a secular government. Further, when threatened by the conservative powers of Europe, they called the whole "nation" to arms. The lyrics of the revolutionary national anthem, the Marseillaise, were as warlike as the U.S. Star Spangles Banner. Central to French national identity in the revolutionary period was fighting for *la patrie*, the fatherland, in place of the old allegiance to king and church.

As a result of the Napoleonic Era, the countries invaded by the French eventually adopted their own nationalist beliefs. The invaded countries turned the democratic French principle of self-determination into a sacred right to defend their own national identities, shaped by their own particular histories, against the universalist pretensions of the French. This action was reflected in the Spanish revolt that began in 1808, the revival of Austria and Prussia and their struggles of "liberation" against Napoleon, Russia's leadership of the anti-Napoleonic coalition that followed, and fierce British pride in their defiance to French military pretensions.

Congress of Vienna (1814-1815)

In 1814, as the Napoleonic wars drew to a close, European monarchs and diplomats convened the **Congress of Vienna**. The short meeting was interrupted by Napoleon's inconvenient return from Elba, but ultimately concluded by rewarding the victorious kingdoms with territorial gains and restoring conservative monarchs to the thrones of states such as Spain and France. The diplomatic representatives were not concerned with the "national identity" of the people who lived in the territories that were carved up and distributed like pieces of cake to the victors. The inhabitants of northeastern Italy were now subjects of the Austrian king, the entirety of Poland was divided between Russia and Prussia, and Great Britain remained secure in its growing global empire and possession of the entirety of Ireland.

Thus, many of Europe's peoples found themselves without states of their own or in states squeezed between the dominant powers of the time. Among the notable examples are the Italians and the Poles. Since the Renaissance, Italy had suffered from the domination of one great power or another. After 1815, the Austrians were in control of much of northern Italy. Poland had been partitioned among the Austrians, the Prussians, and the Russians, simply vanishing from the map in the process. Germany was not united, which led to Prussia and Austria vying with each other for dominance of the German lands. Indeed, both were fundamentally conservative powers uninterested in "German" unification until later in the century.

What had changed? The language of nationalism and the idea of national identity had come into its own by the late Napoleonic period. For example, in 1817, after the end of the Congress of Vienna, German nationalists gathered in Wartburg (where Martin Luther had first translated the Bible into German), waving the black, red, and gold tricolor flag that would become the official flag of the German nation. Two years later, a nationalist poet murdered a conservative one, and the Austrian Empire passed laws that severely limited freedom of speech, specifically to contain and restrict the spread of nationalism. Despite the efforts of the government and Austrian secret police, nationalism continued to spread.

1830s

The 1830s were a pivotal decade in the spread of nationalism. In 1831, the Italian nationalist leader Giuseppe Mazzini founded Young Italy, calling for a "springtime of peoples" in which the people of each "nation" of Europe would topple conservative monarchs and assert their sovereignty and independence. The movement would quickly spread beyond Italy. "Young" became the rallying word and idea of nationalism.

In addition to Young Italy, there was a Young Germany and a Young Ireland - the idea was that *all* people should and would eventually inhabit nations. Further, this new "youthful" manner of politics would lead to peace and prosperity for everyone. With

old, outdated borders abandoned, everyone would live where they were supposed to: in nations governed by their own people. Nationalists argued that war could be rendered obsolete. After all, if each “people” lived in “their” nation, what would be the purpose of territorial conflict? The emergence of nations was synonymous with a more perfect future for all.

Part of this optimistic phase was the identity of “the people,” a term with powerful political resonance in just about every European language: *das Volk*, *le peuple*, *il popolo*, etc. In every case, "the people" was thought to be something more important than just "those people who happen to live here." Instead, the people were those tied to the soil, with roots reaching back centuries, and who deserve their own government. This profoundly romantic idea spoke to an essentially *emotional* sense of national identity - a sense of camaraderie and solidarity with individuals with whom a given person might not actually share much in common.

When scrutinized, the “real” identity of a given “people” became more difficult to discern. For example, how were the German people? Someone who spoke German, lived in Central Europe, was Lutheran or Catholic, or whose ancestors were from the same area in which they themselves were born? If a German nation emerged, who would lead it - were the Prussians or the Austrians more authentically German? What about those “Germans” who lived in places like Bohemia (i.e. the Czech lands) and Poland, with their own growing senses of national identity? During the early 19th Century, the nationalist movement did not need to concern themselves overmuch with these conundrums, since the goals of liberation and unification were not yet achievable. However, when national revolutions occurred, they proved difficult to overcome.

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15.6: Liberalism

Liberalism would be based on the Enlightenment concepts of reason, rationality, and progress. The 19th Century liberals were usually educated men and women, including the elites of industry and trade, as well as the middle classes. These people shared the conviction that freedom in all its forms—from the despotic rule of kings, the obsolete privilege of nobles, economic interference and religious intolerance, occupational restrictions and limitations of speech and assembly—could only improve the quality of society and the well-being of its members.

In a contrast to the abstract nature of national identity among nationalists, liberalism had straightforward concrete beliefs. The most fundamental belief was in equality before the law, which starkly contrasted with the old “feudal order of legally-defined social estates. According to liberals, the very purpose of law was to protect the rights of each and every citizen rather than enshrine the privileges of a minority.

“Rights” had meant the traditional privileges enjoyed by a given social group or estate in the past, from the king’s exclusive right to hunt game in his forests to the peasants’ right to access the common land. Now, "rights" meant a fundamental and universal privilege concomitant with citizenship. Liberals argued that freedom of speech, a press free from censorship, and religious expression were “rights” that should be enjoyed by all. Likewise, most liberals favored the abolition of archaic economic interference from the state, including legal monopolies on trade (e.g. in shipping between colonies) and the monopolies enjoyed by those craft guilds that remained.

Early 19th-Century liberals considered the constitutional monarchy as the most reasonable and stable form of government. Constitutions should be written to guarantee the fundamental rights of the citizenry while defining and restricting the power of the king (thus staving off the threat of tyranny). Liberals also believed in the desirability of an elected parliament, albeit one with a restricted electorate. Almost universally, liberals thought that voting should be restricted to those who owned significant amounts of property, thereby (they thought) guaranteeing social stability.

Unlike nationalists, liberals saw some of their goals realized in post-Napoleonic Europe. The Bourbon monarchy was restored alongside an elected parliament, religious tolerance, and relaxed censorship in France. Meanwhile, Britain remained the most “liberal” power, having long stood as the model of constitutional monarchy. A liberal monarchy emerged as a result of the Belgian Revolution of 1830. By the 1840s, limited liberal reforms had also been introduced in many of the smaller German states. Thus, despite the opposition of conservatives, much of Europe slowly and haltingly liberalized in the period between 1815 and 1848.

Goals of Liberals and Conservatives

LIBERALS	CONSERVATIVES
Ideas appealed to middle class of educated business people and professionals.	Ideas appealed to royalty, nobility, church leaders, and uneducated peasants.
GOALS:	**GOALS:**
Governments based on written constitutions	Royal families on their thrones
Separation of powers	Traditional social hierarchy
Natural rights of individuals (liberty, equality, and property)	Authority of established churches
Republican form of government	Respect and obedience to authority
Laissezfaire economics	Stability and order
Revolution, if necessary, to achieve goals	Suppression of revolutions

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15.7: Socialism

Seeking to address both the economic repercussions of the industrial revolution, and provide a new moral order for modern society, socialism was a specific historical phenomenon born out of two related factors

- the ideological rupture with the society of orders that occurred with the French Revolution
- the growth of industrial capitalism

Right from its inception, socialism was contrasted with individualism and egoism, of the selfish and self-centered pursuit of wealth and power. Simply put, socialism proposed a new and better moral order, in which the members of a society would care not only for themselves, but for one another. For the first decades of its existence, the ideology was more about ethics than economic foundation.

By the middle of the 19th-Century, the word 'socialism' was used to widely describe several different movements that had previously been considered in isolation from one another. The common factor was the idea that material goods should be held in common and that producers should keep the fruits of their labor, all in the name of a better, happier, more healthy community and, perhaps, nation. The early socialists wanted to address what they saw as the moral and social disintegration of European civilization in the modern era, as well as to repair the rifts and ameliorate the suffering of workers in the midst of early industrial capitalism.

Until 1848, socialism consisted of movements that shared a concern with the plight of working people and the regrowth of organic social bonds. This kind of socialism was fundamentally *optimistic*. Early socialists thought that almost everyone in European society would eventually become a socialist once they realized its potential. This kind of socialism is often referred to as "utopian socialism."

After 1848, socialism was increasingly *militant.* Socialists realized that a major restructuring of society could not happen peacefully, given the strength of both conservative and liberal opposition. The most important militant socialism was Marxism, named after its creator Karl Marx.

Utopian Socialism

The Saint-Simonians, Owenites, and Fourierists were named after their respective founder and visionary. These early socialist thinkers had radical proposals for the reorganization of work, believed that economic competition was a moral problem, and that competition was in no way natural rather implied social disorder. Indeed, the Saint-Simonians called egoism, the selfish pursuit of individual wealth, “the deepest wound of modern society.”

Ironically, the utopians found a surprisingly sympathetic audience among some aristocratic conservatives who were also afraid of social disorder and were nostalgic for the idea of a reciprocal set of obligations that had existed in pre-revolutionary Europe between the common people and the nobility. There was nothing inherent or threatening to the rich – socialism would be a way to bridge the class divide, not widen it.

Named after their founder Henri de Saint-Simon, the Saint-Simonians were mostly highly educated young elites in France. Many had privileged backgrounds and/or had graduated from the *École Polytechnique*, the most elite technical school in France founded by Napoleon. They envisaged a society in which industrialism was harnessed to make a kind of heaven on earth, with the fruits of technology going to feed, clothe, and house everyone. This group is often considered the first "technocrats," people who believe that technology can solve any problem. The Saint-Simonians did not inspire a popular movement. Individual members went on to achieve influential roles in the French industry and helped lay the intellectual foundations of such ventures as the creation of the Suez Canal between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

Robert Owen built a community for his workers in New Lanark, Scotland, providing health care, education, pensions, communal stores, and housing. He believed that productivity was tied to happiness, and his initial experiments met with success, with the New Lanark textile mill realizing consistent profits. He and his followers (the Owenites) created a number of cooperative, communalist “utopian” communities (many in the United States). However, these communities tended to fail in fairly short order. Instead, the lasting influence of Owenism was in workers' organizations, culminating in the London Working Men's’ Association in 1836.

The Fourierists were part of a very peculiar movement. Unlocking a "science of the passions", founder Charles Fourier reasoned that most people detested what they did to survive because they were not doing the right kind of work. There were 810 specific kinds of personalities in the world, each of which was naturally inclined toward a certain kind of work. Thus, if 1,620 people (one man and one woman of each type) were to come together in a community, and each did the kind of work they "should" do, perfect happiness became possible. For example, according to Fourier, murderers were just people who should have been butchers. Children should be trash collectors because they love to play in the dirt. These planned communities would be called "Phalanxes," after the fighting formations of ancient Greece.



Figure 15.8.1: Illustration of a Fouriest phalanx. The heading simply reads “The Future.”

Fourier was far more radical than most other self-understood socialists. For one, he advocated complete gender equality and even sexual liberation. Regarding marriage as an outdated custom, he imagined that in his phalanxes, children would be raised in common rather than lorded over by their parents. Above and beyond forward-thinking ideas about gender, some of his concepts were a bit more puzzling. For example, he claimed that planets mated and gave birth to baby planets, and that once all of humanity lived in phalanxes, the oceans would turn into lemonade.

Practically speaking, many phalanxes were actually founded, including several in the United States. While the more unusual ideas were conveniently set aside, they were still among the first real experiments in planned, communal living. Likewise, many important early feminists began their intellectual careers as Fourierists. For instance, Flora Tristan was a French socialist and feminist who did important early work on tying the idea of social progress to female equality.

State Socialism

In 1848, there was an enormous revolutionary explosion all over Europe (which will be covered in the next chapter). From Paris to Vienna to Prague, Europeans rose up and attempted to overthrow their monarchs. In the end, however, the revolutions collapsed. The awkward coalitions of socialists and other rebels fell to infighting, and kings/emperors eventually reasserted control.

Following 1848, socialists realized that democracy did not inevitably lead to social and political progress, as majorities typically voted for established community leaders (often priests or nobles). Class collaboration was impossible, as the wealthier bourgeoisie and the nobility recognized socialism as a shared enemy. Indeed, peaceful change might not be possible, given the forces of order's willingness to employ violence to achieve their ends. For example, Russia invaded Hungary to ensure the continued rule of (Russia’s ally at the time) Habsburg Austria. Socialism became increasingly militant, focused on the necessity of confrontational tactics, even outright violence, to achieve a better society. Two post-Utopian and rival forms of socialist theory matured in this period: state socialism and anarchist socialism.

State socialism is represented by the French thinker and agitator Louis Blanc, who posited that social reform had to come from above. He argued that it was unrealistic to imagine that groups could onerously organize themselves into self-sustaining, harmonious units. Further, universal manhood suffrage should and would lead to a government capable of implementing necessary economic changes, primarily by guaranteeing work for all citizens. During the French revolution of 1848, he briefly served in the revolutionary government, that had passed a law creating National Workshops for workers, which provided paid work for the urban poor.

Anarchist Socialism

In stark contrast was anarchist socialism. A semantic point: anarchism means the rejection of the state, not the rejection of all forms of social organization or even hierarchy (i.e. it is perfectly consistent for there to be an organized anarchist movement, even one with leaders). In the case of 19th-Century anarchist socialism, there were two major thinkers: the French Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Russian Mikhail Bakunin.

Proudhon was the author of a book entitled “What Is Property?” in which he answered unequivocally that “property is theft.” The idea of ownership was vacuous and false, a conceit that ensured the wealthy maintained their hold on political and legal power. Unlike his rival Louis Blanc, Proudhon was skeptical of the state's ability to effect meaningful reform. After the failure of the French revolution of 1848, Proudhon advocated local cooperatives of workers in a kind of “economic federalism” in which cooperatives would exchange goods and services between one another, and each cooperative would reward work with the fruits of that work. Simply put, workers themselves would keep all profit. He believed emancipation would come through some kind of revolution but did not advocate violence.

Mikhail Bakunin believed in the necessity of an apocalyptic, violent revolution to wipe the social slate clean for a new society of free collectives. He loathed the state and detested the traditional family structure, seeing it as a useless holdover from the past. Bakunin thought that if his contemporary society was destroyed, the social instincts inherent to humanity would flower and people would “naturally” build a better society. He was also the great champion of the outcasts, the bandits, and the urban poor. Eventually, he organized large anarchist movements in Europe's “periphery,” especially in Italy and Spain.

Marxism

The most influential socialist was a German: Karl Marx. Born in 1818 in the Rhineland, Marx was the son of Jewish parents who had converted to Lutheranism (out of necessity - Marx’s father was a lawyer in conservative, staunchly Lutheran Prussia). He was a passionate and brilliant student who believed that philosophy was only important if it led to practical change – he wrote, “philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it.” By 1840, Marx became an avowed socialist and penned (along with his friend and collaborator Friedrich Engels), *The Communist Manifesto*.

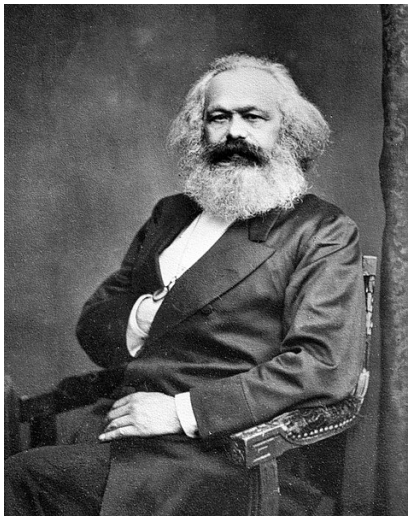


Figure 15.8.2: The best-known portrait of Marx, dating from 1875.

After the failure of the Revolutions of 1848 and exiled to Great Britain, Marx began a detailed analysis of the endogenous tendencies of capitalist economics, ultimately producing three enormous volumes entitled, simply, *Capital*. The first was published in 1867, with the other two edited from notes and published by Engels after Marx’s death. Marx’s theories would have a profound influence. By the middle of the 20th-Century, a third of the world was governed by communist states that were at least nominally “Marxist” in their political and economic policies.

According to Marx, all of history is the history of class struggle. From ancient pharaohs to feudal kings and their nobles, the rich and powerful had always abused and exploited the poor and weak. The world had moved on into a new phase following the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution into an ongoing struggle from two main classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie were the rising middle classes, the owners of factories and businesses, the bankers, and all of those with direct control over industrial production. The proletariat was the industrial working class.

Pre-modern era workers generally had direct access to their livelihood: a small parcel of land, access to the common lands, and tools of their trade in the case of artisans. According to Marx's idea, they had some kind of protected access to "the means of production," which could mean anything from some land, a plow, and an ox to a workshop stocked with a carpenter's tools. However, those rights and those tools were systematically taken away in the modern era. The common lands were closed off and

replaced with commercial farms. Artisans were rendered obsolete by the growth of industry. Peasants were pushed off the land or owned plots so small their children had to look for work in the cities. The net effect: the class of workers had "nothing to sell but their labor".

At the same time, the people who did own property, "the bourgeoisie," were under pressure. In the climate of the new capitalism, of unregulated markets and cutthroat competition, it was terribly easy to fall behind and go out of business. Thus, former members of the bourgeoisie lost out and became proletarians themselves. As the proletariat grew, every other conceivable class (including peasants, the owners of small shops, etc.) shrank.

Meanwhile, industry produced more and more products. Continuance improvements in efficiency and economy in production created a terrific glut of products available for purchase. Eventually, there were simply too many products and not enough people who could afford to buy them. Thus, the proletariat faced a form of "alienation," an inability to buy the very things they made. This resulted in a "crisis of overproduction" and a massive economic collapse. (In a pre-modern economy, the essential problem had been society faced was the scarcity of goods.) Thanks to the Industrial Revolution, products need consumers more than consumers need products.

Marx wrote that the members of the proletariat *could* realize their common interests in seizing the unprecedented wealth that industrialism had made possible and using it for the common good. Instead of a handful of super-rich expropriators, *everyone* could share in material comfort and freedom from scarcity, something that had never been possible before. In other words, given capitalism's inherent tendencies, a revolution was inevitable.

Revolutions did happen, most spectacularly in 1848. However, the revolutionary momentum ebbed, and conservatives regained the initiative. Subsequently, Marx devoted himself to the analysis of capitalism’s inherent characteristics rather than revolutionary propaganda. With staggering erudition, he tried to make sense of an economic system that somehow repeatedly destroyed itself and yet regrew stronger, faster, and more violent with every business cycle.

In historical hindsight, Marx was really writing about what would happen if capitalism was allowed to run *completely rampant*, as it did in the first century of the Industrial Revolution. The hellish mills, the starving workers, and the destitution and anguish of the factory towns were all part of nineteenth-century European capitalism. Everything that could contain those factors, primarily in the form of concessions to workers and state intervention in the economy, had not happened on a large scale when Marx was writing. Indeed, trade unions were outlawed in most states until the middle of the century. In turn, none of the factors that might mitigate capitalism’s destructive tendencies were financially beneficial to any *individual* capitalist, so Marx saw no reason that they would ever come about on a large scale in states controlled by moneyed interests.

To boil it down to a very simple level, Marx never described in adequate detail when the material conditions for a socialist revolution were possible. Across the vast breadth of his books and correspondence, Marx (and his collaborator Friedrich Engels) argued that each nation would have to reach a critical threshold in which industrialism was mature, the proletariat was large and self-aware, and the bourgeoisie was using increasingly harsh political tactics to try to keep the proletariat in check. According to Marxism, there would have to be, and there always would be, a major economic crisis caused by overproduction.

At that point, the proletariat could rise up and take over. In some of his writings, Marx indicated that the proletariat would revolt spontaneously, without guidance from anyone else. In the second section of his early work *The Communist Manifesto*, he alluded to the existence of a political party, the *communists*, who would work to help coordinate and aid the proletariat in the revolutionary process.

The bottom line: Marx was very good at critiquing the internal laws of the free market in capitalism and pointing out many of its problems, but he had no tactical guide to revolutionary politics. Toward the end of his life, Marx himself was increasingly worried that socialists, including self-styled Marxists, would try to stage a revolution “too early” and it would fail or result in disaster.

In sum, Marx did not leave a clear picture of what socialists were supposed to do, politically, nor did he describe how a socialist state would work if a revolution was successful. Historically, socialist revolutions *were* successful, and those nations had to try to figure out how to govern in a socialistic way.

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15.8: Social Classes

How much did European society resemble the sociological description provided by Marx? At first sight, most people were still farmers, every country except Britain was still mostly rural, and the Industrial Revolution took decades to spread beyond its British heartland. That being said, European society *was* undergoing significant changes, and Marx was right in identifying the new professional middle class, the bourgeoisie, as the agents of much of that change.

"Bourgeoisie" is French for "business class." Originally, the term originally meant, simply, "townspeople." Over time, it acquired the connotation of someone who made money from commerce, banking, or administration but did not have a noble title. By the early 1800s, the bourgeoisie made up between 15% and 20% of the population of central and western Europe. The male members were factory owners, clerks, commercial and state bureaucrats, journalists, doctors, lawyers, and everyone else who fell into that ambiguous class of “businessmen.” They were increasingly proud of their identity as “self-made” men, whose financial success was based on intelligence, education, and competence instead of noble privilege and inheritance. Many regarded the old order as an archaic throwback, limiting their ability to make money and society’s possibilities of further progress. At the same time, they did not work with their hands to make a living; they were neither farmers, artisans, nor industrial workers.

The bourgeoisie was proud of its self-understood sobriety and work ethic, in contrast to the foppery and frivolity of the nobility. Successful middle class members often eagerly bought as much land as they could, both in emulation of the nobles and because the right to vote in most of western Europe was tied to land ownership. In turn, nobles were wary of the middle class, especially because so many bourgeois were attracted to potentially disruptive ideologies like liberalism and nationalism. Over the course of the century, the two classes tended to mix based on wealth. Old families of nobles may have despised the “nouveau riche,” but they still married them if they needed the money.

The bourgeoisie had certain *visible* things that defined them as a class, literal “status symbols.” They did not perform manual labor and insisted on the highest standards of cleanliness and tidiness in their appearance and homes. All but the most marginal bourgeois families employed at least one full-time servant (recruited from the working class and always paid a pittance) to maintain those standards of hygiene. If possible, bourgeois women did no paid work at all, serving instead as keepers of the home and the maintainers of the rituals of visiting and hosting that maintained their social network. Finally, the bourgeoisie socialized in private places: private clubs, the new department stores that opened in for the first time in the mid-nineteenth century, and the foyers of private homes. The working classes met in taverns (“public houses” or just “pubs” in Britain), while bourgeois men and women stayed safely inside.

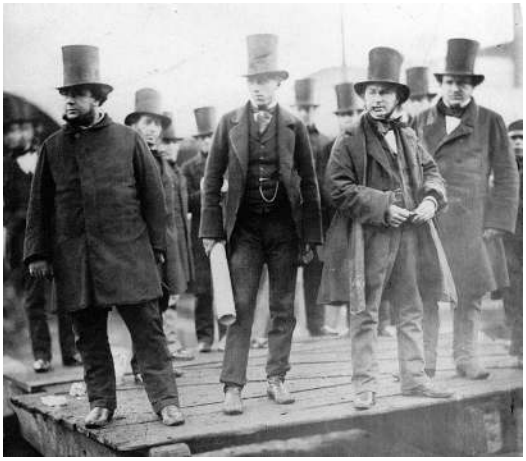


Figure 15.9.1: Clothing among the bourgeoisie came to resemble a specific “uniform” of respectability in the nineteenth century - the top hat was an iconic mark of class identity by the middle of the century.

In addition, the members of the bourgeoisie were supposed to live by certain codes of behavior. In contrast to the sexual libertinage of the old nobility, bourgeois men and women were expected to avoid extra-marital affairs. (Although, practically speaking, bourgeois men regularly took advantage of prostitutes). A bourgeois man was to maintain high standards of honesty and business ethics. Popular literature is filled with references to the failure of the bourgeois to live up to these standards and being exposed to vast public humiliation.

What about the nobility? The legal structures that sustained their identity slowly but surely weakened over the course of the nineteenth century. Generational wealth shifted away from land to commerce and industry. Relatively few noblemen had been involved in the early Industrial Revolution, in large part to their traditional disdain for commerce. But, by the middle of the century, it was apparent that industry, banking, and commerce were eclipsing land ownership as the major sources of wealth. At the same time, universal male suffrage was on the horizon (or had already come to pass, as it did in France in 1871) in almost every country in Europe.

Thus, while stubbornly clinging to its titles and its claims to authority, the nobility grudgingly entered into the economic fields of the bourgeoisie and adopted the bourgeoisie's social habits as well. The lines between the upper echelons of the bourgeoisie and the bulk of the nobility were very blurry by the end of the century, as bourgeois money funded old noble houses that still had access to the social prestige of a title.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

16: The Politics of the Nineteenth Century

16.1: The Congress of Vienna

16.2: Revolts and Revolutions

16.3: The Revolutions of 1848

16.4: National Unifications---Italy

16.5: Germany

16.6: Russia

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16.1: The Congress of Vienna

At its simplest, 19th-Century European politics can be seen as a series of struggles and compromises between different political ideologies and their corresponding movements, normally pitting conservatives against liberals and nationalists. A series of revolutions shook much of Europe in 1848. But, in their aftermath, conservative monarchs regained control almost everywhere. After 1848, conservatism slowly adopted liberal and nationalistic traits, culminating in the conservative-led national unifications of Italy and Germany. Of the new political movements considered in the last chapter, only socialism failed to achieve its stated goals at least somewhere in Europe, instead becoming an increasingly militant movement opposed not just to conservatives, but its occasional former allies: liberals and nationalists.

After the Napoleonic wars, the great powers of Europe deliberately crafted a new political arrangement whose purpose was, in part, to maintain peace between them. Starting 1853, that peace was broken occasionally. But, the subsequent wars were shorter, less bloody, and less frequent than those of any previous century. According to historians, the nineteenth century *technically* ended in 1900, but in terms of its prevailing political, social, and cultural patterns, it *really* ended in 1914, with the advent of the horrendous bloodshed and destruction of World War I.

Congress of Vienna (revisited)

When Napoleon was first defeated in 1814, representatives from the victorious states gathered in the Austrian capital of Vienna to establish what was to be done in the aftermath of his conquests. Napoleon's escape from Elba and inconvenient attempts to re-establish his empire forced the representatives to suspend their meeting. The Congress of Vienna finally concluded in 1815. While various states in Europe, including the Ottoman Empire, sent representatives, the Congress was dominated by the five "great powers": the Austrian Empire, Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, and (by the end) France.

At its conclusion, the Congress of Vienna had redrawn the map of Europe with the goal of preventing France from threatening the balance of power again. Louis XVIII, the younger brother of the executed Louis XVI, was placed on the throne of France, and the "great powers" had the good sense to avoid punishing the French (not least because the French might opt to have yet another revolution in response). Much of the credit was due to a wily diplomat, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, a former official under Napoleon, who convinced the other representatives to include France as an equal partner rather than an enemy. Instead, the victors deprived the French of their conquests and imposed a modest indemnity, but they did not dismember the country. They did, however, redraw the map of Europe.

The powers had a few specific goals at the conference.

- Create lasting conservative order in France.
- Restrain French ambition and stave off the threat of another revolution.
- Reward themselves with territory taken from weaker states like Poland and the formerly independent territories of northern Italy.
- Suppress future revolutionary movements.

The political order that emerged became known as the Congress System (also known as the Concert of Europe): a conservative international political network maintained by the five great powers.

The Congress System was devoted to peace, stability, and order. While Great Britain was content with any political arrangement that prevented a disruption like the Napoleonic wars from occurring again, the more conservative states were not. Led by the Russian Tsar Alexander I, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and France (the latter under its new Bourbon monarch Louis XVIII) joined in a "Holy Alliance" that promised to put down revolutions wherever they might occur. Now, war would be waged in the name of dynastic sovereignty and the conservative political order, not territorial ambition. In other words, the next time France invaded Spain and Russia invaded Hungary, they did so in the name of restoring foreign conservative monarchs to their "rightful" position of power, not in order to enrich themselves.



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16.2: Revolts and Revolutions

Spain

The military commitment of the Holy Alliance was soon put into action. In the immediate aftermath of the Congress of Vienna, the first liberal revolt against a conservative monarch occurred in what had traditionally been one of the most conservative states of Europe: Spain.

The French Revolution was the symbol of progress for liberals all over Europe, even if they had misgivings about the Terror. During the Napoleonic period, Spanish liberal intellectuals had been stuck in an awkward position. France ruled the country, taxed it, and extracted resources for Napoleons' wars, but it also represented the best hope of liberal reform. When the Spanish resistance sprung up against the French under Napoleon, it was an alliance of conservative priests and peasants, along with conservative nobles, who spearheaded it. Most Spanish liberals did end up supporting the resistance, but still hoped that the post-Napoleonic order would see liberal reforms to the Spanish monarchy.

Toward the end of the Napoleonic period, the Spanish representative assembly, the *cortes*, approved a liberal constitution. Once back in power, the restored Spanish king Ferdinand VII, refused to recognize the constitution, and he refused to summon the *cortes*. With the approval of the other conservative monarchies of Europe, Ferdinand essentially moved to turn back the clock to the pre-revolutionary period.

While Ferdinand was able to force Spain back toward the old order, he proved unable to squelch independence movements in Spain’s American colonies. In 1816, an anti-Spanish uprising in Argentina began and soon spread to the other colonies. By 1824, all of Central and South America was independent. Also, in 1820, during the midst of the failure of Spanish military expeditions to stop the revolutions, an alliance of liberal politicians and military officers staged a coup against Ferdinand and began remaking Spain as a liberal state.



Figure 16.2.1: The Arch-Conservative Spanish King Ferdinand VII

The Spanish liberal coup of 1820 was the first major test of the Holy Alliance’s commitment to prevent revolution anywhere in Europe. The alliance's continental members supported a French army of 200,000 invading Spain and restoring Ferdinand to the throne. The liberals were persecuted and hounded, and Spain was essentially ruled by an arch-conservative order for the next few decades. At this time, U.S. President James Monroe issued the Monroe Doctrine, which forbid European powers from interfering in the politics of the Americas. Monroe feared that the Holy Alliance would try to extend its intervention to the now-former Spanish colonies. The proclamation was a warning that any attempt by a European power to intervene in the western hemisphere would be considered a threat to US peace and safety.

Russia

The next liberal revolt occurred in Europe's *most* conservative political state: Russia. Late in the Napoleonic wars, some Russian officers in the Tsarist army underwent a pair of related revelations. First, they came to admire the bravery and loyalty of their soldiers, all of whom were drawn from the ranks of the serfs. Next, they experienced western ideas and culture firsthand as Russian

armies fought Napoleon's forces and later occupied France. There, the sheer backwardness of Russia stood in contrast to the dynamism and vitality they discovered in French society (especially in Paris itself). The officers came to see serfdom as both fundamentally immoral and totally incompatible with any hope of progress for Russia. After the Congress of Vienna, a conspiracy of liberal officers emerged, intent on creating a liberal political order for the Russian state once the aging, fanatically religious, and arch-conservative Tsar Alexander I died.

The Tsar died ten years later (1825), resulting in the "Decembrist" uprising. The conspiracy of army officers put plans in motion to force the government to accept liberal reforms, especially a constitution guaranteeing basic rights and freeing the serfs. When the new Tsar, Nicholas I, was crowned in December of 1825, the officers staged a rebellion in the square in front of the royal palace in St. Petersburg, hoping that the army as a whole would side with them and force the Tsar to accept reforms. Instead, after a tense day of waiting, troops loyal to the Tsar opened fire and crushed the uprising.

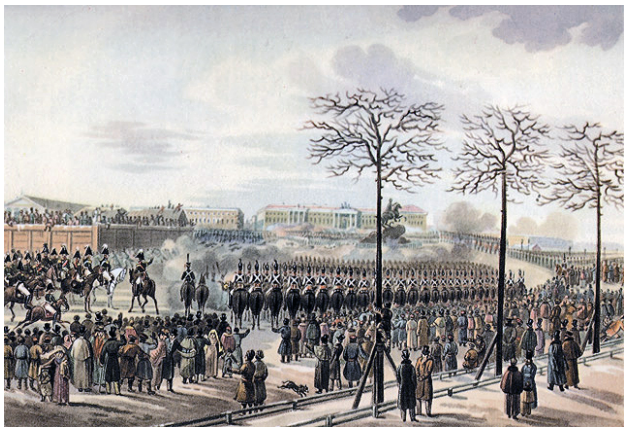


Figure 16.2.2: The Decembrist uprising, depicted at the moment troops loyal to the tsar opened fire.

Tsar Nicholas I was the ultimate reactionary, personally overseeing the police investigation of the Decembrist conspiracy and creating Europe's first secret police force, The Third Section. He would have a long rule (r. 1825 - 1855) defining the Russian autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationality. In the decades that followed, the slightest sign of dissent from a Russian subject was grounds for imprisonment or exile to a Siberian prison-village. Thus, the political and social changes that swept across the rest of Europe were held at bay. Tsarist power remained intact, but Russian society (and the Russian economy) stagnated.

Greece

Even as the Decembrist uprising failed, another revolt was being fought in the heartland of "Western Civilization": Greece. The Balkans, including Greece, as well as Bosnia, Serbia, and Macedonia, had been part of the Ottoman Empire for hundreds of years. The predominantly Christian subjects of the Ottomans enjoyed official religious toleration, but chafed at the tax burden and increasingly resented the "foreign" rule of the Turks. This resentment coalesced around the new political ideology of nationalism. Just as "Germans" resented the conservative Austrian regime and Poles detested the Russian and Prussian states that had divided up Polish territory, Greeks (as well as Serbs, Croatians, and the other peoples of the Balkans) increasingly saw themselves as autonomous peoples artificially ruled by a foreign power.

In 1821, a Greek prince named Alexander Ypsilantis organized a revolt centered on the demand for a Greek state. A series of uprisings occurred in Greece and on various islands in the Aegean Sea. The Ottoman Empire was a nominal ally of the members of the Holy Alliance and an official part of the Congress System, and the Greek uprising was precisely the kind of thing that the Holy Alliance had been organized to prevent. However, Europeans soon flocked to support the rebellion. European scholars wrote impassioned articles about how Greece, as the birthplace of European culture, needed to be liberated from the "oriental" tyranny of the Turks.

After reports of a Turkish massacre of Greeks were publicized in Europe, the Holy Alliance demanded that Turkey grant Greek independence. The Ottomans refused. In 1827, a combined fleet of Britain, France, and Russia sunk an Ottoman fleet. Fighting continued between the rebels and the Ottomans for a few years, with European powers continuing to support going to the rebels. (Russia actually declared war in 1829.). Finally, in 1833, the Ottomans relented and granted independence to Greece.

In this case, the cultural bias pitting European Christians against (perceived) non-European Muslims proved stronger than the pragmatic, conservative concern with suppressing revolutions among the European powers. Following the Greek uprising, the Ottoman Empire entered into a period of marked decline in power. The Ottoman Empire was soon referred to as the "sick man of Europe," and squabbling over Ottoman territory became an increasing source of tension between the European great powers by the middle of the century.

France

While the Greek uprising raged in the eastern Mediterranean, a revolution was brewing once again in France. King Charles X, the arch-conservative and nearly delusional king of France from 1824 – 1830, was one of the most unpopular monarchs in Europe. During his rule, a small group of rich politicians in the French Chamber of Deputies passed a law making religious sacrilege punishable by death (no one was ever actually executed). In addition, he re-instituted harsh censorship even as French society had become increasingly literate and liberal. In July of 1830, angered at the growing strength of liberalism, Charles disenfranchised most voters and further clamped down on the freedom of the press.

The result was a kind of accidental revolution in which angry crowds took to the streets, and the king lost his nerve and fled. Just as they had in the first French Revolution, the army sided with the crowd of protesters, not with the king. After Charles X fled to exile in England, his cousin Louis-Philippe of the Orléans branch of the royal line became the king. The so-called "citizen king" expanded the electorate, reinstituted freedom of the press, and abandoned the medieval court etiquette favored by Charles X.

The "July Monarchy" of Louis-Philippe demonstrated some of the limitations of liberalism at the time. The electorate was very small, comprised of the wealthy (both noble and bourgeois). The government essentially ran like a company devoted to making the rich and connected richer and better connected, while leaving the majority of the population without access to political power. Workers were banned from forming unions, and even relatively prosperous bourgeois were not rich enough to vote. Louis-Philippe became increasingly unpopular as the years went on. Indeed, satirical cartoons often depicted him as an obese, spoiled pear. The July Monarchy lasted fourteen years and was toppled during the revolutions of 1848.

Great Britain

Meanwhile, in Great Britain, it seemed possible that a revolution might occur. As of 1815, the country was comparatively "liberal", having been a constitutional monarchy since 1689. However, the parliament had limited representative government, and the electorate mostly represented the landowning gentry class. Furthermore, the electoral districts were either totally out of sync with the British population or were, in fact, complete nonsense. Voting districts had not been revised to reflect changes in population since the eighteenth century, and thus, the north was sorely underrepresented. Also, there were "rotten boroughs," electoral districts with no one in them, which were controlled remotely by a lord. For example, Dunwich was literally underwater. However, it still sent a lord to parliament, who was a descendant of the lords who controlled the land before it was submerged.

A series of reforms in Britain staved off a revolution along continental lines. First, in 1828 and 1829, separate bills made it legal for Catholics and non-Anglican Protestants to hold office. Next, the Great Reform Bill of 1832 expanded the electorate to encompass most of the urban middle class and eliminated the rotten boroughs entirely. This law only passed the arch-conservative House of Lords because the lords were terrified that the disgruntled middle class would join with workers in an actual revolution. The newly liberalized parliament that followed swiftly voted to end slavery in British territories (1833), passed the controversial Poor Laws that created public workhouses (1834) for the unemployed, and eliminated corrupt and archaic city governments and replaced them with elected councils. A decade later, the hated Corn Laws were finally repealed after a protracted political struggle (1846). Thus, the pattern in British politics in the nineteenth century was a slow, steady liberalization, even as Britain clinched its position as the most powerful single state in Europe by the middle of the century.

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16.3: The Revolutions of 1848

In 1848, all across Europe, revolutions combined the liberal, socialist, and nationalist movements in a temporary alliance against the conservative order. Starting in France, but quickly spreading to Prussia, Austria, the smaller German kingdoms, and regions like Italy and Hungary, coalitions rose up and, temporarily, succeeded in either running their monarchs out of their capital cities (as in Paris) or forcing the monarchs to agree to constitutions and rationalized legal systems (as in Prussia and Austria).

France

In February of 1848 in France, the unpopular king Louis-Philippe unwisely tried to crack down on gatherings of would-be reformers. After panicked soldiers fired and killed forty protesters, crowds began to build barricades and prepared to fight back. The king promptly fled the city. A diverse group of liberals and socialists formed a provisional government, declared France to be a new republic, and drew up plans for a general election for representatives to a new government. There would be no property restrictions on voting - although women remained disenfranchised. Never again, would a monarch hold the throne of France simply because of his or her dynastic birth.

Revolutionary coalitions soon discovered that their constituent elements did not necessarily agree on the major political issues that had to be addressed in creating a new government. The socialists in the new French parliament (called the National Assembly, just as it was in the first French republic earlier) created new "National Workshops" in Paris that offered good wages to anyone in need of work. Soon, however, the workshops were shut down as the alliance between liberals and socialists broke down over resentment at the facilities' costs. The workers of Paris rose up in protest. A series of bloody street battles called the June Days broke out, resulting in the deaths and imprisonment of thousands of Parisian workers. Conservative peasants were sent by railroad from the countryside under orders from the Assembly. In just a few days, the great socialist experiment was crushed.

In the aftermath of the June Days, the government of the Second Republic was torn between liberals, socialists, and conservatives (the latter of whom wanted to restore the French monarchy). Amid the chaos, Napoleon Bonaparte’s nephew, Louis Napoleon, successfully ran for president of the Republic. Posing as a unifying force above the fray of petty politics, he was genuinely popular across class and regional lines throughout France. In 1852, he staged a coup and declared himself Emperor of France, just as his uncle had decades earlier. Also, like the first Napoleon, his power was ratified by bypassing the Assembly entirely and calling for a plebiscite (vote of the entire male population) in support of his title, which he won by a landslide. He took the title of Napoleon III. (Napoleon II, the first Napoleon's son, had died years earlier.) Thus, in a few short years, the second experiment in democratic politics in France ended just as the first one had: a popular dictator named Napoleon took over.

Austria

Meanwhile, in Austria, crowds took to the streets of Vienna after learning of the revolution in Paris. (Telegraphs now carried information across Europe in hours. Thus, this was the first time revolutions were tied together via "social media".) Peasants marched into the capital, demanding the end of feudalism. Workers demanded better wages and conditions. Liberals demanded a constitution. After learning about events in Austria, nationalists in non-German areas rose up in the regional capitals of Prague and Budapest demanding their own independent nations. It looked like the Austro-Hungarian Empire itself was on the verge of collapse.



Figure 16.3.1: Europe in 1848. Note the red marks on the map - those denote major revolutionary outbreaks.

German States

In Prussia and the other German kingdoms, a series of revolutions saw hundreds of would-be politicians in the city of Frankfurt. In a historical first, a popularly elected national assembly gathered to draw up a constitution based on the principle of German unity and a liberalized legal order. Not only Prussians, but representatives of the various other kingdoms of Germany came together and began the business of creating a unified state. However, the representatives had to debate some thorny issues. Should the German liberals support free enterprise or a guaranteed "right to work," as demanded by German socialists? Should they support the independence of Poland at the expense of the German minority there? Should they favor Bohemian independence at the expense of the German minority in the Czech lands? About 800 delegates, elected from all over the German states, operating without the official sanction of any of the kings and princes of their homelands, *all* wanted the chance to speak.

The major debate was about the form of German nationalism that should be adopted: should Germany be a “smaller German” state defined by German speakers and excluding Austria, or a “greater German” state including Austria and all of its various other ethnicities and languages? It took months, but the final conclusion was that any state could join Germany, only if it “left behind” non-German territories (like Hungary). Further, the delegates agreed that Polish and Czech nationalism had to be crushed because of German “racial” superiority, an early anticipation of the Germanic ethnocentrism that would eventually give rise to Nazism almost a century later.

This flowering of revolutionary upheaval proved shockingly short-lived. The coalitions of artisans, students, and educated liberals who had spearheaded the uprisings were good at arguing with one another about the finer points of national identity, but not so good at establishing meaningful links to the bulk of the population who did not live in or near capital cities. Despite the growing popularity of German nationalism, the Frankfurt Congress was the quintessential expression of that form of dysfunction: impassioned, educated men, mainly lawyers, with few direct links to the majority of the German population. Unlike France, in the German kingdoms, Italy, and Austria, monarchs and officials worked behind the scenes to re-establish control of armies and shore up their own support while hastily-created assemblies were trying to draw up liberal constitutions.

Austria and Prussia

In both Austria and Prussia (as well as the smaller German kingdoms), conservative forces turned the tide as the revolutionary coalitions wasted time debating the minutia of the new political order. By the autumn of 1849, forces loyal to the Austrian emperor, aided by a full-scale Russian invasion of Hungary in the name of Holy Alliance principles, restored Habsburg rule throughout the empire. In the meantime, when the Prussian King Wilhelm IV was presented with the constitution, he simply refused to accept it (he called the offered position a “crown from the gutter”). At the same time, the kings of the smaller German states reasserted their control across the German lands.

Consequences

Ultimately, all the revolutions “failed” in their immediate goals of creating liberal republics, as did the socialist dreams of state-sponsored workshops for the unemployed. According to one prominent historian, in 1848, Europe had “reached its turning point

and failed to turn." This statement is not entirely true, however. Even though conservative regimes ultimately retained power, the revolutions altered the definition of conservatism and the methods conservatives used.

First, some limited constitutional and parliamentary reforms did occur in many kingdoms. Relying on Russian support, the Austrian Empire had been restored by conservative forces, and the new constitution of 1849 did institute a parliament. By the latter half of the century, elected representative bodies became the norm across Europe. Electorates were almost always limited to property owners. (Women were not part of electorates until the 20th Century.) Likewise, accepting the need for written constitutions and ending the old feudal obligations of peasants were marked steps toward liberalism.

Second, the power of nationalism was obvious to everyone in the aftermath of 1848, including conservative monarchs. Only the Russian invasion had prevented Hungary from achieving its independence, and Italian uprisings against Austria had been contained only with great difficulty. Subsequently, conservatives began to adopt some of the trappings of nationalism to retain their power. For example, the most noteworthy success stories of nineteenth-century nationalism, those of Italy and Germany, were led by conservative politicians, not by utopian insurgents.

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16.4: National Unifications---Italy

The most spectacular successes were in Italy and Germany, two areas with ancient regional identities but a total lack of political unity. Italy had last been united during the period of the Roman Empire, whereas Germany had *never* been truly united. Note: Italy and Germany referred to a region and a language, not a kingdom or nation, places where people spoke similar lingual dialects and had some kind of a shared history, but were divided between various kingdoms, cities, and empires.

Italy

During the first half of the 19th Century, a lack of unity was a source of inspiration for the nationalists. For example, Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Italy movement inspired comparable movements all over Europe in the 1830s. Mazzini was the quintessential romantic nationalist, who believed that nations would organically emerge to replace the tyranny of the old feudal order of conservative monarchs. Young Italy was just one of a number of “Young Europes” (e.g. Young Germany, Young Ireland) that shared this essentially optimistic, even utopian, outlook.

However, in the aftermath of 1848, even kings accepted that the popular desire for nations was too strong to resist forever. In Prussia and elsewhere, conservative monarchs began maneuvering to co-opt the very idea of nationalism. There was no great, sinister master plan. Instead, high-ranking royal officials completed a series of pragmatic political calculations. Through a combination of deliberate political manipulation and sheer chance, Italy was the first nation to unite under conservative leadership.

During the Renaissance, Spain and France had jostled for control and extinguished the independence of most Italian city-states. Later, Austria came to dominate the north, adding Italian regions and cities to the Austrian Empire. The south was essentially a feudal kingdom. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies being dominated by lesser branches of the Habsburg and then the Bourbon royal lines. In the middle was the Papal States, ruled by the pope. Despite the popularity of the concept of nationalism among the members of the small northern-Italian middle class, it had relatively little mass support. Indeed, less than 3% of the population was literate in the standard “Italian” language, the dialect spoken in the region of Tuscany.

Italian unification was the core focus of the kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, consisting of a large island in the Mediterranean and a chunk of land wedged between France, Spain, and the Austrian-dominated northern Italian states. King Victor Emmanuel II was from the old royal house of Savoy. The kingdom had retained independence following the Napoleonic period because it served as a useful buffer state between the French and Austrian spheres of influence. Victor Emanuel enjoyed interfering in foreign policy and took pride in his military prowess. Yet, he was too lazy to become involved in domestic affairs, which he left to his ministers. As a result, Count Camillo di Cavour (1810-1861) became the true architect of Italian unification.



Figure 26.4.1: Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont-Sardinia. Even by the standards of the time, he favored an impressive mustache.

Cavour used Italian nationalism to increase Piedmont-Sardinia’s power. He did not have any sentimental attachment to the concept of “Italy.” Instead, he wanted to make Piedmont-Sardinia the center of a larger, more powerful kingdom. As of the 1850s, the Crimean War had torn apart the system of alliances that had been so crucial in maintaining the balance of power after the Congress

of Vienna, and Cavour knew that he could play one great power off against the other to Piedmont's benefit. His plan was to use the rivalry between France and Austria. By having France support some kind of Italian independence from Austria in order to weaken the Habsburgs. In 1859, with French military support, Piedmont-Sardinia pushed the Austrians out of northern Italy and gained political ascendancy in the name of a new "Italian nation." In return, France received the city of Nice for continued support in holding the Austrians in check.

At this point, Giuseppe Garibaldi, an unexpected political leader, brought southern Italy into the equation. Garibaldi was an adventurer, a romantic nationalist, and a revolutionary who had spent most of his adult life as a mercenary battling in independence campaigns and wars, mostly in South America. During the Revolutions of 1848, he returned to Italy, only to see his hopes of both a united Italy and freedom from foreign control dashed due to the machinations of the Austrians, the French, and the papacy.

After Piedmont-Sardinia's success, Garibaldi returned. In May 1860, Garibaldi, with a tiny force of 1,000 red-shirted volunteers (mostly townsmen from the north, including numerous under-employed professional men and students hoping to avoid their examinations) packed aboard two leaky steamships, set out to invade Sicily. Garibaldi rapidly captured Palermo, the chief city of Sicily, with the support of the Sicilian peasants, who had been promised suspended taxes and land. Sicilian landowners realized the only hope of law and order was in protection by this radical dictator. Their gradual and reluctant transference of allegiance to the insurrection was a decisive event.

On August 18, Garibaldi crossed to mainland Italy for a planned invasion of the Papal States. However, Cavour convinced Napoleon III to block the further progress of Garibaldi's adventurers, with an assurance that the papacy itself (under French protection) would not be affected. Cavour threw the bulk of the Piedmontese army into the Papal States. When he arrived, Garibaldi ceded his conquests to Victor Emmanuel. Thus, the northern conquests of Piedmont-Sardinia were united with Garibaldi's bizarre conquest of the south. Italy had grown to encompass both Sicily and the south.

In a real sense, southern Italy emerged as the unfortunate loser of the wars of unification. In order to pay for the war of 1859, taxes had to be increased. In addition, the new Italian state needed a larger army and navy. Further, the extension of low tariffs from Piedmont to economically backward regions often completely extinguished the few local industries that existed. Nor did the new state have funds to alleviate distress or to undertake public works and infrastructure projects in the south. As a result, the rural poor became more totally dependent than ever on the local landowning class. Some members of the lower classes became "brigands" and immediately rose up against the new political order. To restore and maintain, the so-called Bandit Wars cost more lives than the wars of the unification itself. In the aftermath of the wars, the south was treated almost like a colony rather than a full-fledged part of the Italian nation, and politics revolved around the growing relationship between the official Italian government and (as of the 1880s) organized crime.

In 1861, at the time of Cavour's death, the new state had a population of 22 million, but an electorate of only half a million, limited to property-owners. Although a constitutional monarchy, Italian politics was about patronage: getting jobs for one's cronies and shifting the burden of taxation onto those who could least afford to pay it. In many respects, unification had amounted to the occupation of the rest of the country by the north. Many years would pass before the new state began to serve the needs and interests of the majority of its citizens.



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16.5: Germany

In Prussia, Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck was personally responsible for unifying Germany. Ruthless, practical, and completely amoral in his service to the Prussian king, he supported the idea of "*Realpolitik*": a political philosophy that insisted on being completely pragmatic and realistic, rather than pursuing empty goals like "glory" or pulling punches in the name of moral rectitude. Even though he was an arch-conservative, he introduced social reforms to blunt the growth of socialism. Ironically, the great German unifier was from an old Prussian noble family, a *Junker*, had no time for romantic nationalist drivel, and clearly stated that "the great questions of the time are not determined by speeches and majority decisions – that was the error of 1848 – but by iron and blood."

After 1815, "Germany" was nothing more than the "German Confederation," a free trade zone containing a number of independent kingdoms. In 1848, a strong sense of German nationalism culminated in the roughly year-long standoff between the elected group of self-understood German nationalist politicians in Frankfurt and the kings of Prussia and Austria (and those of the smaller German kingdoms). Although the revolution failed to create a "Germany", it became clear that a German state probably come into existence at some point. However, would it be a "greater Germany" under Austrian leadership or a "smaller Germany" under Prussia?

During the 1700s, Prussia had risen from a fairly poor backwater in the north, lacking natural resources and remote from the centers of intellectual and cultural life farther south, to one of the great kingdoms of Europe. This rise was largely due to the Hohenzollerns, who relied on a combination of ruthless administrative efficiency and a relentless focus on building up Prussia's military. Whereas the other royal houses sought to live in the style of the glorious French kings, the Hohenzollerns lived like reasonably well-off nobles, pouring state revenues into the army and insisting on brutal discipline. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Prussia was an established Great Power, part of the coalition that had defeated Napoleon, a military equal with Austria, and was poised to exert an even greater role in Central Europe.



Figure 16.5.1: The Holy Roman Empire in 1789. While many of the smallest states of the region vanished during the Napoleonic period, "Germany" remained nothing more than an idea in the early nineteenth century.

Otto Von Bismarck was an inheritor of these Prussian traditions, a conservative who served in various diplomatic posts in the Prussian kingdom before being promoted to chancellor by the Prussian King Wilhelm I. Bismarck did not have a master plan to unify Germany. His goal was always to maintain or, preferably, increase Prussia's power (in that sense, he was a lot like Cavour in

Piedmont-Sardinia). He became highly skilled at manipulating nationalist passions to inflame popular support for Prussian wars, but was deeply skeptical about a "national spirit" animating the need for unification.

Bismarck achieved German unification through war. He egged Austria on in a conflict over control of a region in northwestern Germany, recently seized from Denmark, and succeeded in getting the Austrians to declare war on Prussia. In 1866, Prussia's modernized and well-trained army smashed the Austrians in a few months. Significantly, however, Bismarck convinced the Prussian king not to order a march on Vienna and the occupation of Austria itself. After all, the goal had been to knock Austria out of contention as the possible governing power of Germany, *not* to try to conquer and control it. Conquest of Austria, he thought, would just lead to more headaches for Prussia since the Austrians would resent the Prussian takeover. This decision - not to conquer Austria when Prussia could have - was a perfect example of *Realpolitik*: a bloodless, realistic, coldly calculating approach to achieving greater political power without succumbing to some kind of ill-considered quest for "glory."

After defeating Austria, Bismarck tricked France into going to war. The Spanish throne suddenly became available because of a coup, and Bismarck sponsored a Prussian candidate related to the former Spanish ruling line, none other than the Bourbons of France. Even though Napoleon III was not a Bourbon, this was a direct attack on France's sphere of influence. Napoleon III was infuriated. Bismarck further humiliated Napoleon by leaking a memo to the press in which Napoleon's machinations for territory before the Austro-Prussian War were revealed. Feeling both threatened and belittled, Napoleon insisted that France declare war on Prussia.

The ensuing Franco-Prussian War started in late 1870 and was over by early 1871. Sick with the flu and without an ounce of his famous uncle's tactical expertise, Napoleon III foolishly led the French army into battle personally and was subsequently captured in the field. French forces were poorly led and could not stand up to Prussian training and tactics. As a result, Prussia won every important engagement. In one fell swoop, the myth of French military supremacy, a legacy from the first Napoleon, was destroyed, and Europeans were confronted with the fact that a new military power had asserted its strength in its stead.

In the aftermath of the Prussian victory, a new German empire was declared at Versailles, with Wilhelm I taking the title of Kaiser (emperor) of the German Reich (empire). The various smaller German kingdoms renounced their independence and pledged themselves to the newborn state in the process. France lost two important eastern regions, Alsace and Lorraine, and had to pay a considerable war indemnity, inspiring an enormous amount of resentment among the French (and leading to a desire for *revenche* – revenge). The German Empire became a constitutional monarchy in which all men over 25 could vote for representatives in the Reichstag, but an unelected federal council held considerable power, with the emperor having ultimate authority. Thus, even though Germany was a constitutional monarchy, it was hardly the liberal vision of a democratic state.

In one of the more bizarre historical episodes of the time, the city of Paris refused to concede defeat and fought on. The Prussians simply handed off the issue to the hastily-declared Third Republic of France, since Napoleon III had left into exile. Paris declared itself an independent city-state organized along socialist lines, the "Paris Commune,". From March through May, the French army besieged the *communards* in the capital. In the end, a French army stormed the city and approximately 20,000 *communards* were executed.

While Italian unification had redrawn the map of Europe and disturbed the balance of power, German unification utterly destroyed it. Germany contained Prussia and most of what had been the Holy Roman Empire. The German Reich had a large population, a rapidly industrializing, wealthy economy, and proven military might. From 1871 until the start of World War I in 1914, European great powers jockeyed for position, built up their respective military strength, and scrambled to seize territory overseas before their rivals did. Gone were the days of the Congress System and a balance of power based on the desire for peace.



Figure 16.5.2: Germany after unification. Note that the color-coded regions were the states of the German Empire: they retained considerable autonomy despite now being part of a single unified nation.

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16.6: Russia

In the context of 19th Century European politics, the histories of Great Britain and Russia were *always* exceptional. Neither underwent revolutionary upheavals, and neither had much difficulty suppressing nationalist movements from within their respective empires. And yet, the two countries were in many ways polar opposites.: Britain was an advanced industrial economy with a liberal constitution and a monarchy whose real political power declined over time. Meanwhile, Russia was an overwhelmingly agricultural - even feudal - economy with a powerful, autocratic head of state: the Tsar. The modernizing trends that changed much of the rest of Europe over the course of the century had the least impact on Russia of any of the major states.

Tsar Alexander I (r.1801 – 1825) was intensely conservative and had a powerful attraction to Orthodox Christian mysticism. In turn, he sincerely believed that he had a mission from God to maintain the sacred order of monarchy, nobility, and clergy. Becoming Tsar shortly after Napoleon seized power in France, Alexander believed the event was an unholy abomination, a perversion of the proper order of society as it had been ordained from on high. Ultimately, largely due to the winter and the brilliant tactical decision to camp out and wait for the French to run out of supplies, Russia defeated Napoleon's armies in 1812. Alexander sat in a position of great power at the Congress of Vienna because of the strength of his armies and aiding in the French's defeats of 1814 and 1815.

In 1815, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and, technically, the restored French monarchy formed the Holy Alliance that vowed to crush attempts to overthrow the social and political order with force. For Austria, this was a pragmatic gesture because the Habsburgs had to the most to lose in the face of nationalism. For Prussia, it was a way to cement their great power status and to be treated as an equal by the other members of the anti-Napoleonic coalition. For Russia and for Alexander, however, it was nothing less than a true holy mission that had to happen regardless of any practical benefits. Russia did indeed intervene to crush rebellions over the course of the next few decades, most importantly in 1848, when it decimated the Hungarian Revolution and returned Hungary to the Austrians.

Alexander I died in 1825, and his death promptly set off the Decembrist Uprising., which was crushed by his younger brother and heir Nicholas (r. 1825 - 1855). Much less of a mystic than his brother had been, Nicholas was equally trenchant in his opposition to any loosening of the Russian social order. During his rule, he championed the conservative cause, was a staunch supporter of the Holy Alliance, and formed the world's first modern secret police force, The Third Section. Nicholas declared his three principles of government: autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationality, the last of the three in service to the idea of Russian supremacy over its enormous empire and the other ethnic groups present in it.

19th Century Tsars were mostly arch-conservatives, and the vast majority of the Russian population had no interest in political change. The Russian serfs were among Europe's poorest, least educated, and most oppressed. The Russian Orthodox Church was closely tied to the government and preached total obedience to the authority of the Tsar. For that tiny sliver of educated society that could read and had access to foreign books, to discuss politics at all and advocate reform of any kind, was a punishable crime. Thousands were exiled to Siberia for making an off-hand remark about politics or owning a book describing a political concept originating in the west.



Figure 16.6.1: Tsar Nicholas I, architect of nineteenth-century Russian autocracy.

The Russian intelligentsia mostly belonged to the noble class: a small class of educated and very self-consciously cultured people who were at the forefront of Russian literature and artistic creation. They began modern Russian literature, containing great novelists like Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Chekhov. Their art dealt with both the thorny political issues of their time and a kind of ongoing spiritual quest to understand the Russian "soul," something that was usually identified with both nature and the mystical qualities of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Reading or discussing anything to do with politics was sufficient cause for arrest and exile to Siberia. As a result, many of the great novelists spent at least part of their lives in Siberia. Even Dostoevsky, a deeply conservative thinker hostile to radical or even disruptive politics, spent part of his life in exile. To be an intellectual was almost the equivalent of being a criminal in the eyes of the state. The police apparatus that matured under Nicholas I's rule perpetuated this phenomenon.

A momentous event occurred late in Nicholas's reign unrelated to Tsarist autocracy: the destruction of the Congress System created at the Congress of Vienna via the Crimean War. From 1854 – 1856, Russia tried to take advantage of the political decline of the Ottoman Empire to assert total control in the region of the Black Sea, and both France and Britain recognized those machinations as a threat to the balance of power. The Austrian government unwisely stayed neutral, which ruptured the alliance between it and Russia (after all, Russia had just put down the Hungarian uprising on Austria's behalf during the Revolutions of 1848).

While not long by the standards of the Napoleonic period, the Crimean War was nevertheless a major conflict. 600,000 men died, the majority from disease due to the abysmal conditions at the front. Russia ultimately lost, and the Congress System was finally undone. From that point on, the great powers of Europe feared and resented each other more so than they feared revolutionary forces from within. One manifestation of this newfound rivalry was the wars that saw the birth of Italy and Germany.

When Nicholas finally died in 1855, and his son Alexander II took the throne. In 1861, following Russia's defeat, Alexander made the momentous decision to emancipate the serfs, two years before the Emancipation Proclamation in the United States freed the African-American slaves. Russian elites thought that Russia had lost the war because of its backwardness. This backwardness could not be mitigated with serfdom weighing down the possibility of progress. However, emancipation had surprisingly little immediate impact on Russian society, because the serfs legally owed the government the money that had been distributed to buy their freedom from the nobility. Thus, for generations, serfs were still tied to the same land, laboring to survive and to pay off the debt incurred with their "freedom."

Ironically, Alexander II was assassinated by a radical terrorist group. The People's Will believed that the assassination of a Tsar would result in an enormous uprising of the newly-"liberated" peasants (i.e. the former serfs). In this, they were inspired by the anarchist socialism of the exiled Mikhail Bakunin, whose vision of an apocalyptic revolutionary transformation spoke directly to the social and political conditions of his native Russia.

Before the assassination, young members of the intelligentsia formed a social movement known as the Narodniks. The members advocated going "back to the people," living among and trying to educate the former serfs beginning in the spring of 1874. The serfs would form the nucleus of a revolutionary class that would rise up and dismantle Tsarist autocracy. Instead, the serfs were deeply suspicious of the urban, educated Narodniks. In many cases, the serfs actually turned the Narodniks into the local authorities. The disappointed Narodniks formed the People's Will, which killed Alexander II in March 1881.

While The People's Will had hoped that their assassination of Alexander II would result in a spontaneous uprising of the peasants against Tsarist despotism, nothing of the sort occurred. Instead, another reactionary Tsar, Alexander III, came to the throne and ruthlessly hunted down the terrorist groups. Now, there *were* terrorist groups, not just intellectuals guilty of discussing politics. One thing that practically every intellectual in Russian society (terrorist or not) believed was that meaningful change would require a significant, even radical, restructuring of Russian society. There was no room for weak-kneed reformism; it was a revolution or nothing. In this environment, Vladimir Lenin, future Bolsheviks, and the leaders of the Russian Communist Party were born. A brilliant intellectual, Lenin would synthesize the writings of Marx with the tradition of Russian radical terrorism, producing a potent combination of theoretical and practical political concepts that were realized in 1917.

By the late 19th Century, Russia had changed the least among the great powers of Europe. Whereas the other states, from Austria to the new Germany to France, had all adopted at least some form of representative government, Russia remained staunchly autocratic and monarchical. The Russian economy was overwhelmingly agricultural and rural, with industrialization only arriving at the very end of the century in and around some of the large cities of western Russia. In a sense, Russia was stuck in a historical impasse that would only end with outright revolution, first in 1905 and again in 1917.

Russia in 1871



Source: TimeMaps

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

17: Culture, Science, and Pseudo-Science

17.1: Victorian Culture

17.2: Scientific and Pseudo-Scientific Discoveries and Theories

17.3: Mass Culture

17.4: Culture Struggles--Germany

17.5: First Wave Feminism

17.6: Modern Anti-Semitism

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17.1: Victorian Culture

Equally momentous shifts in culture and learning occurred during the 19th Century. The cultural era is known as “Victorianism,” named after the British Queen Victoria, who presided over the zenith of British power and the height of British imperialism. Her astonishingly long reign, from 1837 to 1901, coincided with the triumph of bourgeois norms of behavior among self-understood elites.



Figure 17.1.1: Queen Victoria, the symbolic matriarch of Western culture in the nineteenth century.

Victorianism was the culture of top hats, dresses that covered every inch of the female body, rigid gender norms, and an almost pathological fear of sexuality. Its defining characteristic was the desire for security from the influence of the lower classes. Class divisions were made visible in the clothing and manners of individuals, with each class outfitted in distinct “uniforms”. Indeed, one’s hat indicated one’s income and class membership. The bourgeoisie increasingly mixed with the old nobility, and came to assert a self-confident vision of a single European culture that, they thought, *should* dominate the world. Social elites insisted that scientific progress, economic growth, and their own increasing political power were all results of the superiority of European civilization, a civilization that had reached its pinnacle due to their own ingenuity. By the latter decades of the century, they characterized that superiority in racial terms.

According to the great Victorian psychologist Sigmund Freud, Victorianism was fundamentally about the repression of natural instincts. Three threats were present in the lives of social elites: the threat of sexual impropriety, the threat of financial failure, the threat of immoral behavior being discovered in public. All of these threats were tied to *shame*. Further, Victorianism was connected to Christian piety. The impulse to tie morality to a code of shame was secularized in the Victorian era to apply to everything, especially in economics. Simply put, there was a moral connection between virtue and economic success. The wealthy came to regard their social and economic status as proof of their strong ethical character, not just luck, connections, or hard work. Thus, Victorian culture included a belief in the existence of good and evil in the moral character of individuals, traits that science, they thought, *should* be able to identify just as it was now able to identify bacteria.

The Victorian bourgeoisie accused the working class of inherent weakness and turpitude. According to this social class, as the labor movements and socialist parties grew, the demands of the working class for shortened working days spoke not to their exhaustion and exploitation, but to their laziness and lack of work ethic. The Victorian bourgeoisie were the champions of the notion that everyone got what they deserved and that science itself would eventually ratify the social order. What the Victorian elite feared more than anything was that the working class would somehow overwhelm them, through a communist revolution or by simply "breeding" out of control. They tended to fear a concomitant national decline, sometimes even imagining that Western Civilization itself had reached its pinnacle and was doomed to degenerate.

There were remarkable contrasts between the ideology of Victorian life and its lived reality. Even though much of the fear of social degeneration was exaggerated, alcoholism became much more common and drug use spread. Cocaine was regarded as a medicinal pick-me-up, and respectable diners sometimes finished meals with strawberries dipped in ether. Many novels critiqued the hypocrisy of social elites and their pretensions to rectitude. Two classics of horror writing, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Dracula*, are both about the monsters that lurked within bourgeois society, just under the surface of their respectable exteriors.

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17.2: Scientific and Pseudo-Scientific Discoveries and Theories

During the Victorian Era, some of the most important breakthroughs had to do with medicine and biology. Those genuine advances were accompanied by the growth of scholarship that claimed to be truly scientific, but that violated the tenets of the scientific method, employed sloppy methods, were based on false premises, or were otherwise simply factually inaccurate. Those fields constitute branches of “pseudo-”, meaning “false,” science.

Disease had always been the greatest threat to humankind - of the “four horsemen of the apocalypse,” it was Pestilence that traditionally delivered the most bodies to Death. In turn, the link between filth and disease had always been understood, but the rapid urbanization of the nineteenth century lent new urgency to the problem. For example, a modern sewer system was built in London after a terrible epidemic of cholera in 1848. Thus, before the mechanisms of contagion were understood, at least limited means to combat it were implemented in some European cities. Likewise, the first practical applications of chemistry to medicine occurred with the invention of anesthesia in the 1840s, allowing the possibility of surgery without horrendous agony.

First pioneered by the French chemist Louis Pasteur (1822 - 1895), bacteriology was a significant medical advancement of the era. While experimenting on the process of fermentation, Pasteur built on his ideas and proved microscopic organisms caused disease. Subsequently, he definitively proved that life's “spontaneous generation” was impossible and that microbes were responsible for putrefaction. He developed the technique of pasteurization to make foodstuffs safe (originally in service to the French wine industry), and created effective vaccines against diseases like anthrax that affected both humans and animals. In the course of just a few decades, Pasteur overturned the entire understanding of health itself. Other scientists followed his lead, and by the end of the century, deaths in Europe by infectious disease dropped by a full sixty percent, primarily through improvements in hygiene. (Antibiotics would not be developed until the end of the 1920s).



Figure 17.2.1: Pasteur, with some of his early experimental subjects.

These advances generated understandable excitement. At the same time, they fed into a newfound obsession with cleanliness. All of a sudden, people understood that they lived in a dirty world full of invisible enemies - germs. Good hygiene became a matter of survival, and a badge of class identity for the bourgeoisie. In addition, the inherent dirtiness of manual labor was further cause for bourgeois contempt for the working classes. For those who could afford servants, homes and businesses were regularly scrubbed with caustic soaps, but there was little to be done in the squalor of working-class tenements and urban slums.

Comparable scientific breakthroughs occurred in the fields of natural history and biology. For centuries, naturalists (later known as biologists) had been puzzled that the fossils of marine animals could be found on mountaintops. Likewise, fossils embedded in rock were a conundrum that the biblical story of creation could not explain. By the early 19th Century, some scientists argued that these phenomena could only occur through the stratification of rock, a process that would take millions, not thousands, of years. British naturalist Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* was so popular among the reading public that it went through eleven editions. Meanwhile, archeological discoveries of ancient tools and the remains of settlements pushed the existence of human civilization back thousands of years from earlier concepts (all of which had been based on a literal interpretation of the Christian Bible).

In 1859, the English naturalist Charles Darwin published his *Origin of the Species*, which argued that lifeforms "evolved" over time due to random changes in their physical and mental structure. Some of these traits are beneficial and increase the likelihood that the individuals will survive and propagate, while others are not and tend to disappear as their carriers die off. Darwin based his arguments on both the fossil record and what he had discovered as the naturalist aboard a British research vessel, the HMS Beagle, that toured the coasts of South America. While visiting the Galapagos Islands, he encountered numerous species that were uniquely adapted to live only in specific, limited areas. On returning to Britain, he concluded that only changes over time within species themselves could account for his discoveries.

Darwin's arguments shocked most of his contemporaries. His theory directly contradicted the biblical account of the natural world, in which God's creation is fundamentally static. In addition, he argued that nature itself was a profoundly hostile place to all living things. Even as nature sustains species, it constantly tests individuals and kills off the weak. Evolutionary adaptations are random, not systematic, and are as likely to result in dangerous (for individuals) weaknesses as newfound sources of strength. There was no plan embedded in evolution, only random adaptation.

Nevertheless, Darwin's theory was the first to systematically explain the existence of fossils and biological adaptation based on hard evidence. As early as 1870, three-quarters of British scientists believed evolutionary theory to be accurate, even before the mechanism by which evolution occurred, genetics, was understood. In 1871, Darwin's *The Descent of Man* explicitly argued that humans are descended from other hominids - the great apes. Despite popular backlash prompted by religious conviction and the simple distaste for being related to apes, the Darwinian theory became one of the founding discoveries of modern biological science.



Figure 17.2.2: Caricatures of Darwin as a monkey appeared almost as soon as the *Descent of Man* was published.

Unknown to anyone at the time, during the 1850s and 1860s, an Austrian monk named Gregor Mendel carried out a series of experiments with pea plants in his monastery's garden. In the process, he discovered the basic principles of genetics. Although Mendel presented his work in 1865, it was entirely forgotten. A number of scholars simultaneously rediscovered the work in 1900. In the process, Mendel's ideas were linked to Darwin's evolutionary concepts. Mendel's work revealed that through gene mutation new traits emerge. In addition, genes that favor the survival of offspring tend to dominate those that harm it.

Social Science and Pseudo-Science

Many Europeans regarded Darwinian theory as proof of progress: nature ensured that the human species would improve over time. Evolutionary theory was used as a justification for rigid class distinctions and racism. Elite male theorists believed that Darwinism implied a parallel kind of evolutionary process at work in human society. In this view, success and power are the result of superior breeding, not just luck and education. The rich fundamentally deserve to be rich, and the poor (encumbered by their poor biological traits) deserve to be poor. This set of concepts came to be known as Social Darwinism. Social Darwinist, British writer, and engineer Herbert Spencer summarized this outlook with the phrase "the survival of the fittest," a phrase often misattributed to Darwin.

The new movement led to an explosion of pseudo-scientific apologetics for notions of racial hierarchy. Usually, Social Darwinists claimed that non-white races were inherently inferior and had stopped evolving, while the white race continued. Encyclopedia

illustrations of the evolutionary process were replete with an evolutionary chain from small creatures through monkeys and apes and then on to non-white human races, culminating with the supposedly “fully evolved” European “race.”

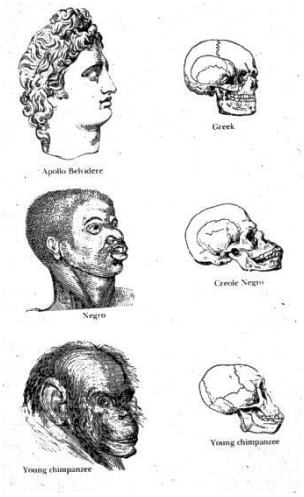


Figure 17.2.3: A typical pseudo-scientific racial hierarchy. (In fact, all human races have skulls of identical dimensions and shapes, as well as identical intellectual and moral capacities.)

In addition to non-white races, Social Darwinists lumped together various identities and behaviors as “unfit.” The "unfit" included alcoholics, those who were promiscuous, unwed mothers, criminals, the developmentally disabled, and those with congenital disabilities. Charity, aid, and rehabilitation were misplaced, since they would supposedly lead to the survival of the unfit and thereby drag down the health of society overall. Thus, the best policy was to allow the "unfit" to die off if possible and to try to impose limits on their breeding if not. Social Darwinism soon led to the field of eugenics, which advocated programs to sterilize the "unfit."

Ironically, even as Social Darwinism provided a pseudo-scientific foundation for racist and sexist cultural assumptions, these notions of race and culture also fed into the fear of degeneration. In the midst of the squalor of working-class life, or in terms of the increasing rates of drug use and alcoholism, many people came to fear that certain destructive traits were flourishing in Europe and being passed on. Further, high birth rates among the weak and unintelligent would simply overwhelm the smart and capable classes.

In the late nineteenth century, a Frenchman (Emile Durkheim) and a German (Max Weber) independently began the academic discipline that would become sociology: the systematic study of how people behave in complex societies. Durkheim treated Christianity like just another set of rituals and beliefs whose real purpose was regulating behavior. Meanwhile, Weber provided insights into the operation of governments, religious traditions, and educational institutions. Another German, Leopold von Ranke, created the first truly systematic forms of historical research, in turn creating the academic discipline of history.

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17.3: Mass Culture

The Victorian era saw the emergence of the first modern, industrialized, "mass" societies. Written material went from expensive books to mass-market periodicals, newspapers, and cheap print. Inhabitants of villages and regions that were fiercely proud of their identities became inhabitants of larger, more anonymous, and alienating cities. Mass production created cheaper material goods that could be used up and thrown away with a much more casual attitude.

Spread of Literacy

The 19th Century was *the* century of mass literacy. At the time of the French Revolution, male literacy was just below 50%. By 1970, the number had grown to almost 80%. In 1900, almost 100% of Frenchmen were literate. Female literacy was close behind. This improvement was possible due to the spread of printing in vernacular languages and mass education. In 1882, during the Third Republic and under the guidance of prime minister Jules Ferry, free, public primary schools ensured that every child in France was taught in standard French and studied the same subjects.

Traditionally, paper was made from rags, which were shredded, compressed together, and reconstituted. The resulting paper was durable but expensive. In the late nineteenth century, printers began to make paper out of wood pulp, which dropped it to about a quarter of the former price. As of 1880, the linotype machine was invented, which also made printing much cheaper and more simple than it had been. Thus, it became vastly cheaper and easier to publish newspapers.

From 1850 to 1900, the average French person saw their real purchasing power increase by 165%. Comparable increases occurred in the other dynamic, commercial, and industrial economies of western Europe (and, eventually, the United States). The increased ability of average people to afford commodities above and beyond those they needed to survive was ultimately based on the energy unleashed by the Industrial Revolution. Even with the struggles over the quality of life of working people, goods were so cheap to produce that the average person actually *did* enjoy a better quality of life and could buy things like consumables and periodicals.

As a result of the cheapening of print and the rise in buying power, “yellow” journalism, sensationalized accounts of political events that stretched the truth to sell copies, emerged. In France, *Le Petit Journal was* an extremely inexpensive and sensationalistic paper that avoided political commentary in favor of banal, mainstream expressions of popular opinion. Rival papers soon sprang up that did not try to change or influence opinion so much as they *reinforced* it. Each political persuasion was now served by at least one newspaper that “preached to the choir,” reinforcing pre-existing ideological outlooks rather than confronting them with inconvenient facts.

Overall, the kind of journalism that exploded in the late nineteenth century lent itself to the cultivation of scandals. For instance, a naval arms race between Britain and Germany that was one of the causes of World War I had much to do with the press of both countries playing up the threat of being outpaced by their national rival. The Dreyfus Affair, in which a French Jewish army officer was falsely accused of treason, spun to the point that some people were predicting civil war due to the massive amount of press on both sides of the scandal. Likewise, imperialism, the practice of invading other parts of the world to establish and expand global empires, received much of its popular support from articles praising the civilizing mission involved in occupying a couple of thousand square miles in Africa that the reader had never heard of before.

In short, politics were embedded in journalism. As almost all of the states of Europe moved toward male suffrage, leaders were often shocked that they had to cultivate public opinion in order to pass the laws. Journals became the mouthpieces of political positions, which both broadened the public sphere to an unprecedented extent and, in a way, sometimes cheapened political opinions to the level of banal slogans.

Another seismic shift occurred in the sphere of acquisition. In the early modern era, luxury goods were basically reserved for the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie. There simply was not enough social wealth for the vast majority of Europeans to buy many things they did not need. The average peasant or shopkeeper, even fairly prosperous ones, owned only a few sets of clothes, which were repaired rather than replaced over time. Most people did not think of money as something to “save”. In good years, an average person would simply spend any 'extra' money on more food or, especially for men, alcohol, because it was impossible to anticipate having a surplus again in the future.

Rise of Consumerism

An iconic shift in acquisition and consumerism patterns occurred. Department stores created recognizable modern patterns of buying, in which people shopped for necessities and small luxuries. Traditional consumption was centered on small, family-run shops and traveling peddlers, a system in which bargaining was common and no advertising existed. With department stores, prices were fixed, and a wide variety of goods of different genres were on display together. Advertising became ubiquitous. Branded products could be found across the length and breadth of a given country. Just as print and primary education inculcated national identity, so did the fact that consumer goods were increasingly standardized.

Manufacturing and semi-skilled labor dramatically decreased the price of textiles, and department stores carried large selections that many people could afford. People of all social classes came to own many different items of clothing that were voluntarily replaced due to shifts in fashion, not because it was worn out.

The first real department store was the **Bon Marché** in Paris. Originally built in the 1840s, it would eventually occupy a city block and employ 4,500 people. During the 1880s, 10,000 clients passed through its doors in a day. In February, during the 'white sales', the number would increase to 70,000 a day. (White sales involved the selling of linens at reduced prices.)

The 1860s witnessed the birth of the seaside holiday. By the 1870s, there were mail-order catalogs. Not to be outdone, tourists still considered a visit to the Bon Marché to be on the same level as one to the Arc de Triomphe built by Napoleon to commemorate his victories.

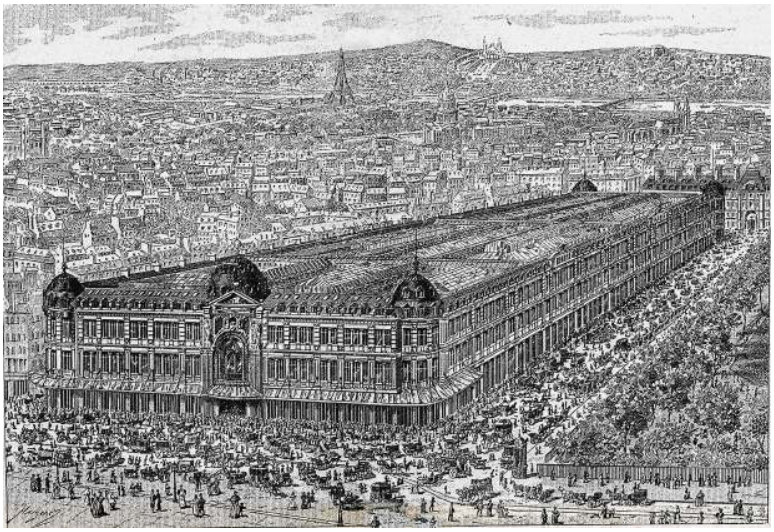


Figure 17.3.1: The Bon Marché - the “temple of consumerism.”

Ultimately, the Victorian Era saw the birth of modern consumerism, in which economies became dependent on the consumption of non-essential goods by ordinary people. The “mass society” inaugurated by the industrial revolution came of age in the last decades of the nineteenth century. With its bourgeois standards, triumphant self-confidence, and deep-seated “scientific” social and racial attitudes, that society was in the process of taking over much of the world at precisely the same time.

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17.4: Culture Struggles--Germany

The stakes of political and cultural identity had changed significantly over the course of the nineteenth century. Within the nations of Europe, it was appropriate to speak of nations instead of just “states”. After all, liberal and nationalistic legal frameworks had triumphed almost everywhere in Europe. However, in significant ways, the enfranchisement of each nation’s citizens was still limited. Most obviously, women did not have the right to vote, and women’s legal rights were severely curtailed everywhere. Likewise, conflicts remained concerning citizenship itself. (Generally, universal manhood suffrage came about in the aftermath of World War I.)

Struggles over national identity and legal rights occurred across Europe. Following German unification, Otto von Bismarck led an officially-declared culture struggle – a *Kulturkampf* – against Roman Catholicism, and later, against socialism. The term also lends itself to a number of conflicts that occurred in Europe (and the Americas) around the turn of the century, especially among women and European Jews.

The Kulturkampf was a product of Germany’s unique form of government, a political structure set apart from the far more liberal regimes in western Europe. While there was an elected parliament, the *Reichstag*, it did not exercise the same degree of political power as did the British parliament or the French Chamber of Deputies and Senate. The German chancellor and the cabinet answered to the Kaiser (the emperor). While the regional governments had considerable control locally, the federal structure was highly authoritarian. In turn, there was a comparatively weak liberal movement in Germany because most German liberals saw the unification of Germany as a triumph and held Bismarck in high regard, despite his arch-conservative character. Likewise, most liberals detested socialism, especially as the German socialist party, the SPD, emerged as one of the most powerful political parties in the 1870s.

Bismarck represented the old Lutheran Prussian nobility, the *Junkers*, and loathed socialism as well as Catholicism. Along with many northern Germans, he regarded Catholicism as alien to German culture and an existential threat to German unity. Since the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the majority of northern Germans had been Lutherans. Still, 35% of Germans were Catholic, mostly in the south, and the Catholic Center Party emerged in 1870 to represent their interests. The same year the Catholic church issued the doctrine of papal infallibility - the claim that the Pope literally could not be wrong in manners of faith and doctrine - and Bismarck feared that a future pope might someday order German Catholics not to obey the state.

Thus, in 1873, he began an official state campaign against Catholics. Priests in Germany had to endure indoctrination from the state in order to be openly ordained, and the state would henceforth only recognize civil marriages. More laws followed, including the right of the state to expel priests who refused to abide by anti-Catholic measures. A young German Catholic tried to assassinate Bismarck in 1874, which only made him more intent on carrying forward with his campaign.

Soon, Bismarck realized that the state might need the alliance of the Catholic Center Party against the growing number of socialists. Thus, he relaxed the anti-Catholic measures (although Catholics were still kept out of important state offices, as were Jews) and focused on measures against the SPD. Two assassination attempts against the Kaiser, despite being carried out by men who had nothing to do with socialism, gave Bismarck the pretext, and the Reichstag immediately passed laws that amounted to a ban on the SPD itself.

Whereas early socialists rarely organized into formal political parties, socialists in the post-1848 era became increasingly militant and organized. In September of 1864, a congress of socialists from across Europe and the United States gathered in London and founded the International Workingmen’s Association - the “First International” - in order to better coordinate their efforts. Within the nations of Europe, socialist parties soon acquired mass followings among the industrial working class. Sister parties emerged in France, Britain (where it was known as the Labour Party), Italy, and elsewhere.

Founded in 1875, the SPD resulted from the merging of socialist unions and parties. After the party's ban of 1878, individual socialists could still run for office and campaign for socialism. Bismarck’s response was typically pragmatic: he supported social legislation, including pensions for workers, in a bid to keep the socialists from attracting new members and growing even more militant. Thus, in an ironic historical paradox, some of the first “welfare state” provisions in the world were passed by a conservative government to *weaken* socialism.

In 1890, the SPD was re-legalized, following the new Kaiser’s firing of Bismarck. The party issued a new manifesto that represented an explicit Marxist ideological stance. The party’s leaders asserted that capitalism would inevitably collapse. As such,

the party’s primary goal was to prepare the working class to rise up and take over in the midst of the coming crisis. In the meantime, the party should focus on securing universal suffrage and trying to shore up the worker's quality of life.

The resulting tension culminated in a fierce debate between two of the leaders of the SPD: Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein. Kautsky, who had written most of its theoretical manifestos, continued to insist that the real function of the party was to reject parliamentary alliances and to agitate for revolution. However, Bernstein claimed that history had already proven that the party should improve the lives of workers in the present, not wait for a revolution that may or may not ever happen in the future. Bernstein wanted the SPD to build socialism gradually under his theory of “revisionism.” Ironically, the SPD rejected Bernstein's revisionism, but what the party actually *did* was indeed “revisionist”: fighting for legal protection of workers, wages, and labor conditions.

As the century drew to a close, there were increasingly democratic parliaments and mass parties, and at least in some cases, the beginning of social welfare laws. On the other hand, rather than the state socialist doctrines of Louis Blanc, the revolutionary, “scientific” socialism of Marxism became the official ideology of the majority of socialist parties. The controversy between the two main types of socialism would have serious consequences for the next hundred years of world history.

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17.5: First Wave Feminism

As socialist parties were growing in size and strength, another political and cultural conflict raged: the emergence of feminism. In the context of the Victorian era, most Europeans believed in the doctrine of gender relations known as “separate spheres.” Basically, men and women had useful and necessary roles to play in society, but those roles were distinct from one another. The man’s job was to publicly represent the family unit and make all decisions affecting the family. The woman’s job was maintaining order in the home and raising the children, albeit under her husband's “veto” power. The Code Napoleon, in Article 231, proclaimed that the husband owed his wife protection, and the wife owed her husband obedience. Until the late nineteenth century, most legal systems officially classified women with children and the criminally insane in having no legal identity.

As of 1850, women across Europe could not vote, could not initiate divorce (in those countries in which divorce was even possible), control custody of children in the case of divorce, pursue higher education, open bank accounts in their own name, maintain ownership of inherited property after marriage, initiate lawsuits or serve as legal witnesses, or maintain control of their own wages if working and married. Everywhere, domestic violence against women (and children) was ubiquitous. It was taken for granted that the “man of the house” had the right to enforce his will with violence if he found it necessary. Despite the claim by male socialists that the working class were the “wretched of the earth,” there is no question that male workers enjoyed vastly more legal rights than did women of any social class at the time.

What had changed was the growth of liberalism. It was a short, logical step from making the claim that “all men are equal” to “all *people* are equal”. Indeed, some women had vocally emphasized the point in the early liberal movement leading up to the French Revolution. By the late nineteenth century, liberal legal codes were present in some form in most of Europe. After World War I, all men won the vote in Britain, France, and Germany, along with most of the smaller countries in central and western Europe. Thus, early feminists argued that their enfranchisement was simply the obvious, logical conclusion of the political evolution of the century.

Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century feminism is referred to by historians as “first-wave” feminism. Its defining characteristic was the battle against legally-mandated discrimination against women regarding property laws, control over children within the family, and the right to vote. Of all of the cultural struggles and legal battles of the period, first-wave feminism faced the greatest opposition from those in power: men. Biologists routinely claimed that women were simply physiologically less intelligent than men. Women who had risen to positions of note were constantly attacked and belittled. For example, in the early 1900s, a new female scientist at the University of Athens had her speech interrupted by male students shouting, “back to the kitchen!” Indeed, Queen Victoria once said that the demand for equal rights for women was “a mad, wicked folly…forgetting every sense of womanly feelings and propriety.”

First-wave feminists argued that women were only “inferior” because of their inferior education. If they were educated at the same level and to the same standards as men, they would be able to exercise reason at the same level and deserve to be treated as full equals by the law.

First-wave feminism’s defining concern was suffrage - the right to vote. In 1867, in Britain, the National Society for Women’s Suffrage was founded. Over the next three decades, comparable movements spread across the continent. Only in Finland and Norway did women gain the vote before World War I. In some cases, it took shockingly long for women to get the vote. France only granted it in 1944 as a concession to the allies, who liberated the country from the Nazis. Switzerland took until 1971(!)

It would be misleading to claim that first-wave feminism was solely focused on suffrage. There were other components that needed to be addressed in relation to women's equality. An iconic example is marriage. For middle-class women, marriage was a necessity, not a choice. Working-class women worked in terrible conditions just to survive, while the truly desperate were often driven to prostitution due to the brutal economic and legal conditions for unmarried poor women. Feminists argued that women needed economic independence, the ability to support themselves before marriage without losing status or respectability, and the right to retain the property and earnings they brought to and accumulated during marriage. Voting rights and the right to initiate divorce were thus “weapons of self-defense”.

After decades of campaigns by feminists, divorce became possible in countries like Britain and France in the late nineteenth century, but it remained difficult and expensive to secure. For a woman to initiate divorce, she had to have the means to hire a lawyer and navigate labyrinthine divorce laws. As a result, only the well-off could do so. In other countries, like Russia, divorce

remained illegal. Much more common than legal separation was the practice of men simply abandoning their wives and families when they tired of them. This action made the institutions of middle-class family life open to mockery by socialists, who, as did Marx and Engels, pointed out that marriage was nothing but a property contract that men could choose to abandon at will. (The socialist attitude toward feminism, incidentally, was that gender divisions were byproducts of capitalism. Once capitalism was eliminated, gender inequality would supposedly vanish as well).

In Britain, the best-known first-wave feminists were the Pankhursts: the mother Emmeline (1858 – 1928) and daughters Christabel and Sylvia, who formed a radical group known as the Suffragettes in 1903. A large part of the original membership came from the ranks of Lancashire textile workers before the group moved its headquarters to London in 1906. Eventually, the Pankhursts severed the links with the Labour Party and working-class activists, beginning a campaign of direct action under the motto "deeds, not words". By 1908, they had moved from heckling to stone-throwing and other forms of protest, including destroying paintings in museums and, on one occasion, attacking male politicians with horsewhips on a golf course.

Activists who staged public demonstrations were treated brutally by police, including coercive feeding when they went on hunger strikes. The brutality led to more widespread public support for the Suffragettes. But, no legal changes were forthcoming. Even the British Liberal Party, who had claimed to support women's suffrage, always ended up putting it on the back-burner in Parliament. In the most spectacular and tragic act of protest, a Suffragette named Emily Davison threw herself under the King's horse during the Derby of 1913 and was killed.



Figure 17.5.1: Suffragettes who went on hunger strikes were often brutally force-fed while jailed.

By the early 20th Century, by and large, women had secured the right to enter universities. The first female academics secured teaching positions soon after. For example, the first woman to hold a university post in France was the famous Marie Curie, whose work was instrumental in understanding radiation. Women secured the right to initiate divorce, control their own wages and property, and fight for the custody of children. In short, thanks to feminist agitation, women had secured a legal identity and meaningful legal rights in at least some of the countries of Europe, and the United States, by the onset of World War I in 1914.

Women's Suffrage

In 1893, New Zealand became the first self-governing country to grant women the right to vote in parliamentary elections. Between 1893-1960, an additional 128 countries approved suffrage. After European decolonization, 80 percent of the countries in Africa granted women the right to vote between 1950 and 1975. More recent examples include Kuwait (2005) and the United Arab Emirates (2006). Published in 2020, the infographic is based on Pew Research Center data.



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17.6: Modern Anti-Semitism

European Jews were a minority everywhere they lived. Throughout history, Jews have faced persecution and a deep-seated form of mistrust from a majority of Christians. This hatred, referred to as **anti-Semitism,** took on new characteristics in the modern era that made it even more dangerous.

Since the Roman Empire, Jews had been part of European society. In the Middle Ages, Jews were frequently persecuted, expelled, or even massacred by the Christian majority. Jews were incorrectly accused of being responsible for the death of Christ, and blamed for plagues and famines. Depending on the location, they were unable to own land, marry Christians, or practice trades besides sharecropping, peddling goods, and lending money. (Christians were banned from lending money at interest until the late Middle Ages.) Beginning in the late period of the Enlightenment, some Jews were grudgingly "emancipated", legally being allowed to move to Christian cities, own land, and practice professions they had been banned from in the past.

By the end of the 19th Century, the legal emancipation was complete almost everywhere in Europe. although Russian still maintained anti-Semitic restrictions. Anti-Jewish hatred did not vanish. Instead, Jews were vilified for representing everything that was wrong with modernity, such as urbanization, the death of traditional industries, and the evils of modern capitalism. To modern anti-Semites, Jews were the scapegoat for all of the problems of the modern world itself.

At the same time, anti-Semitism was bound up with racial theories, including Darwinian evolutionary theory, its perverse offspring Social Darwinism, and the Eugenics movement which sought to purify the racial gene pool of Europe and the United States. Many theorists hypothesized that Jews were not just a group of people who traced their ancestry back to the ancient kingdom of Judah, but were a “race,” a group defined first and foremost by blood, genetics, and by supposedly inexorable and inherent characteristics and traits.

Ample fuel for the rise of anti-Semitic politics existed between vilification for the ills of modernity and the newfound obsession with race swept across European and American societies. In 1870s, an Anti-Semitic League emerged in Germany under the leadership of a politician named Wilhelm Marr, who claimed that Jews had “without striking a blow” “become the socio-political dictator of Germany.” In fact, Jews were about 1% of the German population and had negligible political influence.

As parties that defined themselves solely by anti-Semitism diminished, anti-republican, militaristic, and strongly Christian-identified parties on the political right in France, Austria, and Germany soon started using anti-Semitic language as part of their overall rhetoric.

Along with the new, racist, version of anti-Semitism, a modern conspiracy theory of global Jewish influence emerged. Published in 1868, a Prussian pulp novelist named Hermann Goedsche wrote about a completely fictional meeting of a shadowy conspiracy of Rabbis who vowed to seize global power in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through Jewish control of world banking. That “Rabbi's Speech” was soon republished in various languages as if it had *actually happened.* The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was a document claiming to be the minutes from a meeting of international Jewish leaders referred to in Goedsche's work. The Protocols were first published in 1903 by the Russian secret police as justification for continued anti-Semitic restrictions in the Russian Empire. After World War I, the 'protocols' were used as “proof” that the Jews had caused the war in order to disrupt the international political order.

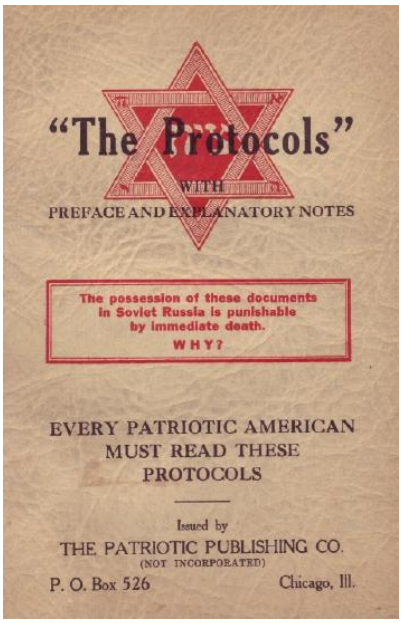


Figure 17.6.1: An American copy of the "Protocols" published in 1934.

Dreyfus Affair

In the 1890s, a French Jewish military officer named Alfred Dreyfus was framed for espionage, stripped of his rank, and imprisoned. An enormous public debate broke out in French society over Dreyfus's guilt or innocence, which revolved around his identity as a French Jew. "Anti-Dreyfusards" argued that no Jew could truly be a Frenchman and that Dreyfus, as a Jew, was inherently predisposed to lie and cheat. Meanwhile, "Dreyfusards" argued that anyone could be a true, legitimate French citizen, Jews included.

In the end, the "Dreyfus Affair" culminated in Dreyfus's exoneration and release, but not before anti-Semitism was elevated to one of the defining characteristics of anti-liberal, authoritarian right-wing politics in France. Some educated European Jews concluded that the pursuit of legal equality and cultural acceptance was doomed given the strength and virulence of anti-Semitism in European culture, and started a new political movement to establish a Jewish homeland in the historical region of ancient Israel. That movement, Zionism, saw a slow but growing migration of European Jews settling in the Levant, which was still part of the Ottoman Empire. In 1948, it culminated in the emergence of the modern state of Israel.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

18: Imperialism

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18.1: Introduction
18.2: Technology
18.3: The Second Industrial Revolution
18.4: The British Empire
18.5: Africa
18.6: Effects
18.7: The Counter-Examples – Ethiopia and Japan

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18.1: Introduction

In a modern historical context, “Imperialism” refers to global empire-building by modern states. To distinguish it from the earlier expansion of European states (e.g. the Spanish empire in the Americas), it is sometimes referred to as “neo-imperialism.” Specifically, neo-imperialism describes the enormous growth of European empires in the nineteenth century. By World War I, European powers controlled over 80% of the surface of the globe. The aftershocks of this period are still felt in national borders and international conflicts today.

Modern imperialism was a product of factors that had no direct parallel in earlier centuries. For a brief period, Europe, and later the United States, enjoyed a monopoly on industrial production and technology. The scientific advances and modern medicine enabled European soldiers and administrators to survive in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa that had been deathtraps in the past because of the prevalence of tropical diseases. In addition, ideological developments like the emergence of Social Darwinism and the obsession with race inspired Europeans to consider their conquests as morally justified, even necessary. It was, in short, a “perfect storm” of technology and ideology that enabled and justified Europe’s global feeding frenzy.

Europeans tended to justify their conquests by citing a “civilizing mission” that would bring the guiding lights of Christianity and Western Civilization to supposedly benighted regions. However, a more tangible excuse for conquest was the rivalry between European states. With the Congress System gone in the aftermath of the Crimean War, and with the wars of the Italian and German unification demonstrating the stakes of intra-European conflict, all of the major European powers jockeyed for position on the world stage. Perhaps the most iconic example was the personal obsession of the King of Belgium, Leopold II, with the creation of a Belgian colony in Africa, which he thought would elevate Belgium’s status in Europe and from which he could derive enormous profits. In the end, his personal fiefdom - the Congo Free State - would become the most horrendous demonstration of the mismatch between the high-minded “civilizing mission” and the reality of carnage and exploitation.

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18.2: Technology

Technology made new imperialism possible by vastly increasing the speed of communication, arming European soldiers with advanced weapons that overwhelmed resistance, and protecting Europeans from tropical diseases. Simply put, technology explains how European dominance grew from about 35% of the globe to over 80% over the course of the nineteenth century. In hindsight, the technological dominance was a historical accident, the circumstantial development of tools and techniques that originated with the Industrial Revolution. At the time, however, most Europeans and Americans considered their technology as proof of their "racial" and cultural superiority.

For the first time, cities in Europe acquired the means to communicate almost instantaneously (via telegraph) with their colonies. Before telegraphs, it could take up to two years for a message and reply to travel between England and India. With the telegraph, a message and reply could make the circuit in just two days. This rapid speed increased the efficiency of governing in the context of global empires.

Europeans could survive in territories thousands of miles from the home country. Except for relatively small territories along the coasts, African had not been colonized by Europeans. The continent was largely impenetrable due to its geography

- few harbors existed for ships
- no navigable rivers (by sail) were found in the continent's interior
- numerous lethal diseases existed to which Europeans had little resistance, especially a particularly virulent form of malaria

Until the second half of the century, Africa was sometimes referred to as the "white man's graveyard". Europeans who traveled there to trade or *try* to conquer territory often died within a year.

In 1841, British expeditions discovered that daily doses of quinine, a medicine derived from a South American plant, served as an effective preventative measure against the contraction of malaria. Thus, Europeans were able to survive in the interior of Africa at much higher rates following the quinine breakthrough. Once Pasteur's discoveries in bacteriology did occur, it became viable for large numbers of European soldiers and officials to take up permanent residence in the tropical regions of Africa and Asia.

Advances in medicine were joined by those in transportation. The steamboat, with its power to travel both with and against the flow of rivers, enabled Europeans to push into the interior of Africa, and many parts of Asia. Steamboats were soon armed with small cannons, giving rise to the term "gunboat." When Europeans began steaming into harbors from Hong Kong to the Congo and demanding territory and trading privileges, the term "gunboat diplomacy" was invented.



Figure 18.1.1: A typical small and unarmed steamship on the Congo River in Central Africa. "Steamers" varied greatly in size and armaments.

In addition, major advances in weapons technology resulted in an overwhelming advantage for the Europeans to inflict violence alongside invasion. In the 1860s, the first breech-loading rifles were developed, seeing widespread use in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 in which Prussian infantry utterly overwhelmed Austrian soldiers armed with older muskets. Breech-loaders were incredibly accurate and quick to reload compared to earlier muzzle-loading firearms. A European soldier armed with a modern rifle could fire accurately up to almost half a mile away in any weather, while the inhabitants of Africa and Asia were armed either with older firearms or hand weapons.

Likewise, the first machine gun, the Maxim Gun, was invented in the 1880s. For a few decades, Europeans (and Americans) had a monopoly on this technology. For that relatively brief period, the advantage was decisive in numerous conquests. Smug British soldiers invented a saying that summarized that superiority: “whatever happens, we have got, the Maxim Gun, and they have not…”



Figure 18.1.2: A British soldier with a maxim gun in South Africa.

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18.3: The Second Industrial Revolution

Technology also created a *motive* for imperialism. The Second Industrial Revolution consisted of the development and spread of a new generation of technological innovation:

- modern steel was invented in 1856
- electrical generators in 1870 (leading to electrical appliances and home wiring by 1900 in wealthy homes)
- bicycles and automobiles by the 1890s
- the telephone in 1876

These advances created a huge demand for the raw materials – rubber, mineral ores, cotton – that were components of the new technologies.

During the First Industrial Revolution, the raw materials necessary for production were found mostly in Europe: coal deposits and iron ore. Cotton was available via slave labor in the southern United States and from weaker states like Egypt, which had seized virtual independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1833. However, the raw material of the Second Industrial Revolution was mostly located outside of areas under European control. This lack meant that European business interests pressured their respective governments to seize as much territory overseas as possible. For example, when oil fields were discovered in Persia in 1908, European interest in Middle Eastern imperialism reached a fever pitch, with European powers cultivating contacts among Arab nationalist groups and undermining the waning unity of the Ottoman Empire.

Mines and plantations were crucial in the imperialism of Africa and Asia. In particular, mining offered the prospect of huge profits. There were Canadian nickel deposits for steel alloys, Chilean nitrates, Australian copper and gold, and Malaysian tin, just to name a few mineral resources coveted by Europeans. (Of course, in the case of Canada, the people being colonized were Indigenous Canadians, and the colonists were themselves of European descent). Thus, while the motives behind imperialism were often strongly ideological, they were also tied to straightforward economic interests. Many of the strongest proponents of imperialism had ties to industry.

Although the United States did seize control of the Philippines from Spain in 1898 and exercised considerable power in Central America, it was not considered a major imperial power. However, it did play a supporting role. The US eclipsed Europe as the major manufacturing power and the major source of exports in a shockingly short period - from about 1870 into the early 1900s - driving Europeans to sometimes-hysterical levels of fear of being rendered economically obsolete. Thus, European politicians and businessmen focused on territorial acquisition overseas to counterbalance the vast natural resources of the US. It's important to note that the US did not join in the Scramble for Africa or assert direct control of East Asian territories.

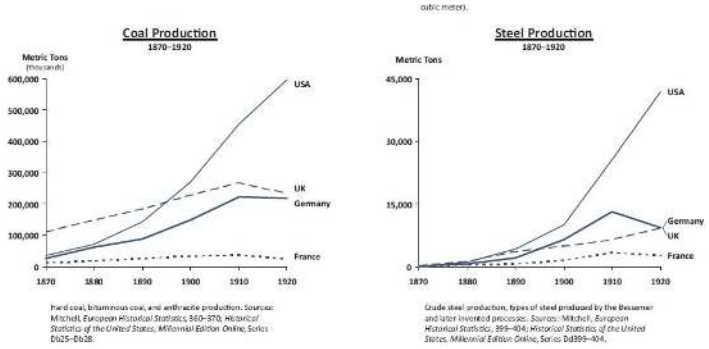


Figure 18.2.1: U.S. resource production and industrial output vastly outpaced European production over time. By the 1870s, astute European observers correctly anticipated the rapid acceleration of American production.

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18.4: The British Empire

According to one phrase, "the sun never set" over the British empire. That was, quite literally, true. Roughly 25% of the surface of the globe was directly or indirectly controlled by the British in the aftermath of World War I (1918). Enormous bureaucracies of "natives" worked under white British officials from the South Pacific to North Africa. The ultimate expression of British imperialism was in India, where just under 100,000 British officials governed a population of some 300 million Indians.

Until 1857, India was governed the British East India Company (the EIC), the state-sponsored monopoly established in the seventeenth century to profit from overseas trade and which controlled a monopoly on Indian imports and exports. The EIC used long, slow creep of territorial expansion and one-sided treaties with Indian princes, tto extend its rule over the subcontinent by 1840. India produced huge quantities of precious commodities, including cotton, spices, and narcotics. In fact, the EIC was the single largest drug cartel in world history, with the explicit approval of the British government. Most of those narcotics consisted of opium exported to China.

By the 1830s, 40% of the total value of Indian exports took the form of opium. In 1840, Chinese officials tried to stop the ongoing shipments of opium from India and open war broke out between the EIC, supported by the British navy, and China. A single British gunboat, the Nemesis, arrived after inconclusive fighting had gone on for five months. In short order, the Nemesis began an ongoing rout of the Chinese forces. The Chinese navy and imperial fortresses were nearly helpless before gunboats with cannons, and steamships were able to penetrate Chinese rivers and the Chinese Grand Canal, often towing sailing vessels with full cannon batteries behind them.



Figure 18.3.1: A British commemoration of victory in the Opium War. The Nemesis is in the background on the right.

In the end, the Royal Navy forced the Chinese state to re-open their ports to the Indian opium trade, and the British obtained Hong Kong as part of the British Empire itself. Other European states secured the legal right to carry on trade in China, administer their own taxes and laws in designated port cities, and support Christian missionary work. The authority of the ruling Chinese dynasty, the Qing, was seriously undermined in the process. (A second Opium War occurred in the late 1850s, with the British joined by the French against China. This war also resulted in a European victory.)

Trouble continued to brew for the British was brewing in India. In 1857, according to rumors, *sepoys* (Indian soldiers employed by the EIC), were issued new rifles whose bullet cartridges were lubricated with both pig and cow fat. Loading the gun involved biting the cartridge open, meaning the soldiers would come into direct contact with the fat, which was totally forbidden in Islam and Hinduism. (Note that there is no evidence that the cartridges *were* greased with the fat of either animal). Simultaneously, European Christian missionaries were trying to convert both Muslims and Hindus to Christianity, sometimes very aggressively. These actions culminated in an explosion of anti-Christian and anti-British violence that temporarily plunged India into a civil war. The British responded to the uprising, dubbed “The Mutiny”, by massacring whole villages. Meanwhile, sepoy rebels targeted any British they could find, including the families of British officials. Eventually, troops from Britain and loyal Sepoy forces routed the rebels and restored order.



Figure 18.3.2: A British depiction of the Sepoy Rebellion, attributing the uprising to greed rather than its actual causes. Note the use of racial caricatures in depicting the sepoys.

After Sepoy Rebellion, the British Parliament disbanded the East India Company, and India was placed under direct rule from London. Henceforth, India was referred to as the "British Raj," meaning British Rulership, and Queen Victoria became the Empress of India in addition to Queen of Great Britain. Indian subjects could take the civil service examinations that entitled men to positions of authority in the Indian government, and elite Indians quickly enrolled their sons in British boarding schools. The first Indian to pass the exam (in 1863) was Satyendranath Tagore. But, white officials consistently refused to take orders from an Indian. As a result, elite Indians often hit a "glass ceiling" in the Raj, able to rise to positions of importance but not real leadership. In turn, resentful elite Indians became the first Indian nationalists, organizing what later became the Indian Independence movement.



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18.5: Africa

While India was the most lucrative part of the British Empire, the conquest of Africa by the European powers stands as the high point of the new imperialism as a whole. Africa represents about a quarter of the land area of the entire world. As of the 1880s, it had about one-fifth of the world's population spread out over 700 distinct societies and peoples. Europeans knew so little about the African interior that maps generally displayed huge blank spots. Likewise, as of 1850, Europeans only controlled little more than trading posts on the coasts. The most substantial European holdings consisted of Algeria, seized by France in the 1830s, and South Africa, split between British control and two territories held by the descendants of the first Dutch settlers, the Boers. The rest of the continent was almost completely free of European dominance, although the Portuguese did maintain sparsely populated colonies in two areas.

New technology changed all of that. In 1876, roughly 10% of Africa was under European control. By 1900, the figure was roughly 90%. The search for profits, raw materials, the ongoing power struggle between the great powers, and the "civilizing mission" reached their collective zenith in Africa. The sheer speed of the conquest is summed up in the descriptive phrase: "Scramble for Africa."

In 1884, Otto Von Bismarck organized the Berlin Conference to determine what was to be done with a huge territory in central Africa called the Congo, already falling under the domination of Belgium at the time. At the Congress, the representatives of the European states, the United States, and the Ottoman Empire divided up Africa into spheres of influence and conquest. No Africans were present at the meeting. Instead, the participants agreed on trade between their territories and stipulated which (European) country would get which piece of Africa. Although there were certainly profits to be had in Africa, they were mostly theoretical since no Europeans knew for sure what those resources were or where they were to be found. (Fear of U.S. economic power was a major factor. Europeans thought it necessary to seize more territory, regardless of what was actually *in* that territory). Thus, in a collective land grab, European states emerged from the Conference intent on taking over an entire continent.

The Berlin Conference was the opening salvo of the Scramble for Africa. In some territories, notably French North Africa and parts of British West Africa, while colonial administrations were both racist and enormously secure in their own cultural dominance, they usually did embark on building at least some modern infrastructure and establishing educational institutions open to the "natives". However, as in the British Raj, Europeans jealously guarded their own authority everywhere. In other regions, colonization was equivalent to genocide.

Among the worst cases was that of Belgium. In 1876, King Leopold II created a colony in the Congo under the guise of exploration and philanthropy, claiming that his purpose was to protect the people of the region from the ravages of the slave trade. His acquisition was larger than England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy combined. Indeed, the territory was eighty times larger than Belgium itself. The Berlin Conference's official purpose was to authorize Leopold's already-existing control of the Congo. As such, the European powers declared the territory to be the "Congo Free State," essentially a royal fiefdom ruled, and owned, by Leopold directly, not by the government of Belgium.

Leopold's real purpose was personal enrichment. His methods of coercing African labor were atrocious: raids, floggings, hostages, destruction of villages and fields, and murder and mutilation. Belgian agents would enter a village and take women and children hostage, ordering men to go into the jungle and harvest a certain amount of rubber. If they failed to reach the rubber quota in time, or sometimes even if they did, the agents would hack off the arms of children, rape or murder the women, or sometimes simply murder everyone in the village outright. No attempt was made to develop the country in any way that did not bear directly on the business of extracting ivory and rubber. In a period of 25 years, the population of the region was cut in half. After decades of dangerous and incredibly brave work by a few journalists and public outcry, the Belgian Parliament stripped Leopold of the colony and took over direct administration in 1908.

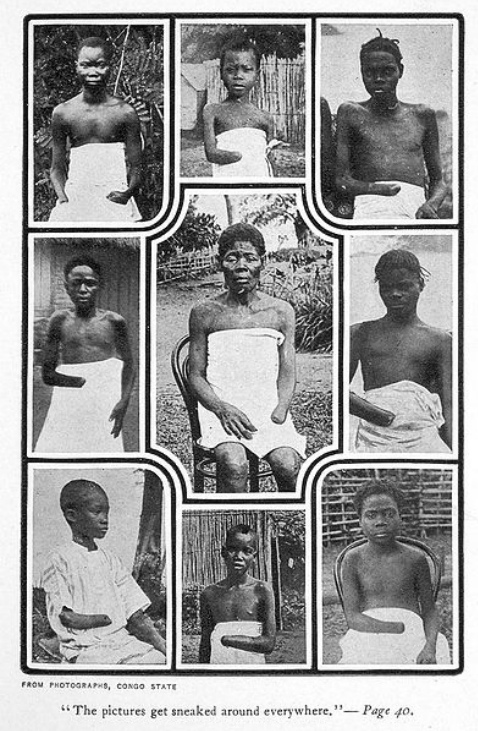


Figure 18.1: A few of the millions of victims of Belgian imperialism in the Congo.

Another comparable example was the treatment of the Herero and Nama peoples of southwest Africa by the German army over the course of 1904 - 1905. When the Herero resisted the German takeover, they were systematically rounded up and left in concentration camps to starve. Survivors were stalked across the desert by the German army, the Germans poisoning or sealing wells and water holes along the way. When the Nama rose up shortly afterward, they were exterminated. In the end, over two-thirds of the Herero and Nama were murdered.



Source: Kids Britannia

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18.6: Effects

Almost without exception, neo-imperialism can be described as “plunder economies”, represented by three components.

- Colonial regimes expropriated the land from the people who lived there through force, backed by pseudo-legal means: unless a given person, or group, had a legal title in the western sense to the land they lived on. Likewise, traditional rights to hunt, gather material, and migrate with herds were lost.
- Colonial regimes expropriated raw materials like rubber, generally shipped back to Europe to be turned into finished products.
- Colonial regimes exploited native labor. Sometimes in the form of outright slavery like the Congo, the Portuguese African colonies, and forced labor in French and German colonies. In other cases, it consisted of "semi-slavery", as on the island of Java where the Dutch imposed quotas of coffee and spices on villages. Most of the territories controlled by Britain used a form of subsistence-level wages paid to workers.

In addition, European powers imposed “borders” where none had existed, randomly splitting up existing kingdoms, tribes, and cultures and lumping different ones together arbitrarily. Sometimes European powers favored certain local groups over others in order to better maintain control, such as the British policy of using the Tutsi tribe (“tribe” being something of a misnomer - “class” is more accurate) to govern what would later become Rwanda over the majority Hutus. Thus, the effects of imperialism lasted long after former colonies achieved their independence in the twentieth century.

In a somewhat ironic twist, only certain specific forms and areas of exploitation ever turned a profit for Europeans or the governments. Numerous private merchant companies founded to exploit colonial areas went bankrupt. In fact, the entire French colonial edifice never produced significant profits. Since governments generally stepped in to declare protectorates and colonies after merchant interests went under, the cost of maintaining an empire grew along with the territorial claims themselves. Thus, much of the imperial impetus boiled down to jockeying for position on the world stage between the increasingly hostile great powers of Europe.

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18.7: The Counter-Examples – Ethiopia and Japan

The European and U.S. monopoly on advanced technology did not always translate into successful conquest, as demonstrated in the cases of both Ethiopia and Japan. In the 1870s, as the Scramble for Africa began in earnest, the recently-united nation of Italy sought to shore up its status as a European power by establishing its own colonies in East Africa, specifically Eritrea and Ethiopia. In 1889, the Italians signed a treaty with the Ethiopian emperor, Menelik II. But the treaty contained different wording in Italian and Amharic (the major language of Ethiopia). The Italian version stipulated that Ethiopia would become an Italian colony, while the Amharic version simply opened diplomatic ties with Europe through Italy. After learning of the deception, Menelik II repudiated the treaty, simultaneously directing the resources of his government to the acquisition of modern weapons and European mercenary captains willing to train his army.

In the early 1890s, open war broke out between Italy and Ethiopia. During the Battle of Adwa (1896), the well-trained and well-equipped Ethiopians decisively defeated the Italian army. The Italians were forced to formally recognize Ethiopian independence, and soon other European powers followed suit. (As a side note, Russia was already favorably inclined toward Ethiopia, and a small contingent of Russian volunteers actually fought *against* the Italians at the Battle of Adwa). Thus, a non-European power could and did defeat European invaders. Nowhere else in Africa did a local ruler so successfully organize to repulse the invaders, but if circumstances had been different, they certainly could have done so.

In Asia, something comparable occurred on an even larger scale. In 1853, in the quintessential example of “gunboat diplomacy,” an U.S. naval admiral, Matthew Perry, forced Japan to sign a treaty through very thinly-veiled threats. As Western powers opened diplomacy and trade with the Japanese shogunate, a period of chaos gripped the country as the centuries-old political order fell apart. In 1868, the Meiji Restoration embarked on a course of rapid Westernization after dismantling the old feudal privileges of the samurai class. Japanese officials and merchants were sent abroad to learn about foreign technology and practices, and European and U.S. advisers were brought in to guide the construction of factories and train a new, modernized army and navy. The Japanese state was organized along highly authoritarian lines, with the symbolic importance of the emperor maintained, but practical power held by the cabinet and the heads of the military.

Westernization meant economic, industrial, and military modernization, as well as reaping the rewards of that modernization. Just as European states had industrialized and then turned to foreign conquest, the new leadership of Japan looked to the weaker states of their region as “natural” territories to be incorporated. Thus, the Japanese undertook a series of invasions, most importantly in Korea and the northern Chinese territory of Manchuria, and began the process of building an empire on par with that of the European great powers.

Japanese expansion threatened Russian interests, ultimately leading to war in 1904. By 1905, much to the shock and horror of the western world, Japan handily defeated Russia, forcing Russia to recognize Japanese control of Manchuria, along with various disputed islands in the Pacific. Whereas Ethiopia had defended its own territory and sovereignty, Japan was playing by the same rules and besting European powers at their own game: seizing foreign territory through force of arms.



Figure 18.6.1: Japanese depiction of an assault on Russian forces. Note the European-style uniforms worn by the Japanese soldiers.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

19: World War I

19.1: Background to the War
19.2: The Start of the War
19.3: The Early War
19.4: The Evolution of the War
19.5: The Eastern Front and the Ottoman Empire
19.6: The Late War
19.7: The Aftermath

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19.1: Background to the War

The single most significant background was the rivalry between Europe's "great powers", nations were able to command large armies, maintain significant economies and industrial bases, and conquer and hold global empires. Their respective leaders were fundamentally suspicious of one another, and the biggest political worry was that one country would come to dominate the others. Long gone was the notion of the balance of power as a guarantor of peace. Now, the balance of power was fragile, with each of the great powers seeking to supplant its rivals in the name of security and prosperity. As a result, there was an ongoing, elaborate diplomatic dance as each power tried to shore up alliances, seize territory around the globe, and outpace the others.

While no great power deliberately sought war out, all were willing to risk war in 1914. No politician had an accurate idea of what a new war would actually be like. In Europe, the only wars that had occured between the great powers since the Napoleonic period were the **Crimean War** of the 1850s and the unification wars of Italy and Germany in the 1850s, 1860s, and early 1870s. While the Crimean War was quite bloody, it was limited to the Crimean region and did not involve all of the great powers. Likewise, the wars of national unification were relatively short and did not involve a great deal of bloodshed (by the standards of both earlier and later wars). In other words, it had been over forty years since the great powers had any experience of a war on European soil.

In the summer of 1914, each of the great powers reached the conclusion that war was inevitable, and that trying to stay out of the immanent conflict would lead to national decline. Potential enemies in France and Russia surrounded Germany. Since the Franco-Prussian War, France had cultivated a desire for revenge against Germany. Russia feared German power and resented Austria for threatening the interests of Slavs in the Balkans. Great Britain alone had no vested interest in war, but it was unable to stay out of the conflict once it began.



Figure 19.1.1: Once the war began, the Triple Entente of Russia, France, and Britain faced the Central Powers of Germany and Austria. Italy was initially allied with the Central Powers but switched sides to join the Entente in 1915.

In turn, imperialism had inflamed jingoism and resentment among the great powers. The British were determined to maintain their enormous empire at any cost, and the Germans posed a threat to the empire with its naval arms race since the 1880s. The great powers continuously bickered over their colonies, especially where colonies butted up against each other, as in Africa and Asia. Generally, violence in the colonies was almost always directed at the native peoples. Thus, even European soldiers overseas had no experience of facing foes armed with comparable weapons.

The nature of nationalism changed significantly over the course of the nineteenth century. Conservative elites had appropriated nationalism to shore up their own power (as in Italy and Germany). In addition, nationalistic patriotism came to be identified with rivalry and resentment among many citizens of various political persuasions. To be a good Englishman was to resent and fear the growth of Germany. Many Germans came to despise the Russians, partly due to to the growth of anti-Slavic racism. The lesser powers of Europe, such as Italy, resented their own status and wanted to somehow seize enough power to join the ranks of the great powers. By 1914, nationalism was hostile, fearful, and aggressive.

Likewise, public opinion mattered since every one of the great powers had at least a limited electorate and parliaments with some real power to make law. After a semi-successful revolution in 1905, Russia saw the creation of an elected parliament, the Duma, and an open press. Newspapers tended to deliberately inflame jingoistic passions rather than encourage rational calculation. A very

recognizably modern kind of connection was made in the press between patriotic loyalty and a willingness to fight, kill, and die for one's country. Since all of the great powers were now significantly (or somewhat, in the case of Russia) democratic, average citizens' opinions *mattered* in a way they never had before. Journalism whipped up those opinions and passions by stoking hatred, fear, and resentment, leading to a widespread willingness to go to war.

The great powers sought to shore up their security and power through alliances. Firmly in place by 1914, each alliance obligated military action if any one power should be attacked. The willingness to go to war for the sake of alliance meant that even a relatively minor event might spark the outbreak of total war. That is precisely what happened.

In 1914, two major sets of alliances set the stage for the war. German politicians, fearing the possibility of a two-front war against France and Russia simultaneously, concluded an alliance with the Austrian Empire in 1879, only slightly over a decade after the Prusso-Austrian War. In turn, France and Russia created a strong alliance in 1893 in large part to contain the ambitions of Germany, whose territory lay between them. Great Britain was generally more friendly to France than Germany, but had not entered into a formal alliance with any other power. It was, however, the traditional ally and protector of Belgium, which British politicians considered a kind of toehold on the continent. Finally, Russia grew increasingly close to the new nation of Serbia, populated as it was by Slavic people who were part of the Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity. The relationships between Great Britain and Russia with Belgium and Serbia, respectively, would not have mattered but for the alliance obligations that tied the great powers together.

Those alliances were now poised to mobilize armies of an unprecedented size. All of the great powers could field a million men or more. Coordinating that many troops required detailed advanced planning and a permanent staff of high-ranking officers, normally referred to as the "general staff" of a given army. In the past, political leaders had often either led troops themselves or at least had significant influence in planning and tactics. By the early twentieth century, however, war plans and tactics were entirely in the hands of the general staffs, meaning political leaders would be obliged to choose from a limited set of "pre-packaged" options given to them by their generals.

Thus, when the war started, what surprised all of the great powers was the ultimatums received from their own generals. According to the general staffs, it was all or nothing: either commit all forces to a swift and decisive victory, or suffer certain defeat. There could be no small incremental build-ups or tentative skirmishes. There could only be a total commitment to a massive war. An old adage has it that "generals fight the last war" meaning that one should use the tactics from the previous conflict. In 1914, the "last war" was the Franco-Prussian War, which Prussia won through swift, decisive action and overwhelming force.

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19.2: The Start of the War

The immediate cause of the war was the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Habsburg throne, a respected Austrian politician who also happened to be friends with the German Kaiser. Ironically, he tended to favor peaceful diplomacy over the potential outbreak of war. Indeed, it is possible that he would have been a prominent voice for peace if he had survived. Instead, he was killed not by Austria's rivals Russia or France, but by a young Serbian nationalist.

Serbia was a new nation that had fought its way to independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. Its political leaders envisioned a role for Serbia like that Piedmont had played in Italy. In this case, the Serbs hoped to conquer and unite the Balkans in one Serbian-dominated country. Austria, however, stood in the path of Serbian ambition since Austria controlled neighboring Bosnia, in which many Serbs lived as a significant minority of the population. Thus, the last thing Austrian politicians wanted was an anti-Austrian movement launched by the ambitious Serbs.

In 1903, a military coup in Serbia killed the king and installed a fiercely nationalistic leadership. Serbian nationalists were proud of their Slavic heritage, and Russia became a powerful ally (i.e. they spoke related languages, and the Russian and Serbian Orthodox churches were part of the same branch of Christianity). Russia also supported Serbia because a rivalry with Austria. Serbian nationalists believed that, with Russian support, it would be possible to create an international crisis in Austrian-controlled Bosnia and ultimately seize Bosnia itself. The Serbs did not consider that Austria would risk a full-scale war with Russia in order to hold on to Bosnia.

The Black Hand trained a group of ethnically Serbian college students in Bosnia to assassinate an Austrian politician when the opportunity presented itself. That happened in June of 1914, when Franz Ferdinand and his wife came to visit the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. In a fantastically bungled assassination, Franz Ferdinand survived a series of attacks, with some of the would-be killers getting cold feet and running off, others injuring bystanders but missing the Archduke, and others losing track of where the Archduke's motorcade was. Finally, quite by accident, the Archduke's driver became lost and stuck in traffic outside of a cafe in which one of the assassins was eating a sandwich. The assassin, Gavrilo Princip, seized the opportunity to stride outside and shoot the Archduke and his wife to death.



Figure 19.2.1: The leaders of the Black Hand, the conspiracy responsible for the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and sparking the beginning of World War I.

Immediately, the Austrian government demanded that Serbia allow Austrian agents to carry out a full-scale investigation of the assassination. Serbian honor would never allow such a thing. Austrian troops started massing near the Serbian border, and the great powers of Europe started calling up their troops. Germany, believing that its own military and industrial resources were such that it would be the victor in a war against France and Russia, promised to stand by Austria regardless of what happened. Russia warned that Austrian intervention in Serbia would cause war. France assured Russia of its loyalty. Only Britain was as-yet unaccounted for.

No one was completely certain that a war would actually happen. (The German Kaiser, Wilhelm II, left for his summer vacation as planned right in the middle of the crisis, believing no war would occur.) If it did, each of the great powers was confident that they would be victorious in the end. A desperate diplomatic scramble ensued as diplomats, parliaments, and heads of state tried at the

last minute to preserve the peace. In the end, it was too late. On July 28, Austria declared war on Serbia, activating the pre-existing system of alliances. By August 4, all of the great powers were involved.

Germany, the Austrian Empire, and Ottoman Empire became known as the Central Powers. Great Britain, France, and Russia made up the Triple Entente, as did smaller states, such as Italy and Portugal. Eventually, the United States joined in with the Entente.

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19.3: The Early War

Apprehension mixed with enthusiasm at the onset of war among civilians and soldiers. Many felt that the war would resolve nationalistic rivalries, and almost no one anticipated a lengthy war. Wilhelm II anticipated “a jolly little war”, and it was widely thought in France and Germany that the war would be over by Christmas. Indeed, 30,000 young men and women marched in Berlin before the war was even declared, singing patriotic songs and gathering at the feet of statues of German and Prussian heroes. Everywhere, thousands of young men enlisted in the military of their own volition. Anti-war protests were minimal and mostly organized by the socialist parties in the name of socialist internationalism.

Whereas pre-war socialists had argued vociferously that the working class of each country was a single, united class regardless of national differences, that internationalist rhetoric largely vanished once the war began. Wanting to be seen as patriots (whether French, German, or British), the major socialist parties voted to authorize the war and supported the sale of war bonds. In turn, the radical left of the socialist parties soon broke off and formed new parties that continued to oppose the war. These new parties were typically called “communists”, whereas the old ones remained “socialists.”

For many people, the war represented a cathartic release. War was an ideal of bravery and honor that many young men in Europe in 1914 longed for as a way to prove themselves, to prove their loyalty, and to purge their boredom and uncertainty about the future. A whole generation had absorbed tales of glory on the battlefield, of the Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War, the Franco-Prussian War, and the conquests overseas. Depending on their nationality, they were either ashamed and angry or fiercely proud of their country’s past performances. As a result, many men saw a new war as a chance to settle accounts, to prove once and for all that they were citizens a great power, and to shame their opponents into conceding defeat. France would get even for the Franco-Prussian War. Germany would prove it was the most powerful nation in Europe. Russia would prove that it was a powerful modern nation - and so on.

The war began with the German invasion of France through Belgium. German tactics centered on the “Schlieffen Plan,” named after its author, Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen. The Schlieffen Plan called for a rapid advance into France to knock the French forces out of the war within six weeks. Subsequently, German troops would be whisked back east via railroads in time to engage Russia, as it was believed that it would take the Russians at least that long to mobilize their armies. In addition to rapid mobilization, the German military was to defeat the French military more quickly than the Prussian forces had forty years earlier in the Franco-Prussian War.

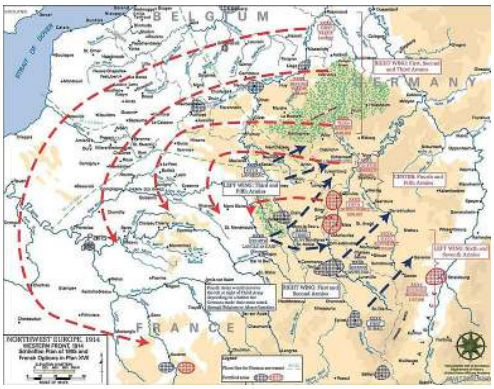


Figure 19.3.1: The Schlieffen Plan, in theory. While it met with initial success, French and British troops succeeded in counter-attacking and pushing back the German advance.

Belgium was a neutral country, and German planners had expected the country to surrender swiftly as German troops advanced rapidly toward France. Instead, Belgian soldiers fiercely resisted the German invasion. In retaliation, German troops deliberately massacred civilians, destroyed towns, and raped Belgian women. Thousands of Belgian refugees fled to Britain, where they were welcomed and housed. The bloodshed shocked the sensibilities of the French and British reading public and emphasized the fact that the war might go very differently than many had first imagined. Britain swiftly declared war on Germany.

After a few weeks, the Schlieffen Plan ground to a halt. A fierce French counter-attack stopped the Germans in Belgium and Northeastern France in late September. Simultaneously, Russia mobilized its forces much more quickly than expected, attacking both Germany and Austria in the east in late August. In the autumn of 1914, the scale of battles grew to exceed anything Europe

had witnessed since the Napoleonic Wars. To their shock and horror, soldiers on all sides encountered the sheer destructive power of modern weaponry for the first time. To shield themselves from the clouds of bullets belched out by machine guns, desperate soldiers dove into the craters created by artillery shells. In the process, trench warfare was invented.

Enormous new battleships known as dreadnoughts, high-explosive artillery shells, and machine guns were far more lethal than anything created before. Unfortunately, human bodies were pitifully weak by comparison. As the death toll mounted, modern warfare's human and financial costs shattered the image of national strength that politicians and generals continued to cling to. Those generals stuck to favored and outdated tactics, sending cavalry in bright uniforms to their deaths in hopeless charges, ordering offensives that were doomed to fail, and calling up every soldier available on reserve.

In a well-remembered symbolic moment, at Christmas, a brief and unauthorized truce was held on the Western Front when French and German soldiers climbed out of their respective trenches and meet in the “no man’s land” between the lines, with a German barber offering shaves and haircuts to all comers. By then, both sides were well aware that the conceit that the war would “be over by Christmas” had been a ridiculous fantasy. Never again in the war would a moment of voluntary peace re-emerge. While they did not know it then, the soldiers faced four more years of carnage.

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19.4: The Evolution of the War

An English officer and poet wrote “when all is said and done, this war was a matter of holes and ditches.” While they began as improvised, hastily dug ditches, the trenches evolved into vast networks of fortified rifts stretching from the English Channel in the north to the Swiss Alps in the south. Behind the trenches lay the artillery batteries, capable of hurling enormous shells for miles, and farther back still lay the command posts of the high-ranking officers who fruitlessly conceived of new variations on a constant theme: hopeless charges against the impregnable enemy position.

Whereas in past wars the offensive strategy was often superior to the defensive strategy, things were entirely reversed in World War I. Because of trenches, machine guns, mines, and modern rifles, it was far more effective to entrench oneself and defend a position than it was to charge and try to take the enemy’s position. It was nearly impossible to break through and gain territory or advantage. The British phrase for an attack was “going over the top,” which involved thousands of men climbing out of their trenches and charging across the no man’s land that separated them from the enemy. While they were charging, the enemy would simply open fire with impunity from their trenches, and without exception. No a single offensive captured a significant amount of territory between 1915 and early 1917. As a single example, one British attack in 1915 temporarily gained 1,000 yards at the cost of 13,000 lives.

In stark contrast to the early dreams of glory to be won on the battlefield, soldiers discovered that their own competence, even heroism, had been rendered irrelevant by the new technology of warfare. Because warfare was so heavily mechanized, the old ideal of brave, chivalric combat between equals was largely obsolete. Men regularly killed other men they never laid eyes on, and death often seemed completely arbitrary. No amount of skill or bravery mattered if an artillery shell hit the trench where a soldier happened to be standing. Likewise, if ordered to “go over the top,” all one could hope for was to survive long enough to be able to retreat.

Thus, the experience of war in the trenches was a state of ongoing misery. Men stood in mud, sometimes over a foot deep, in the cold and rain, as shells whistled overhead and occasionally blew them up. They lived in abject terror of the prospect of having to attack the enemy line, knowing that they would all almost certainly be slaughtered. Thousands of new recruits showed up on the lines every month, many of whom would be dead in the first attack. In 1915, in a vain attempt to break the stalemate, both sides started using poison gas, which was completely horrific, burning the lungs, eyes, and skin of combatants. The *survivors* of poison gas attacks were considered to be the *unlucky* ones. By 1917, both sides had been locked in place for three years, and the soldiers of both sides were known to remark that only the dead would ever escape the trenches in the end.



Figure 19.4.1: Soldiers in a trench in 1915.

Individual battles sometimes claimed more lives than had entire wars in past centuries. The Battle of Verdun, an enormous German offensive that sought to break the stalemate in 1916, resulted in 540,000 casualties among the French and 430,000 among the Germans. It achieved nothing, with neither side winning significant territorial concessions.

The most astonishing death count of the war was at the Battle of the Somme, a disastrous British offensive in 1916 in which 60,000 soldiers were killed or wounded on the first day alone. Ultimately, the entire Battle resulted in 420,000 British casualties (meaning

either dead, missing, or wounded to the point of being unable to fight), 200,000 French casualties, and 650,000 German casualties. One British poet noted afterward that “the war had won” the battle, not countries or people.

Even the most stubborn commanders were forced to recognize that their dreams of a spectacular breakthrough were probably unachievable. Instead, by 1916 many of the war’s top strategists concluded that the only way to win was to outspend the enemy, churning out more munitions and supplies, drafting more men, committing more civilians to the war effort at home, and sacrificing more soldiers than could the other side. At its worst, commanders adopted an utterly ruthless perspective regarding their own casualties. Tens or even hundreds of thousands of deaths were signs of “progress” in the war effort, because they implied that the other side must be running out of soldiers, too.

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19.5: The Eastern Front and the Ottoman Empire

The Russian, German, and Austrian armies in the east were highly mobile, sometimes crossing hundreds of miles in an attempt to outflank their enemies. In the early years of the war, the Russian army fought effectively, especially against Austrian forces, which it consistently defeated. However, Russia was hampered by its inadequate industrial base and lack of rail lines and cars. The Germans were able to outmaneuver the Russians, often surrounding Russian armies one by one and defeating them. A brilliant Russian general oversaw a major offensive in 1916 that crippled Austrian forces, but did not force Austria out of the war. In the aftermath, a lack of support and coordination from the other Russian generals ultimately checked the offensive.

By late 1916, the war had grown increasingly desperate for Russia. The Tsar's government was teetering and morale was low. The home front was in dire straits, with serious food shortages, and inadequate munitions. Thus, the German armies steadily pushed into Russian territory. A furious defense by the Russian forces checked the German advance in the winter of 1916 - 1917. However, the war was deeply unpopular on the home front, and increasing numbers of soldiers deserted rather than face the Germans. At this time, a popular revolution overthrew the Tsarist state. (That revolution is described in the next chapter.)

Meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire proved a far more resilient enemy than expected. In 1908, well before the war began, a coup of army officers and political leaders known as the Committee of Union and Progress but more often remembered as the "Young Turks" had seized control of the Ottoman state and embarked on a rapid program of western-style reform (including a growing obsession with Turkish "racial" identity at the expense of the Empire's other ethnicities). With war clouds gathering over Europe in 1914, the Young Turks threw in their lot with Germany, the one European power that had never menaced Ottoman territories and which promised significant territorial gains in the event of a German - Turkish victory.

In 1915, British forces staged a full-scale, disastrous invasion of Ottoman territory. In a poorly-planned assault on the Gallipoli Peninsula near Constantinople, hundreds of thousands of British Imperial troops (including tens of thousands of Australians and New Zealanders recruited to fight for "their" empire from half a world away) were gunned down by Turkish machine guns. In the months that followed, British forces failed to make headway against the Ottomans.



Figure 19.5.1: An Australian propaganda poster calling for volunteers.

In 1916, British forces focused their strategy on capturing the eastern stretch of the Ottoman Empire: Mesopotamia, the site of the earliest civilization in human history (and which became the country of Iraq in 1939). The British made steady progress moving west from Mesopotamia while also supporting an Arab nationalist insurgency against the Ottomans from within the Ottoman borders. By 1917, Ottoman forces were in disarray, and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire looked all but certain.

Even as British and French politicians began plans to divide up the Ottoman territory into protectorates (dubbed "mandates" after the war), the Young Turk leader Mustafa Kemal launched a major military campaign to preserve *Turkish* independence, with the other ethnicities that had lived under Ottoman rule either pushed aside or destroyed. As a result, Turkish forces drove hundreds of thousands of Armenians from their homes across deserts to die of abuse, exhaustion, hunger, and thirst. To this day, the Turkish government admits that many Armenians died, but denies that the Armenians were victims of a deliberate campaign of genocide, with over 600,000 killed.

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19.6: The Late War

World War I was fought primarily in Europe, along the Western Front that stretched from the English Channel south along the French border to the Alps, and on the Eastern Front across Poland, Galicia, and Russia. It was a “world” war for two reasons.

- Hundreds of thousands of troops from around the world fought in it
- Military engagements occurred in the Ottoman territories of the Middle East, in Africa between European colonial armies, and in Asia. (Japan even supported the Entente war effort by taking a German-controlled Chinese port, Tsingtao.)

The United States was a latecomer to the fighting due to the domination of "isolationist" sentiment. Most Americans believed that the war was a European affair that should not involve American troops. However, the U.S. was an ally, and provided both military and civilian supplies to the British, along with large amounts of low-interest loans to keep the British economy afloat. In 1917, the German military leadership under the Field Marshal Paul Von Hindenburg recognized that the nation could not sustain the war much longer. So, the German generals decided to use their new submarines, the U-Boats, to attack any vessel suspected of carrying military supplies to the British or French. When ships carrying U.S. civilians were sunk in 1917, American public sentiment finally shifted and the US declared war on Germany in April.

The importance of the entrance centered on the US' gigantic industrial capacity, dwarfing all of the great powers of Europe put together, and millions of fresh troops that could be called up or drafted. Germany had been totally committed to the war for almost three years, and its supplies (money, fuel, munitions, food, and people) were running very thin. Most German civilians still believed that Germany was winning. But, as the carnage continued on the Western Front, the German general staff knew that they had to achieve a strategic breakthrough.

By 1918, it was clear to the German command that they were losing. When the US entered on the side of the British and French, it became impossible to sustain the war. One last desperate offensive might bring the French and British to the negotiating table. In the spring of 1918, German forces staged a major campaign that broke through the western lines, coming within about 40 miles of Paris. But, much like Napoleon experienced in the previous century, German troops had outpaced their supply lines. They lost cover, and had to face the combined reserves of the French, British, and Americans. Another attempted offensive in July failed, and the Entente powers began to push the German forces back.

Meanwhile, criticism of the Kaiser appeared for the first time in the mainstream press, and hundreds of thousands of workers protested the worsening economic conditions. In late September, the head of the German General Staff, Ludendorff, advised the Kaiser to sue for peace. A month later, the Reichstag passed laws making the government’s ministers responsible to it instead of the Kaiser. Protest movements spread across Germany and the rapidly-collapsing Austro-Hungarian empire, as nationalist movements declared independence in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Balkans.

On November 11, 1918, a voluntary commission of German politicians led by the German Socialist Party (SPD) formally sued for peace. The Kaiser snuck away in a train to Holland, where he abdicated. The top generals of the German General Staff, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, did their best to popularize the idea that Germany “would have won” if not for sabotage perpetrated by a sinister conspiracy of foreign agents, communists, and Jews. In fact, if the commission of German politicians had not sued for peace when they did, French, British, and U.S. troops would have simply invaded Germany, and even more people would have died.

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19.7: The Aftermath

At the end of the war, approximately forty million people, both soldiers and civilians, were dead. Oof the twenty million men mobilized by Russia and France, over 76% were casualties (either dead, wounded, or missing). A whole generation of young men was almost wiped out, which had lasting demographic consequences for both countries. For Germany, the figure was 65%, including 1.8 million dead. The British saw a casualty rate of 39%, representing almost a million men, with far more wounded or missing. Even the smaller nations like Italy, which had fought fruitlessly to seize territory from Austria, lost over 450,000 men. In addition, a huge swath of Northeastern France and parts of Belgium were reduced to lifeless fields of mud and debris.

Politically, the war spelled the end of three of the most venerable, and once powerful, empires of the early modern period: the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Empire of Austria, and the Ottoman Empire of the Middle East. The Austrian Empire was replaced by new independent nations. Austria became to a “rump state”: the remnant of its former imperial glory. France and Great Britain busily divided up control of former Ottoman territories in new “mandates.” Turkey achieved independence. Revolution in Russia led to the collapse of the Tsarist state and, after a bloody civil war, the emergence of the world’s first communist nation: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Germany lost its overseas territories.

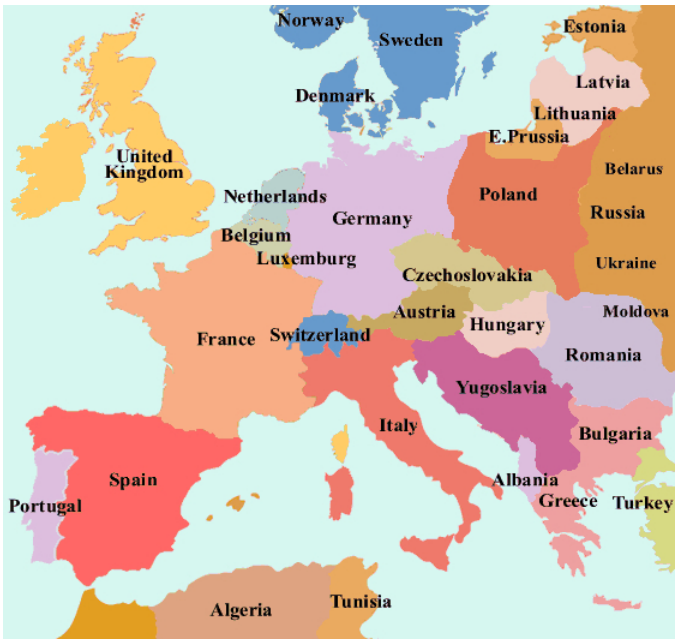
Survivors were left psychologically shattered. The British term for soldiers who survived but were unable to function in society was “shell shock,” a vague diagnosis for what is now known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In the medical classification system of the time, it was considered a form of “hysteria”, a deeply gendered diagnosis that compared traumatized soldiers to “hysterical” middle class women suffering from depression. Treatment revolved around trying to force former soldiers to somehow “tough” their way back to normal behavior (now recognized to be impossible). Some progress was made in treating shell shock cases by applying the “talking cure,” an early form of therapy related to the practices of the great early psychologist Sigmund Freud, but most of the medical community held to the assumption that trauma was just a sign of weakness.

Likewise, there was no sympathy in European or U.S. culture for psychological problems. To be unable to function because of trauma was to be “weak” or “insane,” with all of the social and cultural stigma those terms invoke. Any soldier diagnosed with a psychological issue, as opposed to a physical one, was automatically disqualified from receiving a disability pension. The result was a profound sense of betrayal and disillusionment among veterans.

Europeans dubbed the conflict "The War to End All Wars." It was inconceivable that it could happen again; the costs had simply been too great to bear. The European nations were left indebted and depopulated, the maps of Europe and the Middle East were redrawn as new nations emerged from old empires, and there was profound uncertainty about what the future held. Most hoped that, at the very least, the bloodshed was over and that the process of rebuilding might begin. Some, however, saw the war’s conclusion as deeply unsatisfying and, in a sense, incomplete: there were still scores to be settled. It was from that sense of dissatisfaction and a longing for continued violence that the most destructive political philosophy of the twentieth century emerged: fascism.

Europe: 1914 and 1918





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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

20: The Early Twentieth Century

20.1: Political Disappointments
20.2: Fascism in Italy
20.3: Fascism in Germany- The Nazis
20.4: Fascism- The Spanish Civil War
20.5: Russian Revolutions
20.6: Early Twentieth-Century Cultural Change
20.7: Modernism
20.8: The Great Depression

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20.1: Political Disappointments

World War I had left the great powers reeling, weakened, and at a loss for how to prevent a future war. The Treaty of Versailles imposed harsh penalties on Germany, returning Alsace and Lorraine to France, and imposing a massive indemnity on the defeated country. In addition, Germany had to accept the "war guilt clause," in which it assumed full responsibility for the war having started in the first place. Simultaneously, the Austrian Empire collapsed, with Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the new Balkan nation of Yugoslavia becoming independent countries and Austria a short-lived republic. Almost no one would have believed that another "Great War" would occur in twenty years.

In other words, World War I did not resolve any of the problems or international tensions that had started it. France and Britain blamed Germany for the conflict. Meanwhile, Germany believed that communists and Jews had conspired to sabotage the German war effort. Thus, many Germans felt they had been wronged twice: they had not “really” lost the war, yet they were forced to pay outrageous indemnities to the “victors.”

This context of anger and disappointment gave rise to fascism and its racially-obsessed offshoot Nazism arose. World War I provided the trauma, the bloodshed, and the skepticism toward liberalism and socialism that underwrote the rise of fascism, a modern conservatism that clung to its mania for order and hierarchy, but which did not seek a return to the days of feudalism and monarchy. It was a populist movement, a movement of the people by the people, but instead of petty democratic bickering, it glorified the (imagined) nation, a nation united by a movement and an ethos.

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20.2: Fascism in Italy

The Italian Fascist Party was an invention of Italian army veterans. During the war, Italy had joined with England and France against Germany and Austria in hopes of seizing territory from Austria. But, they were given very little land after the war. Thus, to many other Italians, the war had been *especially* pointless.

During 1919 and 1920, Italy faced incredible social turmoil. A huge strike struck the country, and many poor Italians seized land from the semi-feudal landlords who still dominated rural society. In addition, there was general concern among the traditional conservatives, the church, business leaders, and middle classes that Italy would undergo a communist revolution such as Russia. In fact, there was a powerful communist movement within the nation.

The Fascists organized into paramilitary units of thugs known as the Blackshirts (for their party-issued uniforms) and engaged in open street fighting against communists, breaking up strikes, attacking communist leaders, destroying communist newspaper offices, and intimidating voters from communist-leaning neighborhoods and communities. They were often tacitly aided by the police, who rounded up communists while ignoring Fascist lawbreaking as long as it was directed against the communists. Likewise, business leaders started funding the Fascists as a kind of guarantee against further gains by communists. Fascist politicians ran for office in the Italian parliament while their gangs of thugs terrorized the opposition.

In 1922, the weak-willed King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III appointed Benito Mussolini as prime minister, a staunch fascist who set out to destroy Italian democracy. From 1922 to 1926, Mussolini and the Fascists manipulated the Italian parliament, intimidated political opponents or actually had them murdered, and succeeded in eliminating party politics and a free press. In the process, the Fascist Party became the only legal party in Italy, and the police apparatus expanded dramatically. Mussolini's official title was *Il Duce*: "The Leader," and his authority over every political decision was absolute. The Fascist motto was “believe, obey, fight,” a distant parody of the French liberal motto (from the French Revolution) “liberty, equality, fraternity.”



Figure 20.3.1: Mussolini (in the center) and Fascist Blackshirts during the March on Rome in 1922.

Officially, Italian Fascism promised to end the class conflict that lay at the heart of socialist ideology by favoring what it called “corporatism” over mere capitalism. Corporatism was supposed to be a unified decision-making system in which workers and business owners would serve on joint committees to control work. In fact, the owners derived all of the benefits; trade unions were banned, and the plight of workers degenerated without representation.

What Italian Fascism did do for the Italian people was essentially ideological and, in a sense, emotional: it directed youth movements and recreational clubs and sought the involvement of all Italians. It glorified the *idea* of the Italian people. In turn, Fascist propaganda tried to inculcate Italian pride and Fascist identity among Italian citizens, while Fascist-led police forces targeted would-be dissidents, sentencing thousands to prison terms or internal exile in closed prison villages.

Convinced of his own genius, Mussolini often foolish decisions, especially when it came to building up and training the Italian military. Surrounded by corrupt sycophants, he was continually lied to about Italy's military strength and prosperity to keep him happy. When World War II began in 1939, the Italian forces were revealed to be poorly trained, equipped, and led.

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20.3: Fascism in Germany- The Nazis

Adolf Hitler was critically important to the development of Nazism. His private obsessions became state policy and were used as the justification for war and genocide. His unquestionable powers of public speaking and political maneuvering transformed the Nazis from a small fringe group to a major political party. While he was largely ineffective as a practical decision-maker, he remained central to the image of strength, vitality, and power that the Nazis associated with their state.

Hitler was born in Austria in 1889, a citizen of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His dream of being an artist ended when he was rejected by the Academy of Fine Arts in the Austrian capital of Vienna. Before the outbreak of World War I, Hitler lived in flophouses, cheap hotels for homeless men, where he discovered right-wing politics and his own talents for oratory. He read popularized works derived from racist pseudo-scholarship that glorified a fabricated version of German history. When World War I broke out, he enthusiastically volunteered for the German army and served at the western front, surviving both a poison gas attack and shrapnel from an exploded shell. Unlike most veterans of the war, Hitler experienced combat and service in the trenches as exhilarating and fulfilling, and he was completely without compassion.



Figure 20.5.1: Hitler, on far right, and some of his fellow soldiers in his infantry regiment early in WWI. He trimmed his moustache to its (in)famous length during the war in order to be able to securely wear a gas mask.

While investigating a small right-wing group, the German Workers Party, in Munich, Hitler found like-minded conservatives who loathed the Weimar Republic and blamed socialism and something they called “international Jewry” for the defeat of Germany in the war. He swiftly rose in the ranks of the Nazis, becoming the Fuhrer ("Leader") of the party due to his outstanding command of oratory and his ability to browbeat would-be political opponents. Under Hitler’s leadership, the party was renamed the National Socialist German Workers Party (“Nazi” is derived from the German word for “national”).

Unlike Italian Fascists, the Nazis believed that races were biological entities and that something inherent in the blood of each "race" directly impacted its ability to create or destroy something as vague as “true culture.” According to Nazi ideology, only the so-called Aryan race, Germans and related white northern Europeans like the Danes, the Norwegians, and the English, had ever created culture or been responsible for scientific progress. Other races, including some non-European groups like the Persians and the Japanese, were considered “culture-preserving” races who could at least enjoy the benefits of true civilization. At the bottom of this invented hierarchy were “culture-destroying” races, most importantly Jews but also Slavs, like Russians and Poles. In the great scheme for the Nazi new world order, Jews would be somehow pushed aside entirely, and the Slavs would be enslaved as manual labor for "Aryans."

In 1921, under Hitler’s leadership, the Nazis organized a paramilitary wing called the Stormtroopers (SA in their German acronym). In 1923, inspired by the Italian Fascists' success, Hitler led his fellow Nazis in an attempt to seize the regional government of the German region of Bavaria. The“Beer-Hall Putsch” failed, but Hitler used his ensuing trial on a national stage, as the German press widely discussed the event. While serving a ludicrously short sentence in a minimum security prison, Hitler dictated his autobiography, *Mein Kampf (*"My Struggle"), to the Nazi party's secretary, Rudolf Hess.



Figure 20.5.2: The Nazi leadership on trial. Note the degree to which the photo looks like a publicity stunt rather than a criminal proceeding. Hitler is joined by Erich Ludendorff, in the center, one of the top German commanders during WWI. Ludendorff flirted with Nazism early on, but abandoned the party after the Beer Hall Putsch.

The Great Depression threw the Weimar government and German society into such turmoil that extremists like the Nazis suddenly gained considerable mass appeal. Promising the complete repudiation of the Versailles Treaty, the build-up of the German military, an end to economic problems, and a restoration of German pride and power, the Nazis steadily grew in popularity. In 1930, an electoral breakthrough saw them win 18% of the seats in the Reichstag. In 1932, they won 37% of the national vote. The Nazis never came close to winning an actual majority in the Reichstag.

In January of 1933, President Hindenburg was convinced by members of his cabinet led by a conservative Catholic politician, Franz von Papen, to use Hitler and the Nazis as tools to help dismantle the Weimar state and replace it with a more authoritarian political order. Thus, Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor, the second-most powerful political position in the state.

Hitler seized the opportunity to launch a full-scale takeover of the German government. The Reichstag building was set on fire by an unknown arsonist in February, and Hitler blamed the communists, pushing through an emergency measure (the “Reichstag Fire Decree”) that suspended civil rights. The German Communist Party was destroyed, and 20,000 of its members were forced into newly built concentration camps. Through voter fraud and massive intimidation by the Nazi Stormtroopers, the Nazis won 44% of the seats in the next elections. With the aid of other conservative parties, the Nazis pushed through the Enabling Act, which empowered Hitler and the presidential cabinet to pass laws by decree. In July, the Nazis outlawed all parties except themselves. By the summer of 1933, the Nazis controlled the state, with Hindenburg willingly signing off on their measures.

The Weimar Constitution was never officially repudiated, but the letter of laws became far less important than their interpretation according to the “spirit” of Nazism. The only unshakable core principle was the Fuhrer's personal supremacy, which was supposed to embody Nazism itself.

Hitler was obsessed with winning over “ordinary Germans” to the party’s outlook. To that end, the state both bombarded the population with propaganda and sought to alleviate the dismal economic situation of the early 1930s. The Nazi state poured money into a debt-based recovery from the Depression. The economics of the recovery was totally unsustainable, but the Nazi leadership gambled that war would come before the inevitable economic collapse. Hitler publicly broke with the terms of the Versailles Treaty in 1935, rearming the German military. Soon the rapidly-rebuilding military was staging enormous public rallies.

From 1933 until the end of World War II in 1945, a period that historians have termed the 'Third Reich", the Nazis sponsored a full-scale attempt to recreate German culture and society to correspond with their vision of a racialized, warlike, and “purified” German nation. They targeted almost every conceivable social group with a specific propaganda campaign and encouraged (or required) German citizens to join a specific Nazi league. Workers were encouraged to work hard for the good of the state. Women were encouraged to produce as many healthy children as possible (and to stay out of the workplace). Boys were enrolled in a paramilitary scouting organization, the Hitler Youth. Girls joined the League of German Girls, and trained as future mothers and domestics. All vocations and genders were united in the glorification of the military and of the Fuhrer himself (“Heil Hitler” was the official greeting used by millions of German citizens, even if they were not a member of the Nazi party).



Figure 20.5.3: Hitler Youth and League of German Girls members at a rally in 1933.

The Third Reich suspended civil rights and pursued concomitant campaigns against the so-called “enemies” of the German people. The Nazis vilified Jews and other groups, such as people with disabilities and the Romani. In 1935 the Nazis passed the so-called “Nuremberg Laws”, which outlawed Jews from working in various professions, stripped Jews of citizenship, and made sex between Jews and non-Jews a serious crime.

The Nazis threatened imprisonment or death for those who dared defy them. In 1933, the first concentration camp was opened. Soon, a vast web of police forces monitored the German population. The SS (*Schutzstaffel*, meaning “protection squadron") was the most important organization, an enormous force of dedicated Nazis with almost unlimited police powers. This group had the right to hold anyone indefinitely, without trial, in "protective custody" in a concentration camp. The Nazi secret police, the Gestapo, were merely one part of the SS. This combination of "carrots" (e.g. propaganda, programs, incentives) and "sticks" (e.g. the SS, concentration camps) helps explain why there was no significant resistance to the Nazi regime from within Germany.

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20.4: Fascism- The Spanish Civil War

Spain was the site of the first war launched by fascist forces. In the 1920s, most of the country was populated by poor rural farmers and laborers, and an alliance of the army, Catholic church, and old noble families still controlled the government in Madrid. The king, Alfonso XIII, held real power. In many ways, Spain was the last place in Europe that clung to the old order of the nineteenth century.

By the early 1920s, socialists and liberals were increasingly militant. Likewise, Catalan and Basque nationalists agitated for independence. From 1923 to 1930, general Primo de Rivera acted as a virtual dictator (with the support of the king) promoting the building of dams, roads, and sewers. He weakened political representation by making government ministers independent of the parliament (the Cortes), and lost support in the army by interfering in the promotion of officers.

In 1931, the king abdicated after an anti-monarchist majority took the Cortes. The result was a republic, whose parliament was dominated by liberals and moderate socialists. The parliament pushed through laws that formally separated church and state (for the first time in Spanish history) and redistributed land to the poor, seized from the enormous estates of the richest nobles. Meanwhile, Spanish communists sought a Russian-style communist revolution and, even further to the left, a substantial anarchist coalition aimed at the complete abolition of government. Thus, the left-center coalition was increasingly beleaguered, as the far left gravitated away, and the nobility and clergy joined with the army in an anti-parliamentarian right. Two years of anarchy resulted, from 1933 – 1935.

In 1935, as the forces of the right rallied around a general named Francisco Franco, the socialists, liberals, anarchists, and communists formed a Popular Front to fight it. More chaos ensued, with Franco's forces growing in power and the Popular Front suffering from infighting (i.e. the anarchists, communists, liberals, and nationalist minorities did not work well together). Franco's traditional conservative forces joined with Spanish fascists, the Falange, which Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy openly supported. In 1936, Franco's forces seized several key regions in Spain.

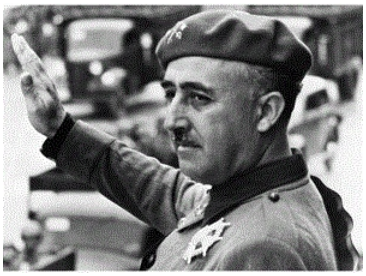


Figure 20.6.1: Francisco Franco

The Spanish Civil War was costly, approximately 600,000 people died, of which 200,000 were "loyalists" (the blanket term for the pro-republican forces) summarily executed after being captured by the "nationalists" under Franco. Meanwhile, the loyalists carried out atrocities of their own, specifically targeting members of the church. International Involvement included the arrival of 20,000 volunteers on the side of the loyalists, including the Abraham Lincoln Brigade from the United States. Both the U.S. writer Ernest Hemingway and the English writer George Orwell fought in defense of the republic.

Officially, there was an international non-interventionist agreement among the governments of Europe and the US with regard to Spain, Germany, and Italy. However, this agreement was blatantly violated. The German air force, the *Luftwaffe*, used Spain as a training ground with real targets. The loyalists had no means to fight against planes, so they suffered consistent defeats and setbacks from the bombing raids. The Spanish Civil War allowed Italy and Germany to "try out" their new armies before committing to a larger war in Europe. (Italy also launched a brutal invasion of Ethiopia in 1934.)

In early 1939, having cut off the pockets of loyalists from one another, the nationalists triumphed and were recognized as the legitimate government of Spain internationally. Despite their promises to the contrary, they immediately began carrying out reprisals against the now-defeated loyalists. Franco adopted the title of *Caudillo*, or leader, in the same manner as Mussolini and Hitler. Where Spain differed from the other fascist powers was that Franco was well aware of its relative weakness and deliberately avoided an expansionist foreign policy.

Franco’s regime, which united the old nobles, the army, and the Catholic church, controlled the country until his death in 1975. Just as Spain was one of the last countries still tied to the old political order of kings and nobles after World War I, it was among the last fascistic countries long after Hitler’s Germany and Mussolini’s Italy had fallen.

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20.5: Russian Revolutions

At the start of his reign in 1894, at the death of his father Alexander III, Tsar Nicholas II (1868-1918) was among the most powerful monarchs in Europe. Russia may have been technologically and socially backward compared to the rest of Europe, but it commanded an enormous empire and boasted a powerful military. In addition, the Tsars had successfully resisted most of the forces of modernity that had fundamentally changed the political structure of the rest of Europe. Nicholas ruled in much the same manner as had his father, grandfather, and great grandfather before him, holding nearly complete authority over day-to-day politics and the Russian Church.



Figure 20.1.1: Family resemblance: cousins Tsar Nicholas II (on the left) and King George V of Britain (on the right).

During his reign, modernity finally caught up with Russia. In the first few years of the 20th Century, the Russian state was able to control the press and punish dissent, but then events outside of its immediate control undermined its ability to exercise complete control over Russian society. The immediate cause of the downfall of Nicholas's royal line, and the entire traditional order of Russian society, was war: The Russo - Japanese War of 1904 - 1905 and, ten years later, World War I.

Japan shocked the world when it handily defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. To many Russians, the Tsar was to blame in both allowing Russia to remain so far behind the rest of the industrialized world economically, and because he had proved to be an indecisive leader. Following the Russian defeat, 100,000 workers tried to present a petition to the Tsar asking for better wages, better prices on food, and the end of official censorship. Troops fired on the unarmed crowds, sparking a nationwide wave of strikes. For months, the nation was rocked by open rebellions in navy bases and cities, and radical terrorist groups managed to seize certain neighborhoods of the major metropolises of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Finally, Nicholas II agreed to allow a representative assembly, the Duma, to meet, and after months of fighting the army managed to regain control.

After the (semi-)revolution, the Tsar still in power, and various newly-constituted political parties were elected to the Duma. Very soon, it was clear that the Duma was not going to serve as a counter-balance to Tsarist power. The Tsar retained control of foreign policy and military affairs. In addition, the parties in the Duma had no experience of actually governing, and quickly fell to infighting and petty squabbles, leaving most actual decision-making to the Tsar and his circle of aristocratic advisors. Still, some things did change: unions were legalized, and the Tsar was not able to completely dismiss the Duma. Most importantly, the state could no longer censor the press effectively. As a result, there was an explosion of anger as various forms of anti-governmental press spread across the country.

One great concern: his only male heir, the prince Alexei, was a hemophiliac (i.e. his blood did not clot properly when he was injured, meaning any minor scrape or cut could be potentially lethal). Nicholas's wife, the Tsarina Alexandra, called upon the services of a wandering, illiterate monk and faith healer named Grigorii Rasputin. Considered one of the most peculiar characters in modern history, Rasputin was somehow able (perhaps through a kind of hypnotism) to stop Alexei's bleeding. Thus, the Tsarina believed God sent him to protect the royal family. Rasputin moved in with the Tsar's family and quickly became a powerful influence.

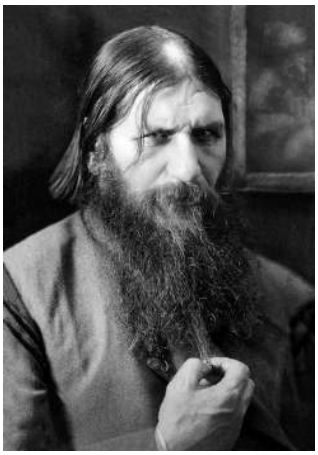


Figure 20.1.2: Grigori Rasputin in 1916, shortly before his death.

When World War I began in 1914, the already fragile political balance within the Russian state teetered on the verge of collapse. In the autumn of 1915, as Russian fortunes in the war started to worsen, Nicholas departed for the front to personally command the Russian army. In 1916, a desperate conspiracy of Russian nobles, convinced that Rasputin was the cause of Russia's problems, managed to assassinate him. By then, however, the German armies were steadily pressing toward Russian territory, and tens of thousands of Russian troops were deserting to return to their home villages. As the social and political situation began to approach outright anarchy, one group of Russian communists steeped in the tradition of radical terrorism stood ready to take action: the Bolsheviks.

Radical politics revolved around apocalyptic revolutionary socialism. Mikhail Bakunin was an exemplary figure in this regard. He believed that the only way to create a perfect socialist future was to utterly destroy the existing political and social order, after which "natural" human tendencies of peace and altruism would manifest and create a better society for all. By the late nineteenth century, this homegrown Russian version of socialist theory was joined with Marxism, as various Russian radical thinkers tried to determine how a Marxist revolution might occur in a society that was still largely feudal.

Marx believed a revolution could only happen in an advanced industrial society. The proletariat would recognize that it had "nothing to lose but its chains" and overthrow the bourgeois order. In Russia, however, industrialization was limited to some of the major cities of western Russia, and most of the population were still poor peasants in small villages. This scenario did not look like a promising setting for an industrial working-class revolution.

Enter Vladimir Lenin, an ardent revolutionary and major political thinker. He created the concept of the "vanguard party": a dedicated group of revolutionaries who would lead workers and peasants in a massive uprising. Left to their own devices, he argued, workers alone would always settle for slight improvements in their lives and working conditions (also known as "trade union consciousness") rather than recognizing the need for a full-scale revolutionary change. However, the vanguard party, could both instruct workers and lead to the creation of a new society. A communist revolution could succeed in a backward state like Russia, jumping directly from feudalism to socialism and bypassing industrial capitalism.

In Lenin’s mind, the obvious choice of a vanguard party was his own Russian communist party, the **Bolsheviks**. By 1917, the Bolsheviks were a highly organized militant group of revolutionaries with contacts in the army, navy, and working classes of the major cities. When political chaos descended on the country as the possibility of full-scale defeat to Germany loomed, the Bolsheviks had their chance to seize power.

In February of 1917, a group of workers in St. Petersburg demonstrated against the Tsar's government to protest the price of food. Within days, similar demonstrations exploded across the country. Then, the army refused to put down the uprisings and instead joined them. Next, the Duma demanded that the Tsar step aside and hand over control of the military. In just a few weeks, the Tsar abdicated, realizing that he had lost the support of almost the entire population.

In the aftermath, power was split. The Duma appointed a provisional government that enacted important legal reforms, but did not have the power to relieve the Russian army at the front or to provide food to the hungry protesters. Likewise, the Duma represented the interests and beliefs of the educated middle classes, a tiny portion of the Russian population. The members of the Duma hoped to create a democratic republic like those of France, Britain, or the United States, but they had no road map to bring it about.

Further, it had no way to enforce new laws, nor could it compel Russian peasants to continue fighting the Germans. Most critically, the members refused to sue for peace with Germany, believing that Russia still had to honor its commitment to the war despite the carnage being inflicted on Russian soldiers at the front.

Soon, in the industrial centers and many of the army and naval bases, councils of workers and soldiers (called *soviets*) sprang up and declared that they had the real right to political power. There was a standoff between the

- provisional government, which had no police force to enforce its will
- soviets, which could control their own areas but did not have the ability to bring the majority of the population (who wanted, in Lenin's words, "peace, land, and bread") over to their side.

People fled the cities for the countryside, peasants seized land from landowners, and soldiers deserted in droves. By 1917, fully 75% of the soldiers sent to the front against Germany had deserted.

As of the late summer of 1917, a vacuum had been created by the war and by the incompetence of the Duma. No group had power over the country as a whole, providing an opportunity for the Bolsheviks. In October, the Bolsheviks took control of the most powerful soviet, Petrograd (former St. Petersburg). Next, they seized control of the Duma, expelled the members of other political parties, and then stated their intention to seek unconditional peace with Germany and give land to the peasants with no compensation for landowners. In early 1918, the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, granting Germany huge territorial concessions in return for peace. (Germany would lose those new territories when it lost the war itself later that year.)

Almost immediately, a counter-revolution erupted, and civil war broke out. Their "Red Army" (Bolsheviks) engaged the "White" (counter-revolutionaries) all over western Russia and Ukraine. For their part, the Whites were an ungainly coalition of former Tsarists, the liberals who had been alienated by the Bolshevik takeover of the Duma, members of ethnic minorities who wanted political independence, an anarchist peasant army in Ukraine, and troops sent by foreign powers (including the United States), who were terrified of the prospect of a communist revolution in a nation as large and potentially powerful as Russia. Despite the fact that very few Russians were active supporters of communist ideology, the Red Army proved both coherent and effective under Bolshevik leadership.



Figure 20.1.3: Lenin making a speech in 1920 in support of the Red Army during the civil war.

The civil war lasted for four years, and ultimately killed close to ten million people. Most of the causalities were massacred or starved. In the end, the Bolsheviks prevailed. A few Eastern European countries, including Finland and Lithuania, gained their independence. Elsewhere in the former Russian Empire, the Bolsheviks created a new communist empire: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Northern Eurasia 1922: Creation of the Soviet Union



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20.6: Early Twentieth-Century Cultural Change

During the first few decades of the 20th century, “Western Civilization” struggled to define itself in the face of scientific progress and social change that seemed to be speeding forward ever faster. The older order of monarchy and nobility was finally, definitively destroyed, a casualty of World War I. Never again would kings, emperors, and noblemen share power over European countries. At the same time, the great political project of the nineteenth century, republican democracy, seemed profoundly disappointing to many Europeans, who had watched it degenerate into partisan squabbles that were helpless to prevent the Great War and its terrible aftermath. Further, after World War I, there was a terrific flowering of cultural and intellectual production even as the continent struggled to recover economically. .

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20.7: Modernism

Modernism expressed a set of common attitudes and assumptions that centered on a rejection of established authority. It was a movement of skepticism toward the post-Victorian middle class, an overhaul of the entire legacy of comfort, security, paranoia, rigidity, and hierarchy. It rejected the premise of melodrama, namely clear moral messages in art and literature that were meant to edify and instruct. Socially, it was a reaction against the complacency of the bourgeoisie, of their willingness to start wars over empire and notions of nationalism.

Modernist art and literature sometimes openly attacked the moral values of mainstream society, or experimented with form itself and simply ignored moral issues. Also known as the era of *l'art pour l'art* ("art for art's sake") of creation disinterred from social or intellectual duty. Artists broke with the idea that art should "represent" something noble and beautiful. Instead, many indulged in wild experiments and deliberately created disturbing pieces meant to provoke their audience. Sometimes, modernists were really "modern" in glorifying industrialism and technology.

Futurism

Starting in Italy before World War I, Futurism was a movement of poets, playwrights, and painters who celebrated speed, technology, violence, and chaos. Their stated goal was to destroy the remnants of past art and replace it with the art of the future, an art that reflected the modern, industrial world. Futurism sought something new and better than what the Victorian bourgeoisie had created: something heroic.

In 1909, F.T. Marinetti, the movement's founder, wrote the *Futurist Manifesto*. In it, he thundered that the Futurists wanted to "sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and rashness," and that "poetry must be a violent assault on the forces of the unknown." The Manifesto went on to proclaim, ominously, that "we want to glorify war - the only cure for the world" and that the Futurists were dedicated to demolishing "museums and libraries" and sought to "fight morality, feminism, and all opportunist and utilitarian cowardice." In short, The Manifesto was a profound expression of dissatisfaction with the mainstream culture of Europe leading up to World War I, and its proponents were proud partisans of violence, elitism, and misogyny.

Futurist art was often bizarre and provocative. For example, one Futurist play consisted of a curtain opening to an empty stage, the sound of a gunshot and a scream offstage, and the closing of the curtain. Futurist paintings often depicted vast clouds of dark smoke with abstract images of trains and radio towers, or sometimes just jumbles of color. While their politics were as murky, most of the Futurists embraced fascism, seeing it as a political movement that reflected their desire for a politics that was new, virile, and contemptuous of democracy.

The Futurists were just one branch of modernism in the visual arts. Other schools existed, including Vorticism in England, Expressionism in Austria, and Cubism in France. Pablo Picasso (1881 - 1973), the major cubist painter and sculptor, portrayed objects, people, and works of past masters from several different perspectives at once. Meanwhile, the English Vorticists attempted to capture the impression of motion in static paintings, not least by depicting literal explosions in their art.

Expressionism

The Austrian expressionists were the most striking, sometimes beautiful, but other times grotesque images associated with modernism. The major point was to display the artist's inner life through abstract, often disturbing images. The governing concept was not to depict things "as they are," but instead to reflect the disturbing realities of the artist's mind and spirit. The greatest Austrian expressionist was Gustav Klimt (1862 - 1918), who created beautiful but haunting and often highly eroticized portraits, including the quintessential dorm room decorations of collegiate U.S. - The Kiss.



Figure 20.3.1: Klimt's The Kiss *from 1908.*

In 1901, the University of Vienna commissioned Klimt to create paintings to celebrate the three great branches of traditional academic scholarship: philosophy, medicine, and law. In each case, he painted frightening images in which the nominal subject matter was somehow present, but was overshadowed by the grotesque depiction of either how it was being carried out or how it failed to adequately address its subject. For example, philosophy depicts a column of naked, wretched figures clinging to one another over a starry abyss, with a sinister, translucent face visible in the backdrop. The paintings were beautiful and skillfully rendered, but also dark and disturbing. The Nazis would destroy the originals during the occupation of Austria. (Modernism was considered "degenerate art" by the Nazi party).



Figure 20.3.2: Klimt's Philosophy, *from 1907.*

Music

In the first few decades of the 20th Century, some composers and musicians sought to shatter musical traditions, defying listeners' expectations by altering the very scales, notes, and tempos that western audiences were used to hearing. Many of these pieces eventually became classics, while others tended to become part of the history of music.

Russian Igor Stravinsky (1882 – 1971) was one noteworthy modernist composer. *The Rite of Spring* was a ballet depicting the fertility rites of the ancient Scythians, the nomadic people native to southern Russia in the ancient past. Staged by classical ballet dancers, the Rite of Spring completely scandalized its early audiences. At its first performance in Paris, members of the audience hissed at the dancers, and pelted the orchestra with debris, while the press described it as pornographic and barbaric. The dancers lurched about on stage, sometimes in an overtly sexual manner, and the music changed its tempo and abandoned its central theme.

Within a few years, however (and following a change in its wild choreography), the Rite became part of ballet's canon of great pieces.

In contrast, the Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874 - 1951) invented a form of orchestral music that remains an important influence on avant-garde musicians and composers. His major innovations consisted of experiments with atonality - music without a central, binding key - and a newly-invented twelve-tone scale of his own creation. Schoenberg was among the first to defy the entire tradition of western music in his experiments. Since the Renaissance, western musicians had worked in basically the same set of scales. As a result, listeners were "trained" from birth to expect certain sounds and certain rhythms in music. Schoenberg deliberately subverted those expectations, inserting dissonance and unexpected notes in many of his works.

Literature

Modernist literature created new approaches to poetry and prose. Authors like Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, and James Joyce wrote stories where the nominal plot was less important than the protagonist's inner life and experiences of his or her surroundings and interactions. Joyce's novel *Ulysses* describes a 'single unremarkable day in the life of a man in Dublin, Ireland, focusing on the vast range of thoughts, emotions, and reactions that passed through the man's consciousness rather than on the events of the day itself'. Proust and Woolf focused on the inner life rather than the outside event. Kafka's work brilliantly, and tragically, satirized the experience of being lost in the modern world, hemmed in by impersonal bureaucracies and disconnected from other people. In his most famous story, *Metamorphosis*, a young man awakens one day to discover that he has become a gigantic insect, but whose immediate concern is that he will be unable to make it into his job.

Ultimately, artistic modernism in the arts, music, and literature questioned the (post-)Victorian obsession with traditional morality, hierarchy, and control. The inner life was not straightforward. Rather, it was a complicated mess of conflicting values, urges, and drives. Traditional morality was often a smokescreen over a system of repression and violence. Certain modernist artists attacked the system, while others exposed its vacuity, emptiness or shallowness, against the darker, more complex reality they thought lay underneath.

Psychology

Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939) was the forefather of the concept of modern therapy. Mostly rejected in terms of empirical accuracy, his theories exerted tremendous influence in the early days of psychology. A brilliant scholar who happened to be Jewish, living in a society rife with anti-Semitism, he sought to understand the inner psychological drives that led people to engage in irrational behavior.

Freud's greatest accomplishment was diagnosing the essential irrationality of the human mind. He believed that the mind itself "evolved" from childhood into adulthood in a fundamentally hostile psychic environment. The mind was forced to conform to social pressure from outside while being enslaved to its own unconscious desires (the "drives") that sought unlimited power and pleasure. Freud wanted to be the "Darwin of the mind," the inventor of a true *science* of psychology that could explain and, he hoped, cure psychological disorders.

Building on the work of an earlier psychologist, he employed the "talking cure", which was the process by which the therapist and the patient recounted memories, dreams, and events, searching for a buried, suppressed idea that caused physical symptoms. Over time, he identified a series of common causes tied to childhood traumas that seemed remarkably consistent. He extrapolated those into "scientific" truths, culminating in *Three Essays in the Theory of Sexuality* (1905).

Ultimately, Freud's most important theories had to do with the nature of the unconscious mind. The thoughts and feelings we experience and can control are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Most thoughts and feelings are buried in the unconscious. Within the unconscious are stored repressed memories that trigger responses, verbal slips, and dreams, *symptoms* of their existence. It is always terribly difficult to reconcile one's desires and the requirements of socialization (of living in a society with its own rules and laws), which inevitably leads to inner conflict. Thus, people form defense systems that may protect their emotions in the short term, but return later in life to cause unhappiness and alienation.

According to Freud, three basic areas or states exist simultaneously in the human mind.

- the unconscious "Id:" the seat of the drives for pleasure (sexual lust, power, security, food, alcohol, and other drugs, etc.) and for what might be considered "obsession" - the seemingly irrational desires that have nothing to do with pleasure per se (pyromania, kleptomania, or seemingly self-destructive political activity).

- the unconscious “Superego:” the social pressure to conform, the confrontation with outside authority, and the overwhelming sense of shame and inadequacy that can, and usually does, result from facing all of the pressures of living in human society.
- the conscious “Ego:” the embattled mind forced to reconcile the drives of the Id and Superego with the "reality principle," the knowledge that to give in to one's urges completely would be to risk injury or death.

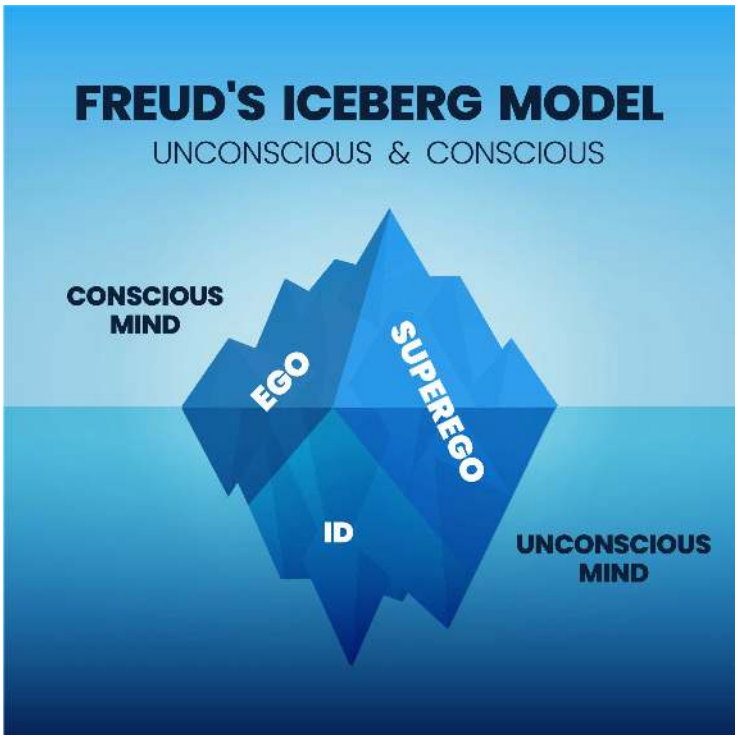


Figure 20.4.1: Freud’s personality theory (1923) saw the psyche structured into three parts, the id, ego, and superego, all developing at different stages in our lives.

During the 19th Century, optimistic theorists believed that proper education and rational politics could create a perfect society. By contrast, Freud cautioned that no one is completely rational and that politics could easily follow the path of the Death Drive and plunge whole nations, even whole civilizations, into self-destruction.

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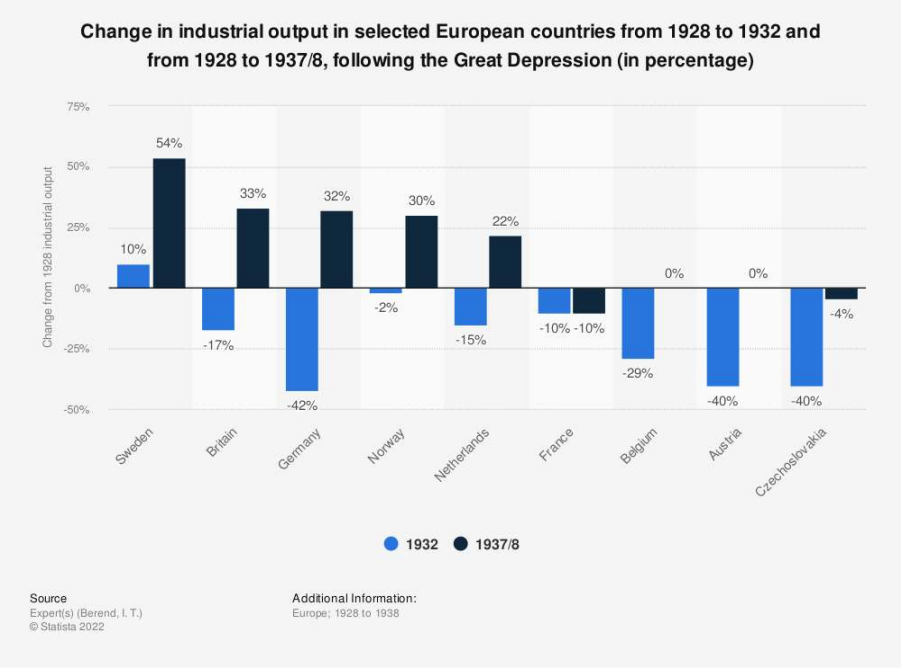
20.8: The Great Depression

While the economies of the west struggled to recover from World War I, there was at least some economic growth. However, that improvement came crashing to a halt in 1929

The Great Depression has the dubious distinction of being the worst economic disaster in the modern era. It constituted an almost total failure of governments, businesses, and banks to anticipate or prevent economic disaster or to effectively deal with it. The Depression explains in large part the appeal of extremist politics like Nazism, in that the average person was profoundly frightened by what had happened to their world. Instead of progress resulting in better standards of living, all of a sudden the hard-won gains of the recent past were completely ruined.

The Depression resulted from the financial mess left by World War I. The victorious alliance of Britain and France imposed massive reparations on Germany - 132 billion gold marks. In addition, the former members of the Triple Entente owed enormous sums to the United States for the loans received during the war, amounting to approximately $10 billion. Over the course of the 1920s, as the German economy struggled to recover (at one point the value of German currency collapsed completely), the US government oversaw enormous loans to Germany. In the end, a “triangle” of debt and repayment locked together the economies of the United States and Europe. US loans underwrote German reparation payments to Britain and France, with Britain and France then trying to pay off their debts to the US. None of the debts were anywhere near settled by the end of the 1920s, as more loans continued to flood the market.

The Depression started with a massive stock market crash on October 24, 1929 in the United States. Quickly, U.S. banks demanded repayment of the European loans, from Germany and its former enemies alike. The capital to repay those loans simply did not exist. Businesses shut down, governments defaulted on U.S. loans, and unemployment soared. In one year, Germany’s industrial output dropped by almost 50%, and millions were out of work. In turn, inspired by liberal economic theories, governments embraced policies of austerity, cutting back the already limited social programs that existed, balancing state budgets, and slashing spending. The result: even less capital was available in the private sector. In the United States and Western Europe, the Depression would drag on for a decade (1929 - 1939), at which point World War II overshadowed economic hardship as the great crisis of the century.



Source: Statista

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

21: World War II

21.1: Conclusion
21.2: Leading up to War
21.3: The Early War
21.4: The War in the East
21.5: The Turn of the Tide
21.6: The Holocaust

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21.1: Conclusion

World War II was the culmination of the vision of total war the world had first encountered in World War I, but it was generalized to vast stretches of the planet, including Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The promise of technology was realized in weapons of mass slaughter. The war was also the setting for the Holocaust, an incidence of industrialized mass murder.

Approximately 55 - 60 million people died, of which 25 million were Soviets and 6 million were the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. While nationalist rivalries and international tensions certainly led to the war in some ways, the primary cause of WWII was Adolf Hitler's personal obsession with creating a vastly expanded German empire. While Europe had stumbled into World War I through a vast alliance system, World War II was a war of aggression launched by a single belligerent, Germany, supported by its allies.

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21.2: Leading up to War

A series of bold moves by Nazi leadership led up to the start of World War II (1939-1945). Over the course of the 1930s, the Nazi government steadily broke with the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. While the (pre-Nazi) German state had already suspended reparation payments, the Nazis simply refused to negotiate the possibility of the payments ever resuming. By 1934, Germany secretly began the process of re-arming. Then, in 1935, it openly moved toward building a military that would dwarf even its World War I equivalent.

By 1938, Hitler felt that Germany could sustain a limited war. In 1939, in his opinion, the German war machine was ready for a full-scale effort to seize the space he imagined for the new Reich. In a sense, this period consisted of Hitler "playing chicken" with the rest of Europe: he would launch a dangerous and provocative initiative, then wait and see if the rest of Europe (meaning primarily France and Britain) would respond with the threat of force or instead back down. The political leadership of France and Britain did back down, repeatedly, until the invasion of Poland in September of 1939 finally that Hitler could not be stopped without war.

“Appeasement” refers to the policy adopted by the French and British governments in giving Hitler what he wanted in hopes that he would not do it again. Pieces of foreign territory, political unions with closely related German territories, and the growth of German military power were seen as things that Germans might have legitimate grievances about,. Thus, the two countries thought that Germany, and more to the point Hitler, might be appeased once those issues were addressed.

After the war, French and British leadership were vilified for being willing to concede so much to Hitler when a strong militarized response might have stopped the Nazi war machine before it was ready for a full-scale assault. Arguably, one should not be too quick to write off appeasement. World War I had been so awful that it was very difficult for most Europeans, even most Germans, to believe that Hitler could actually want to plunge Europe back into another world war. French and British certainly wanted to avoid full-scale war at any cost; their civilian populations were totally opposed to war and, especially in France, their governments were unstable and unpopular. Thus, British and French political leaders did not think of their concessions to Hitler as caving in: they thought of them as preserving peace.

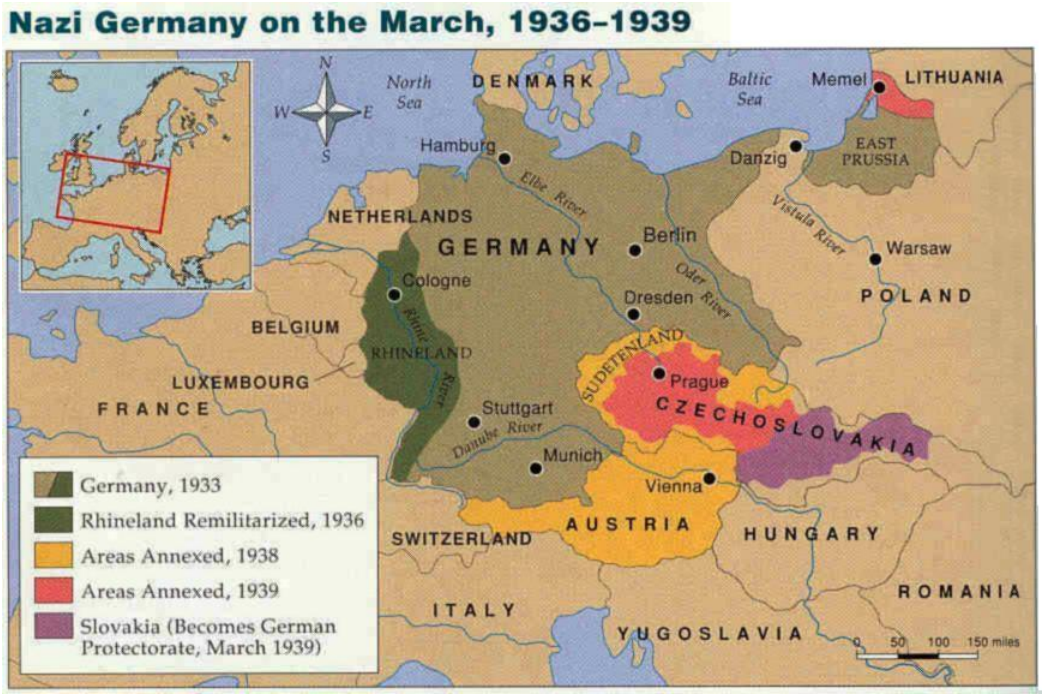
In March of 1938, Germany annexed Austria, an event known as the *Anschluss*. Despite the German pseudo-invasion being poorly organized, most Austrians welcomed the German tanks that rolled into Austrian cities, and there was practically no resistance. When there was no foreign response, Hitler and the Nazis enjoyed a popularity boost. In one fell swoop, Nazi laws and policies (including the entire edifice of anti-Semitic legislation) were imported to Austria.

In September of 1938, the threat of German intervention in the Sudetenland, a region of northwestern Czechoslovakia with a significant German minority, prompted an international crisis. The British and French governments hastily convened a conference in Munich to stave off war. Instead of defending Czech sovereignty (which the Czechs were demanding), the French and British agreed that Germany should annex the Sudetenland to “protect” its German population. Then, in early 1939, German troops simply occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia. The Czech lands were divided between Germany and a newly-created protectorate, while Slovakia became a puppet state under an anti-Semitic Catholic priest, Jozef Tiso.



Figure 21.1.1: Hitler greeting the British prime minister Neville Chamberlain at the Munich Peace Conference that agreed to the German annexation of the Sudetenland.

Meanwhile, Germany was forming political alliances. In May 1939, Italy and Germany pledged alliance with one another, a mere formality given their long-standing fascist kinship. More importantly, in August 1939, Germany and the USSR signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact - a mutual non-aggression pact. This pact was absolutely crucial for the Nazis, as they could not envisage a successful war against Western and Northern Europe unless the major eastern threat, the USSR, was neutralized. Hitler had absolutely no intention of honoring the pact in the long term. However, the Soviet Premier Josef Stalin *did*, believing both that Germany was not strong enough to threaten Soviet territory and that the future war (which he accepted as inevitable) would be a squabble among the capitalist nations that did not involve his own resolutely communist state. To sweeten the deal for the Soviets, the pact secretly included provisions to divide Poland between Germany and the USSR in the immediate future.



Source: Mrs. Flower's History

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21.3: The Early War

The Nazis claimed that ethnic Germans were being abused and mistreated in Poland. In addition, Nazi propagandists fabricated a number of supposed atrocities that had been perpetrated against Germans. Using this excuse, the German army invaded in September 1939. Finally, France and Britain faced the hard truth that there was no appeasing Hitler, and declared war on Germany. As part of the pre-war agreement with Germany, the Soviet Union invaded Poland in the name of both territorial expansion for its own sake and to provide a buffer from Germany and the west.

German strategists had learned from World War I how to overcome trench warfare. Military technology advanced rapidly between the wars, equipping the major nations with fast-moving, heavily armored tanks and heavy bombers supported by fighter planes. It would be possible to strike much more quickly and much harder than had the ragged lines of charging soldiers “going over the top” twenty years earlier.

Likewise, as U.S. intervention had proved in World War I, all of the combatants in the Second World War recognized the key role of industrial production. In addition to military strength, the potential winner would need to continue to churn out weapons and equipment at the highest rates for the longest time. In that sense, industrial capacity was as important as fighting ability. As a result, the German army - the *Wehrmacht* - struck with overwhelming force, backed by an industrial base designed to support a lengthy war.

In September 1939, the Wehrmacht unleashed what the Allies called "Blitzkrieg", a lightning war consisting of fast-moving armored divisions supported by overwhelming air support. Behind those armored divisions, the main body of German infantry neutralized the remaining resistance and, typically, succeeded in taking thousands of prisoners of war. Ironically, Blitzkrieg was originally conceived by a French officer, Charles de Gaulle, but was rejected by the French General Staff. De Gaulle would go on to become the leader of the anti-Nazi Free French forces after France surrendered.

The first stage of the war resulted in a complete German victory. The Polish army put up a valiant defense but was swiftly crushed. Its government fled to exile in London. While the region's smaller nations warily watched their own borders, most global attention shifted to France, the obvious next stage in the plans for German conquest.

While France had declared war on Germany, it did not actually attack. French plans revolved around defense, meaning awaiting a German attack. After WWI, the French built a huge series of bunkers and fortresses along the French-German border known as the Maginot Line. There, from September of 1939 until May of 1940, the French military essentially waited for Germany to invade. The French came to refer to this period as the "*drôle de guerre*,” or “joke war”. (The British called it the “phony war,” and the Germans *sitzkrieg* or “sitting war”). Many people thought the heavy fortifications would hold Germany back. As a result, the French army simply had no plans, or intentions, to attack Germany in the meantime.

Instead, the Germans decided to go around the Maginot Line. In April, German forces invaded and swiftly defeated Denmark and Norway, despite valiant resistance by the Norwegians. Then, on the 10th of May, they attacked the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, sending the bulk of their forces through a forest on the French - Belgian border that the French had, wrongly, thought was impassable to an army. The Germans proved far more effective than the French or British at using tanks and artillery, and they immediately began driving the French and British forces back. Meanwhile, the Maginot Line went unused, with the German invasion bypassing it with the Belgian invasion.

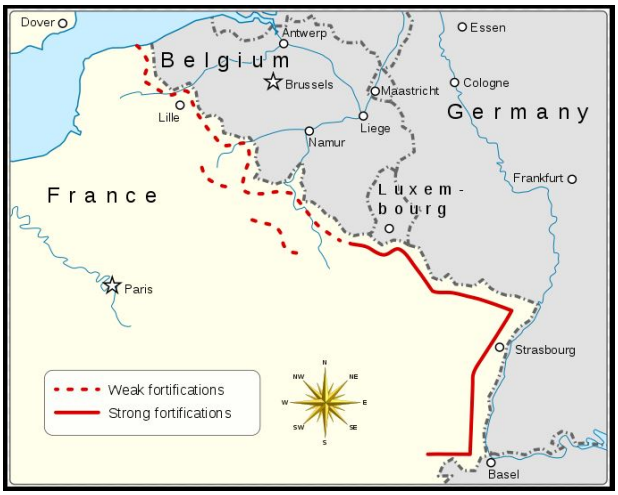


Figure 21.2.1: German forces invaded France through southern Belgium, bypassing the Maginot Line's "strong fortifications" entirely.

In late May, when over 300,000 British and French soldiers retreating from the Germans were pinned down on the coast of the English Channel near the French town of Dunkirk. A flotilla of navy and fishing vessels managed to evacuate them back to England while the British Royal Air Force held off the opposing German *Luftwaffe* (air force). This retreat counted as a success by the standards of the Allies at the time. However, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill reminded his countrymen that successful retreats were not how wars were won.

The combined Allied forces were more numerous than their German enemies. However, the French sent their armored forces toward Holland while the Germans smashed into France. Further, the British and French proved inept at working together, and Allied morale collapsed completely. The French did not realize the potential of tank warfare: they treated tanks more as mobile artillery platforms than as weapons in their own right, and they had no armored divisions, just tanks interspersed with infantry divisions.

In the end, France surrendered to Germany on June 22. Germany occupied France's central and northern parts, but allowed a group of right-wing French politicians and generals to create a Nazi-allied puppet state in the south known as the Vichy Regime. There, the Vichy government rapidly set up a distinctly French fascist state, complete with concentration camps, anti-Semitic laws, and a state of war with Britain.

Thus, as of June 1940, no major powers remained to oppose Germany, but Britain and the United States, which remained neutral. Hitler had initially hoped that the British would agree to surrender the continent while he consolidated his victory and turned against the USSR. Instead, Britain handed over power to an emergency government headed by the new prime minister, Winston Churchill. Starting in July of 1940, the German Luftwaffe began a campaign to utterly destroy Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) and terrify the British into surrendering. The resulting months of combat in the skies became known as The Battle of Britain. Lasting from July through September of 1940, thousands of planes battled in the skies every day and night.

The British were quite well prepared. They had the newly-created technology of radar, as well as numerous batteries of anti-aircraft guns that inflicted significant losses on the Luftwaffe. Many British pilots survived crashes and were rescued, whereas German pilots who were shot down either died or were captured. Most importantly, British factories churned out twice as many new planes as German ones over the course of the war. Thus, the RAF countered German attacks with new, effective fighters and increasingly seasoned pilots. By the end of September, much to Hitler's fury, Germany had to abandon the immediate goal of invading Britain.

Meanwhile, the United States stayed out of the war through a policy known as "isolationism". In part because of the heroism of the British defense, the U.S. Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act (1941), which authorized unlimited support for Britain, mostly through food and military supplies provided on credit. As a result, Britain relied on both U.S. supplies and complete governmental control of its own economy to survive in the coming years. With German blockades preventing the importation of most goods, every aspect of the British economy (especially agriculture and other forms of food production) was directed by emergency wartime ministries to keep the British population from starving.

In September 1941, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact. The Pact stipulated that any of the three powers would declare war on a neutral country that declared war on one of the others. Practically speaking, Germany hoped that the Pact would make American politicians think twice about joining Britain in the war effort. In hindsight, it backfired against Germany. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, Germany was obliged to declare war on the US. (Hitler was urged not to by his advisors, but gleefully claimed that Japan had never lost a war and now victory was assured for the Axis).



Figure 21.2.2: The sinking of the USS Arizona battleship during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In the meantime, the focus of the war shifted to North Africa, Greece, and the Balkans. Mussolini had ordered the Italian army to invade British territories in Africa (most importantly Egypt) and attack Yugoslavia and Greece in 1940. The Italians were largely ineffective. However, their attacks did inspire a spirited British counter-offensive and a strong anti-Italian resistance movement in the Balkans. However, the Germans needed supplies from the Balkans and southeastern Europe, including both foodstuffs and natural resources like oil. It would be literally unable to continue the war if the Allies managed to take over these regions.

Thus, Germany sent forces to the Balkans and Africa to support their Italian allies. By the spring of 1941, the Germans held all of southeastern Europe and had pushed the British back in Africa. Yet, there were delays in the Nazi's plans. Hitler’s attempt to get the Spanish to join the war fell flat, when the Spanish dictator Franco indicated that Spain was simply too poor and weak, despite the obvious political affinity between fascist Spain and Nazi Germany.

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21.4: The War in the East

Within one year, Germany controlled Poland, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, and Belgium. Plus, its forces were making headway in the Balkans and North Africa. Meanwhile, the fact that Britain was not only holding out, but holding on, led to a change in German plans: the Soviet invasion would have to occur before Britain was defeated.

In the overall context of the war, by far the largest and most important target for Germany was the Soviet Union. By the spring of 1941, Hitler felt confident that an all-out attack on the USSR was certain to succeed, now that German military resources could be concentrated in the east. He was spurred on by the fact that, according to his own racial ideology, the Slavs of Eastern Europe were so inferior to the "Aryan" Germans that they would be unable to mount an effective resistance. Thus, Hitler anticipated the conquest of the Soviet Union taking about ten weeks.

Stalin did not think Hitler would be foolish enough to try to invade Soviet Union, especially before Germany had truly “won” in the west. In 1939, Stalin told his advisers “The war will be fought between two groups of capitalist states…we have nothing against it if they batter and weaken each other. It would be no bad thing if Germany were to knock the richest capitalist countries (particularly England) off their feet.” Furthermore, every European schoolchild learned about Napoleon’s disastrous attempted invasion of Russia in 1812. Thus, the sheer size of Soviet territory seemed like a logical impediment to invasion.

In hindsight, Stalin had good reason for thinking that Germany would not attack. The USSR covered one-sixth of the Earth's land surface, with a population of about 170,000,000. As of 1941, its standing army was 5.5 million strong, with 12 million in reserve. Indeed, by the end of the war, the Soviets had mobilized 30.6 million soldiers. Approximately 800,000 of these soldiers were women. Indeed, the USSR was the only nation to rely on women in front-line combat roles, at which they effectively equaled their male countrymen. Given that vast strength, Stalin was astonished when the Germans attacked, reportedly spending hours in a daze before ordering an armed response.

In June 1941, Germany invaded the USSR with over 3 million troops in Operation Barbarossa, after a medieval German king who warred with the Slavs. The first few months were a horrendous disaster for the Soviets. The Soviet air force was utterly destroyed, as were most of its armored divisions. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers were taken prisoner. During the 1930s, Josef Stalin purged various groups within the Soviet state and the army, killing most of the experienced commanders, leaving inexperienced and sometimes inept replacements in their wake. In many areas, the locals welcomed the Germans as a better-controlling force than the Bolsheviks, putting up no resistance at all. Even though Hitler was frustrated to discover that his ten-week estimate of conquest was inaccurate, the first months of the invasion still amounted to an astonishing success for German forces.

Despite its early success, however, the German advance was halted by winter. The initial welcome German soldiers received vanished when it was revealed that the German army and the Nazi SS were pressing people into work gangs, murdering resisters, and shipping everything useful for the German war effort back to Germany, including both equipment and foodstuffs. Thus, groups of “partisans” (i.e. insurgents) mounted successful resistance movements that cost the Germans men and resources. Likewise, German forces had advanced so quickly that they were often bogged down in transit, with German supply lines stretched to the breaking point. Thus, just as had happened during Napoleon's retreat over a hundred years earlier, guerrilla fighters were able to stand and kill the foreign invaders.

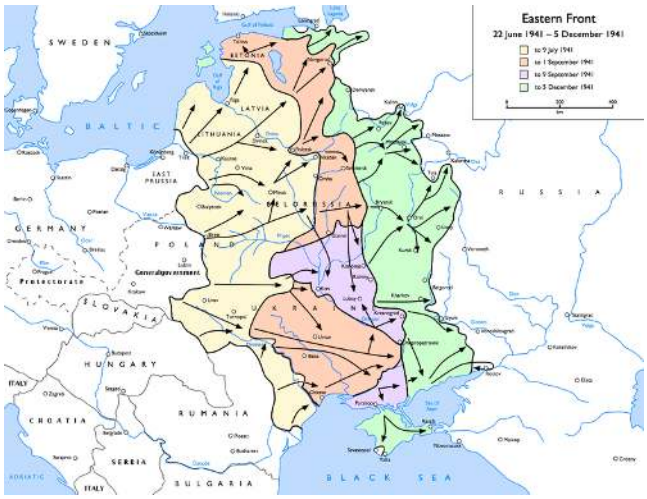


Figure 21.3.1: Between June and December 1941, the German advance opened a front stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, representing a terrible loss of territory and life to the Soviets.

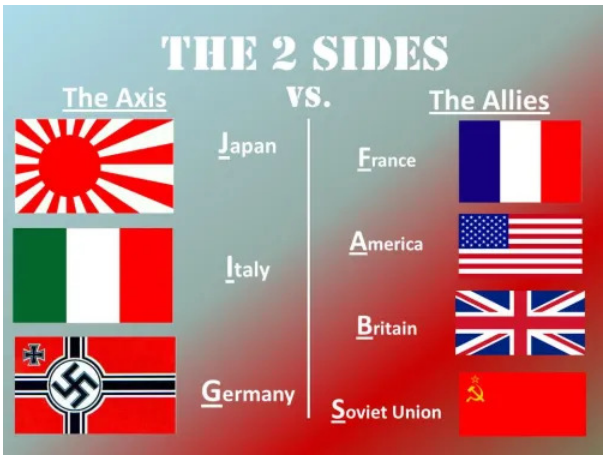
Just as it had thwarted Napoleon, the Russian winter played a key role in freezing the German invasion in its tracks. In the Autumn, mud had slowed the German advance. Then, the bitter cold of winter set in. The Germans were not equipped for winter conditions, having set out in their summer uniforms. Despite the Wehrmacht's mechanization, German forces still used horses extensively for the transportation of supplies, with many of the horses dying from the cold. Even machines could not stand up to the conditions; it got so cold that engines broke down, and tanks and armored cars were rendered immobile. Thus, while still huge and powerful, the German army was largely frozen in place in the winter of 1941 - 1942.

Incredibly, the Soviets were able to use this breathing room to literally dismantle their factories and transport them to the east, outside of the range of the German bombers. Whole factories, particularly in the Ukraine, were stripped of motors, turbines, and other useful equipment that could be moved, and sent hundreds of miles away from the front lines. There, they were rebuilt and put back to work. By 1943, a year and a half after the initial invasion, the Soviets were producing more military hardware than the Germans. Likewise, despite the relative success of the German invasion, Germany lost over 1.4 million men as casualties in the first year.

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21.5: The Turn of the Tide



Over 50 nations and 100 million soldiers were involved in World War II. Countries were considered 'neutral', an axis, or an ally power during the conflict. The major powers are shown in the image above.

Fighting in Africa, Asia, and Europe

Despite the power of Britain, the US, and the USSR, the Axis war effort continued with amazing success well into 1942. In North Africa, General Erwin Rommel ("the Desert Fox") pushed to within a few hundred miles of the Suez Canal in Egypt, threatening to cut the Allies off from a vital oil supply. Once the winter of 1941 - 1942 was over, the Germans continued to advance into Soviet territory, endangering the rebuilt factories and Soviet oil fields in the Caucuses. Japan, meanwhile, took advantage of the success of the Pearl Harbor attack and occupied dozens of islands across the Pacific. The next week witnessed a series of Allied victories, which turned the tide of the war.

In the Pacific, two major naval engagements spelled disaster for Japan. In May of 1942, at the Battle of the Coral Sea, U.S. forces defeated a Japanese invasion force targeting Australia and drove the Japanese fleet back. In June of 1942, at the Battle of Midway, U.S. forces sank four Japanese aircraft carriers. The U.S. had the industrial capacity to rebuild, whereas there was no way that Japan could do so. From that point on, U.S. forces slowly but steadily "island hopped" across the Pacific, driving Japanese forces from the islands they had occupied.

In October 1942, British forces managed to decisively defeat and push back the Germans in Egypt. The U.S. army joined the European forces, which sent the Germans into retreat from North Africa. By July 1943, the Allies were poised to bring the fight to Italy itself. Vichy French territories in North Africa had fallen after an ineffectual resistance earlier, in November 1942, which led Hitler to order the complete occupation of France the same month. T

The “real” turn of the tide occurred in the Soviet Union. In late 1942, a huge German army was dispatched against the city of Stalingrad near the Black Sea. For months, Russian and Ukrainian civilians and soldiers fought the Germans in brutal street battles, with the people of Stalingrad often engaging German tanks armed only with grenades, handguns, and Molotov cocktails. This action provided time for the main Soviet army to assemble. In February 1943, a German general directly disobeyed Hitler and surrendered. In the Russian theater, the Germans were not in their element. Urban warfare was not the same as Blitzkrieg.

Later that year an enormous Soviet army led by 9,000 tanks defeated a German army near the city of Kursk, 500 miles south of Moscow. Kursk is often considered to be the “real” turning point in the Soviet war, since the Germans were consistently on the retreat after it. The battle saw the Germans beaten “at their own game” – they were able to employ Blitzkrieg tactics, but the Russians now had anti-tank military hardware and tactics that rendered it much less effective.

Some historians believe that the USSR broke the back of the Nazi war machine. At the cost of about 25 million lives, the Soviets stopped, pushed back, and ultimately destroyed the large majority of German military forces. For comparison, the Battle of Alamein in Egypt involved about 300,000 troops from both sides combined, while Stalingrad saw over 2 million troops and hundreds of thousands of Soviet civilian combatants. Most German forces were *always* committed to the eastern front after the invasion of the USSR. Without the incredible sacrifice of the Soviet people, the US and Britain would have been forced to take on

the full strength not just of Germany and Italy, but of the various German puppet states and allies (e.g. Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria) within the Axis.

Traveling back to Europe... With Italian forces in shambles and the Fascist government in disarray, the Italian king dismissed Mussolini in July 1943. The new Italian government quickly made peace with the Allies. As a result, for the next year, the Allies swiftly invaded and pushed through Italy towards Germany.

By 1944, Germany was clearly on the defensive. On June 6, 1944, known as D-Day, British, American, and Canadian forces launched a surprise invasion across the English Channel (over 150,000 on the first day alone). After securing the coastline, the Allies steadily pushed against the Germans, suffering serious casualties in the process as the Germans refused to give up ground without brutal fighting. By April 1945, the Allies were within striking distance of Berlin. On May 7, about a week after Hitler committed suicide in his bunker, Germany surrendered.

Meanwhile, the fighting in the Pacific continued for months. By March 1945, U.S. planes targeted civilian and military targets with incendiary bombs in Japan. It took two months for U.S. forces to take the island of Okinawan, resulting in about 100,000 Japanese and 65,000 American casualties. Military strategists worried that an invasion of Japan would result in a horrendous loss of life. This ultimately led to the deployment of the most terrible weapon ever invented by the human species: nuclear arms.

The Manhattan Project, a secret military operation housed in a former boarding school in Los Alamos, New Mexico, succeeded in creating and then detonating an atomic bomb on July 16. U.S. President Truman warned Japan that it faced “prompt and utter destruction” if it did not surrender. When it did not, he authorized the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima (August 6) and Nagasaki (August 8). Hundreds of thousands died either in the initial blasts or from radiation poisoning in the months that followed. At the behest of the Japanese emperor, negotiations began a few days later, with Japanese representatives signing an unconditional surrender on September 2.



Figure 21.4.1: A photograph of the infamous “mushroom cloud” following the atomic blast that destroyed Hiroshima.

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21.6: The Holocaust

After the war, as a whole, Europe was in shambles, with whole cities destroyed, and even the victorious Allied nations were economically crippled. In addition, details of what became known as the Holocaust were discovered by the liberating armies. Simultaneously, the world was forced to grapple with the fact that human beings had the ability to extinguish *all* life on earth through atomic weapons. These two traumas - the Holocaust and The Bomb - forced "Western Civilization" as a whole to rethink its own identity.

Before the Holocaust

In 1935, the Nazis implemented anti-Jewish racial laws, known as the Nuremberg Laws. Jews were deprived of their citizenship and banned from various professions based upon their classification of being either “full” Jews (three or four practicing Jews as grandparents) or 'mixed" Jews. For the next four years leading up to the war, the Nazi government sought to force Jews to emigrate from the Reich, while extracting as much wealth from them as possible. The state imposed a “Reich Flight Tax”. Then, in 1938, they forced all Jews to register their property, which was then expropriated in a campaign dubbed “Aryanization.”

In November 1938, the Nazis initiated a nationwide pogrom known as the Night of Broken Glass (*Kristallnacht*) in which some 90 Jews were killed and 177 synagogues burned to the ground. Afterwards, 20,000 Jewish men were arrested for “disrupting the peace” and incarcerated in prison camps. Nazi leader Hermann Göring demanded one billion Marks from the German Jewish population for the damage caused by the riots. After *Kristallnacht*, many of the remaining German Jews desperately sought asylum outside of Germany, but were all too often rebuffed by countries which, in the midst of the Great Depression, allowed in only a trickle of immigrants each year (Jewish or otherwise). Approximately half of the 500,000 German Jews did manage to flee before the war.



Figure 21.1.1: The aftermath of Kristallnacht in Munich: the gutted remains of the Ohel-Jakob Synagogue.

Simultaneously, high-ranking Nazi officials in the SS were exploring permanent options for ridding the Reich of Jews. Beginning in 1941, many Nazis wanted to render the entire face of Europe, and possibly the world, *Judenrein*: "Jew-Free." In the end, the “final solution to the Jewish question” - the Nazi’s euphemism for the Holocaust - was decided to consist not of deportation, but of systematic murder.

The bulk of Europe's Jewish population was in the east, concentrated in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine. Unlike the Jews of Central and Western Europe, most of the Jews of Eastern Europe were largely unassimilated, living in separate communities, speaking Yiddish as their vernacular language instead of Polish or Russian, and often facing harsh anti-Semitism from their non-Jewish neighbors (which was somewhat muted in the nominally unprejudiced Soviet Union). Thus, the Jews of the east had almost nowhere to run and few who would help them once the German war machine arrived.

When the war began, Polish Jews were beaten, humiliated, and sometimes murdered outright, but there was not a campaign of focused, organized murder against them. Instead, the initial task of Nazi murder squads was the elimination of the Polish “leadership class,” which came to mean intellectuals, politicians, communists, and Catholic priests. At least 50,000 Polish social, political, and intellectual elites were murdered by SS death squads or regular German soldiers in a campaign codenamed “Operation Tannenberg.”

On encountering the enormous numbers of Jews in Poland, the Nazis opted to drive them into hastily-constructed ghettos, neighborhoods that were usually fenced-off, and surrounded with barbed wire. The largest ones were in the large Polish cities of Warsaw and Lodz; the Warsaw Ghetto alone housed over 400,000 Jews at its height in late 1941. Conditions were atrocious. The official food ration “paid” to Jewish workers who worked as slave laborers for the Nazi war effort consisted of about 600 - 800 calories a day. (An adult should consume about 2,000 a day to remain healthy.) Approximately 500,000 people died from starvation and disease in the ghettos.

The Holocaust Begins

The Holocaust began with the invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941. As German armies advanced into Soviet territory, they were followed by four teams of *Einsatzgruppen* - mobile killing squads - charged with killing “Jews, Gypsies, and the disabled.” At some point over the next few months, the top Nazi leadership decided to abandon earlier experiments with forced deportations and search for more efficient methods. The head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, ordered experiments with better means of mass murder, which resulted in Nazi technicians devising “gas vans” that killed their victims through carbon monoxide poisoning. By the late fall of 1941, killing facilities were being built in the concentration camps of Majdanek and Auschwitz. There, the first experiments with the infamous pesticide Zyklon B were carried out on Russian POWs.

Based on the experiments with gas vans and temporary gas chambers at Auschwitz, SS leaders concluded that stationary killing centers would be the most efficient. In early 1942, the Nazis embarked on the creation of the extermination camps. Extermination camps were not the same thing as concentration camps. Concentration camps were prison camps, Extermination camps were designed for one purpose: to kill people. There were only six of them in total, and most were very small - often about a quarter of a square mile in size. All were located in occupied Poland, near rail lines and hidden in forests away from major population centers. New arrivals were typically dead within two hours. They were, in short, "death factories," production facilities of murder that ran on industrial timetables.

The most well-known camp was Auschwitz. Built to be permanent, its gas chambers were large and made of concrete and steel (unlike the wood sheds used to murder in the other extermination camps). It was intended to be the final destination for every Jew captured by the Nazis. Thus most Jews from the western European countries occupied by Germany were sent to die in Auschwitz. The Nazis continued to prioritize the "final solution" even as the war turned against them, shipping hundreds of thousands to Auschwitz as the Allies steadily pressed against them in the east and south.

Aftermath

The liberation of the camps was horrifying to the Allied soldiers who discovered them in the closing months of the war. Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander of the forces that had carried out the D-Day invasion, ordered that British and American troops alike document what they discovered - the huge mounds of corpses, the open graves, the emaciated survivors, and the gas chambers. Likewise, Soviet forces preserved the evidence discovered in the eastern camps, including Auschwitz itself.

At the Nuremberg Trials, Nazi leaders were charged with Crimes Against Humanity, a completely new category of crime designed by the victorious Allies to try to deal with the enormity of what they still called “Nazi atrocities.” Based on the German SS's documentation, the Allies calculated that the death toll of Jews murdered by the Third Reich to roughly six million individuals, and the basic mechanisms of deportation, slavery, and gassing were also clear. Today, global community members can visit a number of museums dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust, such as the *Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum*.

Editor's Note: This textbook is used at Mizzou Academy, a private school located in the state of Missouri. Pursuit to Revised Statutes of Missouri, RSMo Section 161.700, the term "Holocaust" shall be defined as the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators during the period from 1933 through 1945.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

22: The Soviet Union and the Cold War

22.1: Marxism-Leninism

22.2: Stalinism

22.3: World War II and the USSR

22.4: The Cold War

22.5: The USSR During the Cold War

22.6: Conclusion- What Went Wrong with the USSR

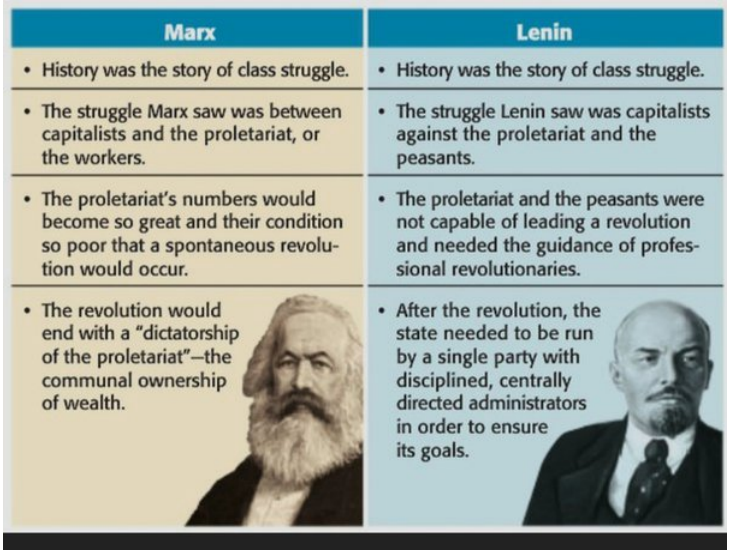
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22.1: Marxism-Leninism

By the late 1960s, one-third of the world's population lived in communist countries. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the People's Republic of China loomed over a vast swath of Eurasia, while smaller countries like Vietnam and North Korea occasionally erupted in revolution. Communist revolutions also broke out in Latin America, succeeding only in Cuba. Non-aligned countries, such as India, were often as sympathetic to the "Soviet Bloc" (i.e. countries allied with or under the control of the USSR) as they were to the United States and the other major capitalist countries.

Behind the façade of strength and power, the USSR was one of the strangest historical paradoxes of all time. It was a country whose official political ideology, Marxism-Leninism, proclaimed an end to class warfare and the stated goal of achieving true communism, a worker's state in which everyone enjoyed the fruits of science and industrialism and no one was left behind. In reality, the nation was in a perpetual state of economic stagnation, with its citizens enjoying dramatically lower standards of living, while toiling harder for fewer benefits than their contemporaries in the west. Marxism-Leninism was officially hostile to imperialism, and yet the USSR controlled the governments of most of its "allied" nations after World War II. Of all forms of government, communism was supposed to be the most genuinely democratic, responding to the will of the people instead of false representatives bought with the money of the rich. Yet, decision-making rested in the hands of high-level members of the communist party, the so-called *apparatchiks*, or arch-bureaucrats. Finally, Marxism-Leninism was officially a political program of peace, yet military power was a priority in the USSR.

Comparison on Marxism-Leninism



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22.2: Stalinism

The Bolshevik party rose to power against the backdrop of the anarchy surrounding Russia's disastrous military position in World War I. By 1922, the party was firmly in power and embarked on a fascinating and almost unprecedented series of political and social experiments. No country had undergone a successful communist revolution, so there was no precedent for how a socialist society was supposed to be organized. Almost immediately, the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin launched the New Economic Policy, which allowed limited market exchange of goods and foodstuffs, while the state supported a renaissance in the arts and literature. For a few years, the standards of living rose, and a flowering of innovative creative energy existed as artists and intellectuals explored what it might mean to live in the country of the future.

When Lenin died in 1924, a struggle within the Bolshevik leadership emerged. In 1927, Joseph Stalin politically defeated his enemies (including the Bolshevik leaders Trotsky and Zinoviev, two of Lenin's closest allies) and consolidated total control of the state. Officially, Stalin was the "Premier" of the communist party, overseeing its central decision-making committee, the Politburo. Unofficially, Stalin's control of the top level of the party translated into pure autocracy, similar to the power of the Tsar before the revolution.

Before his rise to power, Stalin's position in the Russian Communist Party had been relatively innocuous. As its secretary, he had little direct power but enormous potential influence. In order to achieve appointment within the party, other members of the party had to go through Stalin. He shrewdly cemented political relationships, so that by Lenin's death he was well-positioned to make a power grab himself.

Stalin is a much more enigmatic figure than Hitler. However, he did not write manifestos about his beliefs, or leave behind many documents or letters that might help historians reconstruct his motivations. During his rule, he changed his mind frequently and did not stick to consistent patterns of behavior or decision-making, making it difficult to pin down his essential beliefs or goals. His only overarching personality trait was tremendous paranoia: almost always feeling as if surrounded by potential traitors and enemies.

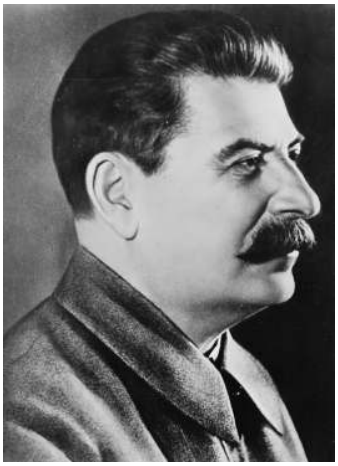


Figure 22.2.1: Stalin

During the 1930s, he forced through massive change to the Soviet economy and society while periodically killing anyone imaged as a threat or enemy. Communism was "supposed" to spread around the world after an initial revolutionary outburst. Instead, it was stuck in one place, which necessitated a massive industrial buildup. The military benefited the most, growing dramatically and achieving a level of parity with the west.

Of his many destructive policies, Stalin is perhaps best remembered for the "purges", rounding up and executing members of the communist party, the army, or even the police forces themselves. Normally, Stalin's agents would use torture to force the hapless victims to confess to outlandish charges like conspiring with Germany or the United States to bring down the Soviet Union. His secret police force, the NKVD (its Russian acronym - later changed to KGB), often followed direct orders from Stalin himself. Thus, even at the highest levels of power in the USSR, no one was safe from Stalin's paranoia.

Stalin relied on the NKVD to carry out the purges, targeting better-off peasants known as kulaks, then the Old Bolsheviks (who had taken part in the revolution itself), army officers, middle-ranking communist party members, and finally, regular citizens caught in the machinery of accusation and punishment that plagued the country in the second half of the 1930s. So many people disappeared that citizens came to suspect that everyone was an informer and that everything was bugged. In addition to outright murder, thousands were imprisoned in labor camps known as gulags, almost all of which were located in the frigid northern regions of Siberia. Researchers estimate that roughly 681,692 died during the Great Purge of 1936-1938.

Domestic Policies

While the purges were emblematic of Stalin's tyranny, other policies led to more deaths. Earlier in the 1930s, Stalin imposed the collectivization of agriculture, forcing millions of peasants to abandon their farms and villages and move to gigantic new "collective" farms. The state-imposed quotas were immediately set at unachievable levels. In the winter of 1932 – 1933, approximately 3 million peasants across the USSR (and especially in the Ukraine) starved to death. The collectivization process resulted in another 6 - 10 million deaths including those who were executed for resisting. Despite falling abysmally short of its production goals, collectivization "succeeded" in destroying the age-old bonds between the peasants and the land. Going forward, Soviet peasants would be a resentful and inefficient class of farm workers rather than peasants rooted in the land who identified with traditional values.

Acknowledging the vast gap between the Soviet Union's industrial capacity and that of the West, Stalin introduced the Five-Year Plans. The sky-high production quotas were never actually met and thousands died in the frenzy of industrial buildup. However, the plans were successful in achieving near parity with the Western powers in terms of industrial capacity. Industrial workers were obliged to toil in conditions far from a "worker's paradise," spared the worst depredations of the purges, and did not face outright starvation.



Figure 22.2.2: Soviet propaganda consistently mythologized the supposed fervor of industrial workers. The text reads "2+2 plus the enthusiasm of the workers = 5."

Foreign Policies

Stalin's overriding goals were twofold:

- secure allies abroad against the growing power of Germany (and, to an extent, Japan)
- drag the USSR into the industrial age

While remaining deeply hostile to the Western powers, the Soviet state did receive official diplomatic recognition from the US and France in 1933. The Five-Year Plans were disastrous in the long run, but did succeed in industrializing the USSR. On the eve of World War II, the USSR had become the third-largest industrial power after the United States and Germany, and was counted among the major political powers of Europe and the world.

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22.3: World War II and the USSR

During World War II, the USSR bore the brunt of the German war machine. More than 25 million Soviets died on the eastern front, soldiers and civilians alike. Futher, it was through the incredible sacrifice of the Soviet people that the German army was finally broken and driven back. During the war, Stalin had played the role of the powerful, protective "uncle" of the Soviet people. After victory was achieved, he enjoyed a period of genuine popularity, especially as returning Soviet soldiers were given good positions in the bureaucracy.

Britain, the US, and the USSR had a shared enemy, Germany. In 1943, the "Big Three" leaders met in Tehran to discuss the war and what would be done afterwards. There, Stalin insisted that the territory seized from Poland by the USSR in 1939 would remain in Soviet hands, shrinking the country's geographic size enormously. Roosevelt and Churchill, well aware of the critical role being played by Soviet troops, were not in a position to insist otherwise.



Figure 22.3.1: The Tehran Conference (1943) represented the first in-person meeting of the “Big Three.” From left: Josef Stalin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill.

In 1944, British and American economists devised the basis of the postwar economic order, the Bretton Woods Agreement, which fixed the dollar as the monetary reserve of the Western world, created the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to stabilize the international economy, and set currency exchange rates. This plan initially included the Soviets, who would be eligible for financial support in addressing the devastation wrought by Germany. However, the USSR pulled out in 1948, creating an economic divide between east and west).

In January 1945, Stalin stipulated that the postwar governments in Eastern Europe would need to be “friendly” to the Soviet Union, an ambiguous term whose practical meaning suggested dominance by communist parties. Churchill and Roosevelt agreed on the condition that Stalin promised to support free elections, something he never intended to allow. The 'big three' also agreed to divide Germany into different zones until such time as they could determine how to allow the Germans to have self-government again.

In part, Britain and the US gave in to Soviet demands because of the incredible sacrifice of the Soviet people. Approximately 90% of the casualties on the Allied side up to 1944 were Soviets (mostly Russians, but also including millions of Ukrainians and Central Asians). In addition, until 1945, Roosevelt assumed the United States would need Soviet help in bringing about the final defeat of Japan. Each side tried to avoid antagonizing the other, even though they privately recognized that there were incompatible visions of postwar European reorganization at stake.

Despite those incompatible ideas, many political leaders and regular citizens across the globe hoped that the postwar order would be fundamentally different than its prewar analog. Fundamental to that vision was the creation of an official international body, whose purpose was the prevention of armed conflict and the pursuit of peaceful and productive policies around the world. Founded in 1945, the United Nations was a body of arbitration and, when necessary, enforcer of internationally agreed-upon policies. Its Security Council was authorized to deploy military force when necessary, while preventing war from being used as a tool of political aggrandizement. The Soviet Union joined the Western powers as a founding member of the UN.

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22.4: The Cold War

Despite being permanent members of the UN Security Council, the divisions between the US and USSR undermined the possibility of global unity. By the late 1940s, the world was increasingly split into the two “camps” of the Cold War, a decades-long rivalry between the two postwar “superpowers,” the United States and the Soviet Union. As the decades moved on, both sides built enormous nuclear arsenals that would potentially lead to the extinction of the human species. (In U.S. History, the idea is often referred to as M.A.D.: Mutually Assured Destruction.) Both nations had enough of a collective self-preservation instinct that the conflict worked itself out in the form of technological and scientific rivalry, an enormous and ongoing arms race, and "proxy wars" fought elsewhere that did not directly draw both sides into a larger conflict.

Truman Doctrine

The Cold War was never 'declared', but rather consisted of doctrines and plans. In 1947, the US issued the Truman Doctrine, which pledged to help people resist communism wherever it appeared – the rhetoric of the doctrine was about the defense of free people who were threatened by foreign agents. Out of the doctrine came the idea of “containment,” of keeping communism “contained” to the countries it already had taken over. The immediate impetus was a conflict raging in Greece after WWII, in which the communist resistance movement sought to overthrow the right-wing, royalist government. Both the British and US supported the Greek government, However, the USSR did not lend any aid to the communist rebels, fearing that doing so could lead to a much larger conflict. Furious at what he regarded as another instance of western capitalist imperialism, Stalin pulled the USSR out of the Bretton Woods economic agreement in early 1948.

The Truman Doctrine was closely tied to the fear of what U.S. policy-makers called the “Domino Theory”, if one nation “fell” to communism, then the same ideology would spread to the surrounding countries. Thus, preventing a communist takeover anywhere, even in a comparatively small and militarily insignificant country, was essential from the perspective of U.S. foreign policy. From the 1950s through the 1980s, the policy would be especially important in politics, conflicts, and wars from Latin America to Southeast Asia.

Along with the Truman Doctrine, the United States introduced the Marshall Plan (1948), which involved providing enormous loans to European countries trying to rebuild from the war. At the same time, European states founded the Organization of European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), which required any country accepting loans to join. Stalin regarded the OEEC as a puppet of the US, and banned all countries under Soviet influence from participating. Simultaneously, the Soviets were busy extracting wealth and materials from Eastern Europe to help recover from their own war losses. The Marshall Plan, OEEC, and Soviet policy created a stark economic division between west and east: while Western Europe rapidly recovered from the war, the east remained poor and comparatively backwards.

Iron Curtain

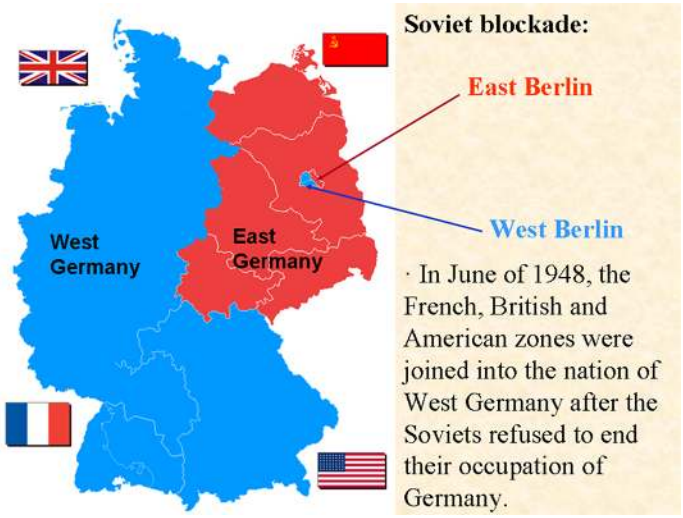
By 1948, in the words of Winston Churchill, the “iron curtain” had truly fallen across Eastern Europe. With the aid of Soviet “advisers”, communists from Poland to Romania used terror tactics and legal bans to push non-communist parties and political organizations out. Soon, Eastern European states officially pledged to cooperate with the USSR. Practically speaking, every Eastern European country was controlled by a communist party that took its orders directly from Moscow, no independent political decision-making was allowed. By 1955, the Soviets had formalized their own military system with the Warsaw Pact, a web of military alliances comparable to NATO.



The major exception was Yugoslavia, where a genuine communist revolution occurred. During the war, an effective anti-German resistance was led by Yugoslav communists, and in the aftermath they succeeded in seizing power over the entire country. Tito, the communist leader of Yugoslavia, angrily broke with Stalin. Thus, Yugoslavia was a communist country, but not one controlled by the USSR.

In turn, Stalin's anger with Yugoslavia inspired the Soviets to carry out a series of purges against the communist leadership of the Eastern European countries under Soviet domination. Soviet agents sought “Titoists” who were supposedly undermining the strength of commitment to communism. Between 1948 and 1953, communist leaders were put on show trials, both in their own countries and sometimes after being hauled off to Moscow, where they were first tortured into confessing various made-up crimes and then executed.

At first, USSR made no overt attempts to sponsor communist takeovers outside of Eastern Europe. One exception occurred in 1948/1949, when the Soviets blockaded West Berlin. The western “zones” of Berlin remained in the hands of the US, Britain, and France, a strange relic of the immediate aftermath of the war. As Cold War tensions mounted, Stalin ordered the blockade of all supplies going to the western zones. In response, the US led a massive ongoing airlift of food and supplies for nearly a year while both sides studiously avoided armed confrontation. In the end, the Soviets abandoned the blockade, and West Berlin became a unique pocket of the Western camp in the midst of communist East Germany.



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22.5: The USSR During the Cold War

When Stalin died in 1954, the USSR was still comparatively poor, but enormously powerful. In addition, millions were still trapped in the gulags of Siberia. After a power struggle between the top members of the communist party, Stalin's successor emerged: Nikita Khrushchev, a former coal miner and engineer who genuinely believed that the USSR would overtake the West economically.

Soon after securing power, Khrushchev broke with Stalinism. In 1956, he gave a 'secret speech' to the leaders of the communist party, not broadcast to the general public, but leaked to the state-controlled press. In it, Khrushchev blamed Stalin for bringing about a "cult of personality" that was at variance with true communist principles, and for "excesses," a thinly veiled acknowledgment of the Siberian prison camps and summary executions. Shortly afterwards, "The Thaw" began. Khrushchev had four million prisoners released from the gulags as a practical gesture demonstrating his sincerity. For a brief period, there was another flowering of literary and artistic experimentation comparable to that of the early 1920s. The ubiquitous censorship was relaxed, with a few accurate accounts of the gulags making it into mainstream publication. In turn, among many, there were genuine hopes for larger political reforms of the system.

This hope of a new beginning was found elsewhere in the Soviet Bloc. In October of 1956, a reformist faction of the Hungarian communist party inspired a mass uprising calling for a reformed, more humanistic communism, and the expulsion of Soviet forces and "advisers" completely. A full-scale invasion by the Soviet army killed several thousand protesters in violent clashes (primarily in the capital city of Budapest), followed by the arrests of over half a million people. While Khrushchev might not want to follow directly in Stalin's footsteps, he had no intention of allowing genuine independence in the Soviet Bloc countries of Eastern Europe.

Angered by the events in Hungary and by the growth of outright dissent with the USSR, Khrushchev reasserted control. Large-scale change was out of the question. Instead, the state concentrated on wildly ambitious, and sometimes astonishingly impractical, economic projects. Soviet engineers and planners drained whole river systems to irrigate fields, Soviet factories churned out thousands of tons of products and materials no one wanted, and whole regions were polluted to the point of becoming nearly uninhabitable. Over time, cynicism replaced terror as the default outlook of Soviet citizens. For most, the only hope of achieving a decent standard of living and relative personal stability was forming the right connections within the enormous party bureaucracy. The USSR went from a murderous police state under Stalin to a bloated, corrupt police state under Khrushchev and the leaders who followed him.

At this point, the Cold War reached its most frenzied pitch. Khrushchev was an explosive personality, who sincerely believed in the possibility of the USSR "winning" the Cold War by

- outstripping the Western world economically
- winning over the nations of the Third World to communism politically

To that end, he continued the Stalinist focus on building up heavy industry and military hardware, as well as developments in science and engineering.

Space Race

During Khrushchev's tenure, the "space race" joined the arms race as a major centerpiece of Cold War policy. The first superpower to reach a given breakthrough in the space race would "win" a major symbolic victory in the eyes of the world. In addition, since the space race was based on the mastery of rocket technology, the military implications were obvious. In 1957, the Soviets launched *Sputnik*, the first satellite to orbit the Earth, which was perceived as a major Soviet triumph in the Cold War. Khrushchev claimed that the USSR had also developed missiles that could strike targets on the other side of the world. Thus, the West feared that the Soviets could as easily detonate a nuclear weapon in the US as in Europe.



Figure 22.5.1: A commemorative Soviet postage stamp depicting Sputnik's orbit.

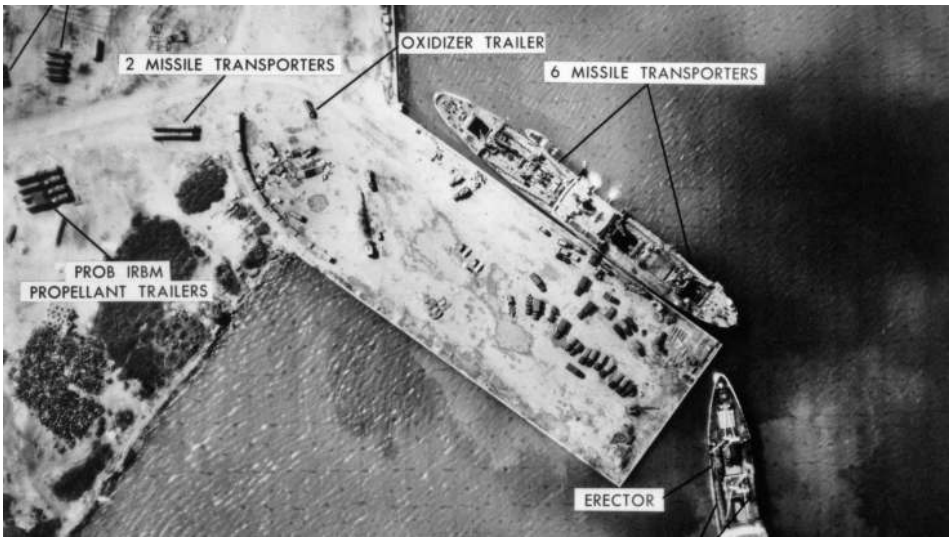
Cuba

U.S. President John F Kennedy was a hard-line anti-communist, who believed it was important to stand up to the Soviets symbolically and, if necessary, militarily. In 1959, Cuban revolutionaries overthrew the right-wing dictator Fulgencio Batista (who had been an American ally). Fearing U.S. intervention, they eventually aligned themselves with the USSR. Thus, Kennedy faced the growing technological and military power of the USSR, as well as what he regarded as a Soviet puppet on the doorstep of US territory.

In 1962, the US Central Intelligence Agency staged an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the Cuban communist leader Fidel Castro, an event known as the Bay of Pigs Invasion. In the aftermath, Castro and Khrushchev agreed to install missile batteries in Cuba both as a deterrent against a potential invasion by the US in the future and to redress the superiority of U.S. missile deployments. Khrushchev was eager to establish a military presence in the Western hemisphere, especially since the US had already installed missile batteries in Italy and Turkey.

Soon, U.S. spy planes detected the construction of the missile site in Cuba and the shipments of missiles en route to Cuba, leading to the Cuban Missile Crisis. There was serious consideration of launching a full-scale U.S.-led assault on Cuba, something that could have led directly to nuclear war. Many U.S. military leaders believed in the possibility of a "limited nuclear war", missile sites would be destroyed quickly enough to prevent the Soviets from launching counter-strikes. Instead, Kennedy and Khrushchev carefully engaged in behind-the-scenes diplomacy. Both realized the stakes of the conflict and did not want to destroy the world in the name of national pride. After thirteen panicked days, both sides agreed to withdraw their missiles. Ironically, a Soviet submarine very nearly launched nuclear torpedoes at an U.S. ship. A single Soviet officer called off the strike that could have led directly to nuclear war.

A photograph released by the U.S. Department of Defense shows a Russian ship unloading missiles.



Source: History.com

In the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the US and USSR agreed to create a “hotline” to ensure rapid communication in the event of future crises. The United States dropped the idea of “limited” nuclear and instead recognized that any nuclear strike was the equivalent of “M.A.D.” (Mutually Assured Destruction). While the arms race between the superpowers continued, both sides did enter into various treaties that limited the pace of nuclear arms production.

Brezhnev's Reign

In 1964, having lost the confidence of key members of the Politburo, Khrushchev was forced out of office. Leonid Brezhnev, a lifelong communist bureaucrat, would hold power until 1982, overseeing a long period of what is usually characterized as stagnation by historians. The Soviet system, including its nominal adherence to Marxism-Leninism, would remain in place, but even elites abandoned the idea that “real” communism was achievable. Instead, life in the USSR was about trying to find a place in the system, rather than pursuing the more far-reaching goals of communist theory. The deeply wedded state and the economy were rife with corruption and nepotism. A deep-seated, bitter cynicism became the outlook of most Soviet citizens toward their government.

During Brezhnev’s tenure as the Soviet premier, Czechoslovakia tried to break away from the Soviet Block. In the Spring of 1968, the Czech communist leader Alexander Dubcek (who had fought against the Nazis in the war and had been a staunch ally and trusted underling of the Soviets) received permission from Moscow to experiment with limited reforms. He called for “socialism with a human face,” meaning a kind of communist government that allowed freedom of speech, a liberalized outlook on human expression, and a diversified economy that could address sectors besides heavy industry. Dubcek relaxed censorship and allowed workers to organize into Soviets (councils) as they had in the early years of the communist revolution in Russia. These reforms were eagerly embraced by the Czechs and Slovaks.

Predictably, the reforms proved too radical for Moscow. Brezhnev sent in the Soviet military, as did the other Warsaw Pact countries (except Romania). This reaction was regarded around the world as especially crude and disproportionate, given that the Czechs and Slovaks did not rise up in any kind of violent way. The message was clear: no meaningful reform would be possible in the East unless the leadership in Moscow underwent a fundamental change of outlook. That change would eventually come in the 1980s under Mikhail Gorbachev.

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22.6: Conclusion- What Went Wrong with the USSR

In historical hindsight, the paradox of a "communist" country that so profoundly failed to realize its stated goals of freedom, equality, and justice, has led many people to speculate about what was inherently flawed with the Soviet system. There are many theories, three of which are considered below.

- The Soviet state was trapped in impossible circumstances. After World War I, the Bolsheviks inherited control of a backward, economically-underdeveloped nation. They utilized brutal methods in trying to catch up with the nations of the West. This thesis is supported by the success of the Red Army. If Stalin had not industrialized Russia and the Ukraine** by force, the results of World War II would have been even more awful.
- Communism is somehow contrary to human nature and thus doomed to failure, no matter what the circumstances or context. Scholars note the incredible prevalence of corruption at every level of Soviet society. A huge black market existed, as did nepotism and infighting from getting a job to obtaining an apartment in one of the major cities. Greed proved an implacable foe to communist social organization, with the party apparatchiks reaping the benefits of their positions - better food, better housing, vacations - that were never available to rank-and-file citizens.
- The Soviet economy was the ultimate expression of the idea of a “command economy,” with every product produced according to arcane and unrealistic quotas set by huge bureaucracies within the Soviet state. The most elementary laws of supply and demand were ignored in favor of irrational, and indeed arbitrary, systems of production. The results were chronic shortages of goods and services people actually needed (or wanted) and equally vast surpluses of useless, shoddy junk, from ill-fitting shoes to unreliable machinery. To cite a single example, party leaders in the Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan told farmers to buy up grain supplies from stores in order to meet their yearly quotas; those quotas were utterly impossible to meet through actual farming.

It should also be considered that there had never been anything like a democratic or liberal society in Russia. There was no tradition of what the British called the “loyal opposition” of political parties who may disagree on particulars but who are still accepted as legitimate expressions of the will and opinion of parts of the citizenry. There were no “checks and balances” to hold back corruption either. Indeed, by the Brezhnev era, political connections were far more important than any kind of heartfelt devotion to Marxist theory. Thus, the kinds of decisions made by the Soviet leadership were inspired by a pure, ruthless will to see results against a backdrop of staggering inefficiency and corruption.

Not everything about Soviet society was a failure. After the “Thaw”, almost no one was executed for simply disagreeing with the state, and prison terms were much shorter. Standards of living were mediocre, but medical care, housing, and food were either free or cheap because of state subsidies. The kind of “leveling-out” associated with communist theory did happen, in a sense, because most people lived at a similar standard of living, the perks allowed to senior members of the communist party notwithstanding. In the end, the Soviet Union represented one of the most profound, albeit often blood-soaked and inhumane, political experiments in world history.

** The use of "the" relates to the time before independence in 1991, when Ukraine was a republic of the Soviet Union known as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Today, the country is called and referred to as Ukraine, without "the".

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

23: Postwar Conflict

23.1: Introduction

23.2: Major Cold War Conflicts

23.3: India, Israel, and Palestine

23.4: Africa

23.5: The Non-Aligned Movement and Immigration

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23.1: Introduction

The aftermath of World War II resulted in a shift in the locus of power from Europe to the United States and the Soviet Union. U.S. aid or Soviet power guided the reconstruction of Europe, and both superpowers proved more than capable of making policy decisions for the countries within their respective spheres of influence. The Soviets directly controlled Eastern Europe and had an enormous amount of influence in the other communist countries, while the United States exercised considerable influence on the member nations of NATO.

Thus, with the height of European power still being a living memory, many Europeans struggled to make sense of their own identity. One issue of tremendous importance was the status of their colonies, most of which were still intact in the immediate postwar period. Many Europeans felt that colonies still proved the relevance and importance of the mother countries. For example, the former British prime minister Winston Churchill was dismayed by the prospect of Indian independence from the British commonwealth, even when most Britons accepted it as inevitable. Indeed, France and Britain thought that their colonies could somehow keep them on the same level as the superpowers in terms of global power.

By 1945, there were a host of problems with imperialism. Colonial troops had played vital roles in the war. Statisticians estimate that millions of Africans and Asians served in the allied armies, with over two million troops from India being a part of the British military. These troops fought in the name of defending democracy from fascism and tyranny. Yet, back in their home countries, they did not have access to democratic rights. Many independence movements, such as India's, refused to aid in the war effort as a result. Once the war was over, troops returned home to societies that were still governed as political dependencies and divided starkly along racial lines. The contrast between the ostensible goals of the war and the obvious injustice in the colonies could not have been more evident.

Simultaneously, the Cold War led to "proxy wars" between U.S.-led or supplied anti-communists group challenging communist insurgents inspired or supported by the Soviet Union or (after 1949) China. A complex matrix of conflicts combined independence struggles within colonies on the one hand and proxy conflicts and wars between factions caught in the web of the Cold War on the other. Sometimes, independence movements avoided being ensnared in the Cold War, such as India and Ghana. Other times, countries became battlegrounds between capitalism and communism, such as Vietnam.

Generally, despite its nominal goal of arbitrating peaceful solutions for international problems, the newly-founded United Nations failed to prevent the outbreak of war. One glaring problem: the two superpowers held permanent seats on the UN Security Council, the body that was charged with authorizing the use of force when necessary. Likewise, the two "camps" of the Cold War generally remained loyal to their respective superpower leaders, ensuring that there could be no unified decision making when it came to Cold War conflicts.

In many cases, European imperial powers reacted violently to their colonial subjects' demands for independent governance, leading to bloodshed and grotesque violations of human rights. Here, again, the United Nations was generally unable to prevent violence. However, it did, at times, at least provide an ethical framework by which the actions of the imperialist powers might be judged historically.

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23.2: Major Cold War Conflicts

Fortunately, the Cold War never turned into a “hot” war between the two superpowers, despite close calls like that of the Cuban Missile Crisis. However, many conflicts in the postwar era represented a combination of battles for independence from European empires and proxy wars between the two camps of the Cold War.

Korea

Since 1910, Korea had been occupied by Japan, part of Japan’s bid to create an East Asian and Pacific empire that culminated in the Pacific theater of World War II. After the defeat of Japan, Korea was divided between a communist north and an anti-communist republican south. In 1950, North Korean troops supported with Soviet arms and allied Chinese troops invaded the south in the name of reuniting the country under communist rule. A United Nations force consisting mostly of the U.S. army fought alongside South Korean troops against the North Korean and Chinese forces.

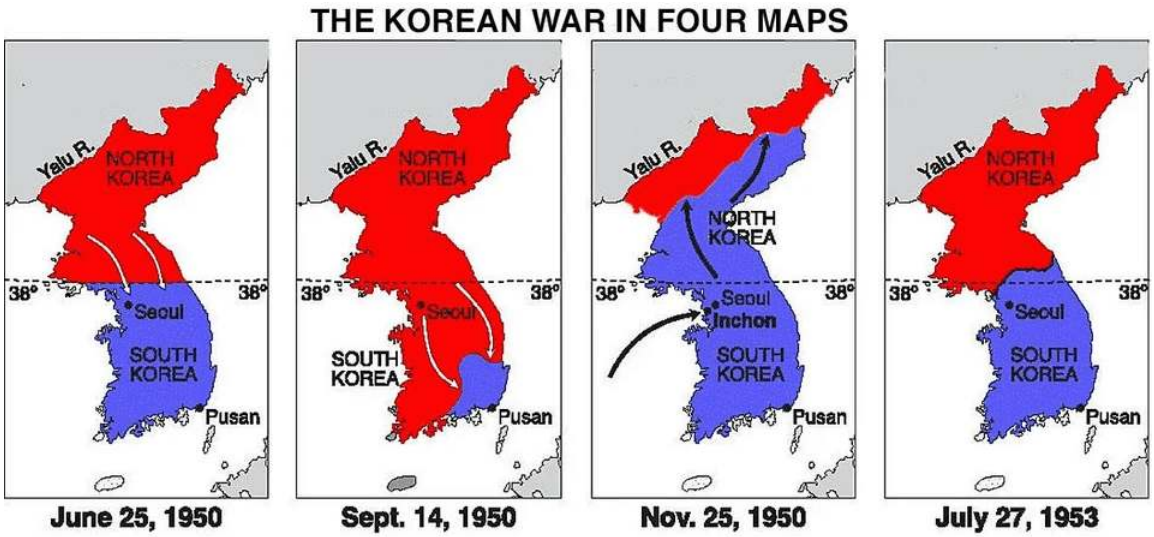


Figure 23.1: An armistice was signed on July 27, 1953. The agreement drew a new boundary near the 38th parallel that gave South Korea an extra 1,500 square miles of territory; and created a 2-mile-wide “demilitarized zone” that still exists today.

In 1945, Vietnamese insurgents declared Vietnam's independence from France. As a result, French forces hastily invaded in an attempt to hold onto the French colony of Indochina. When the Korean War exploded a few years later, the United States intervened to support France, convinced by the events in Korea that communism was spreading like a virus across Asia. As U.S. involvement grew, orders for munitions and equipment revitalized the Japanese economy, and a strong political alliance between the U.S. and Japanese governments emerged.

After three years of bloody fighting, the Korean War ended in a stalemate. Both sides agreed to a cease fire, and a demilitarized zone was established. Technically, the war has never officially ended, with the truce remaining in place to this day. The conflict was costly with an estimated three million casualties. As South Korea evolved into a modern, technologically advanced and politically democratic society, the north devolved into a nominally “communist” tyranny in which poverty and famine were tragic realities of life.

Vietnam

The Korean War energized the U.S. obsession with preventing the spread of communism. Against the bitter protests of the British and French, U.S. President Truman insisted that West Germany be allowed to rearm in order to help bolster the anti-Soviet alliance. As French forces suffered growing defeats in Indochina, the US ramped up its commitment in order to prevent another Asian nation from becoming a communist state. The “domino effect” seemed entirely plausible at the time. Across the U.S. political spectrum, there was a strong consensus that communism could be held in check primarily by the application of military force.

The Vietnam War (or the American War as it is called in Vietnam) is one of the most controversial in U.S. History. The conflict was as much about colonialism and imperialism as it was about communism: the essential motivation of the North Vietnamese forces

was the desire to seize genuine independence from foreign powers. The war itself was an outgrowth of the conflict between the Vietnamese and their French colonial masters, one that eventually dragged in the United States.

Dating the start of the war is difficult. During World War II, the Japanese seized Vietnam from the French. However, after the Japanese defeat, the French tried to reassert control, putting a puppet emperor on the throne and moving their forces back into the country. Vietnamese independence leaders, principally the former Parisian college student Ho Chi Minh, led the communist North Vietnamese forces (the Viet Minh) in a vicious guerrilla war against the beleaguered French. The Soviet Union and China provided weapons and aid to the North Vietnamese, while the US anticipated its own (later) invasion by supporting the South.



Figure 23.2: Ho Chi Minh in 1946.

In 1954, the French were soundly defeated at Dien Bien Phu, a French fortress that was overwhelmed by the Viet Minh. The French retreated, leaving Vietnam torn between the communists in the north and a corrupt but anti-communist force in the south. From 1961 to 1968, U.S. involvement skyrocketed as the South Vietnamese proved unable to contain the Viet Minh and the south-Vietnamese insurgency called the Viet Cong. Over time, thousands of U.S. military “advisers,” which would become known as special forces, were joined by hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops. In 1964, citing a fabricated attack on an U.S. ship in the Gulf of Tonkin, President Lyndon Johnson called for a full-scale armed response, which opened the floodgates for a true commitment to the war. Technically, war was never declared. Thus, the entire conflict constituted a “police action” from the U.S. policy perspective.

Ultimately, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces were fought to a standstill by the Viet Minh and Viet Cong, with neither side winning a definitive victory. All the while, the war was becoming increasingly unpopular in the United States and its allied countries. As the years went by, journalists reported on how jungles were leveled by chemical agents and napalm, as well as the massacring of civilians. The United States resorted to a lottery system tied to conscription - “the draft” - in 1969, which forced U.S. men to fight in the jungles thousands of miles from home against their will. Despite the vast military commitment, by 1970, US and South Korean forces started to lose ground.

The entire youth movement of the 1960s and 1970s was deeply embedded in the anti-war stance caused by the mendacious press campaigns carried on by the US government, by atrocities committed against Vietnamese civilians, and by the deep unpopularity of the draft. In 1973, with U.S. citizens' approval for the war hovering at 30%, President Richard Nixon oversaw the withdrawal of U.S. troops, which ended support for the South Vietnamese. In 1975, the Viet Minh seized the capital of Saigon. The human cost was immense: over a million Vietnamese died, along with some 60,000 U.S. troops.

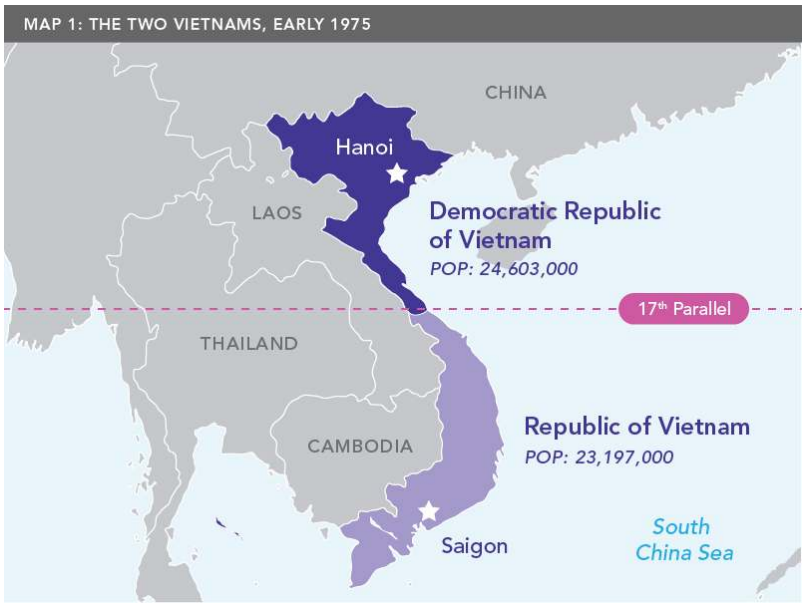


Figure 23.3: Borders of North and South Vietnam before the withdrawal of U.S. troops. Source: Asia Pacific Curriculum

In historical hindsight, one of the striking aspects of the Vietnam War was the relative absence of the Soviet Union. The USSR did provide some military supplies and financial aid to North Vietnamese forces, but it fell far short of any kind of sustained intervention along the U.S. model in the south. In other words, whereas the US regarded Vietnam as a crucial bulwark against the spread of communism, and subsequently engaged in a full-scale war as a result, the USSR remained circumspect, focusing on maintaining power and control in the eastern bloc itself.

Egypt and the Suez Canal

Egypt represents another case of an independence movement that became embedded in Cold War politics. Both superpowers played a major role in determining the future of a nation emerging from imperial control, although neither committed itself to war.

Since 1882, Egypt had been part of the British empire when it was seized during the Scramble for Africa. Although a degree of independence had been achieved after World War I, it remained squarely under British control in terms of its foreign policy. Likewise, the Suez Canal, which linked the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, was under the direct control of a Canal Company dominated by the British and French. In 1952, the Egyptian general Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew the British regime and asserted complete Egyptian independence. The United States initially offered funds for a massive new dam on the Nile, but then Nasser made an arms deal with (communist) Czechoslovakia. The funds were denied, and Nasser reacted by opening talks with the Soviets, who offered funding and weapons in return for Egyptian cotton and for added influence in North Africa and the Middle East.

In 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. Henceforth, all of the traffic going through the vitally important canal would be regulated by Egypt directly. Immediately, Israeli, British, and French forces invaded Egypt. Enraged by the attack on a burgeoning ally, Russian Premier Khrushchev threatened nuclear strikes. In turn, President Dwight Eisenhower forcefully demanded that the Israelis, French, and British withdraw, threatening economic boycotts (all while attempting to reduce the volatility with the Soviets). The Israeli, French, and British forces withdrew. The “Suez Crisis” demonstrated that the US dominated the policy decisions of its allies almost as completely as the Soviets.

In the aftermath of the Suez Crisis, Egypt's control of the canal was assured. While generally closer to the USSR than the US in its foreign policy, the country tried to initiate a genuine "third way" between the two superpowers. Meanwhile, Egyptian leaders (all of them military leaders) called for Arab nationalism and unity in the Middle East as a way to stay independent of the Cold War.



Source: The Sun

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23.3: India, Israel, and Palestine

Despite the enormous pressure exerted by the superpowers, some independence movements did manage to avoid becoming a proxy conflict during the Cold War. From Asia to Latin America, independence movements and rebel groups that adopted communist ideology were targeted by the US. In other global regions, some countries could fight for independence and stay in the good grace of the USSR (as with Egypt) without openly embracing communism. Meanwhile, the Truman Doctrine committed the United States to armed intervention in the case of a communist-backed uprising.

After quickly growing in the 19th Century, colonial empires collapsed following World War II, in a phenomena known as decolonization. By the 1960s, the entire continent of Africa was independent of European power. Likewise, European possessions in Asia all but vanished in the postwar era.

Decolonization was often as bloody and inhumane as had been the establishment of empire in the first place. In some cases, such as Dutch control of Indonesia and French sovereignty in Indochina, European powers clung desperately to colonies in the name of retaining their geopolitical relevance. In others, such as the British in Kenya and the French in Algeria, large numbers of white settlers refused to be “abandoned” by the European metropole, leading to sometimes staggering levels of violence. That being noted, there were also major (soon to be former) colonies that achieved independence without the need for violent insurrection against their imperial masters.

(Note: Given the large number of countries that achieved independence during the period of decolonization, this chapter concentrates on some of the particularly consequential cases in terms of their geopolitical impact over time).

India

Long the "jewel in the crown of the British empire", India was both an economic powerhouse and a massive symbol of British prestige. By World War II, the Indian National Congress had agitated for independence for almost sixty years Despite the growth in nationalist sentiment, 2.5 million Indian troops served the British Empire. These troops returned to find a social and political system still designed to keep Indians from positions of importance in the Indian administration. Peaceful protests grew in intensity. In the aftermath, and in part because of the financial devastation of the war, a critical mass of British politicians finally conceded that India would have be granted independence in the near future. The British state established the date of independence as July 18, 1947.

The British government made it clear that the actual logistics of independence and of organizing a new government were to be left to the Indians. A conflict exploded between the Indian Muslim League and the Hindu-dominated Congress Party, with the former demanding an independent Muslim state. With the British support of the idea, the Congress Party conceded despite the vociferous resistance of the independence leader Mahatma Gandhi. As a result, India was divided between a non-contiguous Muslim state, Pakistan, and a majority-Hindu state, India.

This event is referred to as "The Partition" of India. Millions of Muslims were driven from India and millions of Hindus and Sikhs were forced from Pakistan. Countless acts of violence accompanied the expulsion of both Muslims and Hindus from what had been their homes. Historians estimate that between 200,000 and 2 million people died in the process. Gandhi, who bitterly opposed the Partition, was murdered by a Hindu extremist in 1948. Relations between Pakistan and India are still tense today.



Figure 23.2.1: The partitioning involved two of India's biggest provinces, Punjab and Bengal. The details of where the new international boundary would lie were made public only two days after independence. Source: BBC

Israel and Palestine

Religious and ethnic divides within former colonies were not unique to India. Indeed, the "national" borders of states like Iraq, Ghana, and Rwanda had been arbitrarily created by the imperial powers decades earlier with complete disregard for the religious and ethnic differences of the people who lived there. For example, in Iraq, both Sunni and Shia Muslims, Christian Arabs (the Assyrians, many of whom claim a direct line of descent from ancient Assyria), different Arab ethnicities, and Kurds all lived side-by-side. That diversity did not guarantee violent conflict, but when circumstances arose that inspired conflict, violence could, and often did, result.

The current ongoing crisis of Israel – Palestine is a result of arbitrary borders drawn up by former imperial powers as well as a unique case of a nationalist movement achieving its goals for an ethnic-religious homeland. The British had held the "mandate" (political governorship) of the territory of Palestine before WWII, having seized it after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Thousands of European Jews had already immigrated to Palestine, fleeing anti-Semitism in Europe, and hoping to create a Jewish state as part of the Zionist movement founded during the Dreyfus Affair in France.

During World War I, the British had promised to support the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In addition, Britain's Balfour Declaration of 1917 specifically included language that promised the Arabs of Palestine (both Muslim and Christian) support in ensuring their own "civil and religious rights." In other words, the dominant European power that was to directly rule the area from 1920 – 1947, tried to appease both sides with sometimes vague assurances.

After World War I, the British established control over a large swath of territory that included the future state of Israel, frustrating Arab hopes for their own independence. Between 1918 and 1939, the Jewish population of Palestine went from roughly 60,000 to 650,000 as Jews attracted to Zionism moved to the area. The entire period was replete with riots and growing hostility between the Arab and Jewish populations, with the British trying (and generally failing) to keep the peace.

In April 1947, unable and unwilling to try to manage the volatile region, the British turned the territory over to the newly-created United Nations. The UN's plan to divide the territory into two states – one for Arabs and one for Jews – was rejected by all of the countries in the region. The creation of Israel as a formal state occurred in May of 1948. Nine months of war followed between the state of Israel and a coalition of the surrounding Arab states: Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, along with small numbers of volunteers from other Arab countries. Israel consistently fielded larger, better-trained, and better-equipped armies in the ensuing war. Arab states were in their infancy, and Jewish settlers in Palestine had spent years organizing their own militias. When the dust settled, there were nearly a million Palestinian refugees and a state that promised to be the center of conflict for decades to come.

Since the creation of Israel, there have been three more full-scale regional wars:

- the 1956 Suez War, which had no lasting consequences besides adding fuel to future conflicts
- the Six-Day War of 1967, which resulted in great territorial gains for Israel
- the Yom Kippur War of 1973, which undid some of the previous gains.

In addition to the actual wars, there have been ongoing explosions of violence between Palestinians and Israelis that continue to the present.



Source: The Sun

In 2005, Israel left Gaza and Hamas took control after winning the elections. However, Israel still controls most of Gaza's borders and coastal territory, deciding who can get in and out of region, including goods. Hamas, the largest militant Islamist group in Palestine, refuses to recognize Israel as a country, and wants Palestinians to be able to return to their own home. Their resistance to occupation has led to rocket attacks from Gaza, which causes Israel to retaliate with further force. As of 2021, Israel is dominated by right-wing parties opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state.

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23.4: Africa

In the late 19th Century, Africa had been the main target of European imperialism. The Scramble for Africa was astonishingly quick (c. 1880-1900). With the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia, the entire continent had been taken over by European states. In the postwar era, almost every African country secured independence just as quickly. In some places, this process was peaceful; while in others, it was extremely violent.

Ghana

In West Africa, under the charismatic leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana became independent in 1957. In addition, he founded the Pan-Africanism movement, which hoped for a “United States of Africa” that would achieve parity with the other great powers of the world, as well as the betterment of Africans everywhere. His vision was of a united African league, possibly even a single nation, whose collective power, wealth, and influence would ensure that outside powers would never again dominate Africans. While that vision did not come to pass, the concept of pan-Africanism was still vitally important as an inspiration for other African independence movements.

Kenya

In Kenya, many white colonists were not interested in independence from Britain. As a result, by 1952, a complex web of nationalist rebels, impoverished villagers and farmers, and counter-insurgent fighters plunged the country into a civil war. The British and native white Kenyans reacted to the uprising by creating concentration camps, imprisoning rebels and slowly starving them to death in the hills. Disparagingly referred to as “Mau Maus” (meaning something like "hill savages"), the rebels attacked white civilians. Finally, after 11 years of war, Kenya was granted its independence and elected a former Mau Mau leader as its first president. Ironically, while British forces were in a dominant position militarily, the British state was financially over-extended. Thus, Britain granted Kenyan independence in 1963.

South Africa

For the first time since the Scramble For Africa, many black Africans had achieved political power, and many former colonies adopted official policies of racial equality. However, there was one striking exception: South Africa. An unusual British colony, 21% of its population was white, divided between the descendants of British settlers and the older Dutch colony of Afrikaners who had been conquered and incorporated at the end of the nineteenth century. The Afrikaners, in particular, were virulently racist and intransigent, unwilling to share power with the black majority. As early as 1950, white South Africans (British and Afrikaner alike) emphatically insisted on the continuation of a policy known as Apartheid: the legal separation of whites and blacks and the complete subordination of the latter to the former.

In 1961, South Africa became independent from Britain. Yet, Apartheid remained as the backbone of the South African legal system, systematically repressing and oppressing the majority black population. Even as overtly racist laws were repealed elsewhere - including the United States as a result of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s - Apartheid remained resolutely intact until 1991, when the system finally collapsed and the long-imprisoned anti-Apartheid activist leader Nelson Mandela was released, soon becoming South Africa’s first black president.

Algeria

Beginning in 1952, one of the most violent struggles for independence occurred in the French territory of Algeria. Hundreds of thousands of Algerians died, along with tens of thousands of French and *pieds-noires* ("black feet," the white residents of Algeria). At the center was the concept of French identity: some French citizens felt that France’s remaining colonies were vital to its status as an important geopolitical power, especially the political right. At the same time, many people living in France were ashamed of the French defeat and occupation in World War II, and simply refused to give up France’s empire without a struggle. This sentiment was felt particularly acutely by the French officer corps, who had experienced the losing side of wars, specifically World War II and Indochina. Thus, they were determined to hold on to Algeria at all costs.

On the other hand, many French citizens realized the values of the Fourth French Republic– liberty, equality, and fraternity - were precisely what had been denied the native people of Algeria since the early nineteenth century. In fact, “native” Algerians were divided legally along racial and religious lines. Muslim Arabs and Berber Algerians were denied access to political power and usually worked in lower-paying jobs. Meanwhile, white, Catholic Algerians (descendants of both French and Italian settlers) were

fully enfranchised French citizens. In 1954, a National Liberation Front (FLN) composed of Arab and Berber Algerians demanded independence from France and launched a campaign of attacks on both French officials and, soon, *pieds-noires* civilians.

The French response was brutal with complete disregard for human rights. Infamously, the army resorted almost immediately to a systematic campaign of torture against captured rebels and those suspected of having information that could aid the French. Algerian civilians were often caught in the middle of the fighting, with the French army targeting the civilian populace when it saw fit. While the torture campaign was kept out of the press, rumors of its prevalence soon spread to continental France, inspiring an enormous debate as to the necessity and value of holding on to Algeria. As the conflict grew in Algeria, France was increasingly torn apart.

Within a few years, soldiers in Algeria, France, and French territories grew disgusted with what they regarded as the weak-kneed vacillation on the part of republican politicians. As a result, they created ultra-rightist terrorist groups, launching attacks on prominent intellectuals who spoke out against the war. In 1958, troops launched an attempted coup in Algeria, and briefly succeeded in seizing control of the French-held island of Corsica too.

With the government of the Fourth Republic paralyzed and the prospect of a new right-wing military dictatorship, Charles de Gaulle volunteered to “rescue” France from its predicament, with the support of the army. When it became clear he intended to pull France out of Algeria, a paramilitary terrorist group tried to assassinate him twice. As a result, Gaulle forced through a new constitution that vested considerable new powers in the office of the president. Negotiations were opened with the FLN in 1960, leading to the ratification of Algerian independence in 1962 by a large majority of French voters. Despite being an ardent believer in the French need for “greatness,” De Gaulle was perceptive enough to know that the battle for Algeria was lost.

In the aftermath of the Algerian War, millions of white Algerians moved to France, becoming the core of a new French political far-right, openly racist and opposed to immigration from France's former colonies. Many members coalesced in the first openly French fascistic party since the end of World War II: the *Front National*. Racist, anti-Semitic, and obsessed with a notion of French identity embedded in the culture of the Vichy Regime (i.e. the French fascist puppet state under Nazi occupation), the National Front remains a powerful force in French politics to this day.

Map: Countries of Africa W/Dates of Independence



Source: SAS Blog

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23.5: The Non-Aligned Movement and Immigration

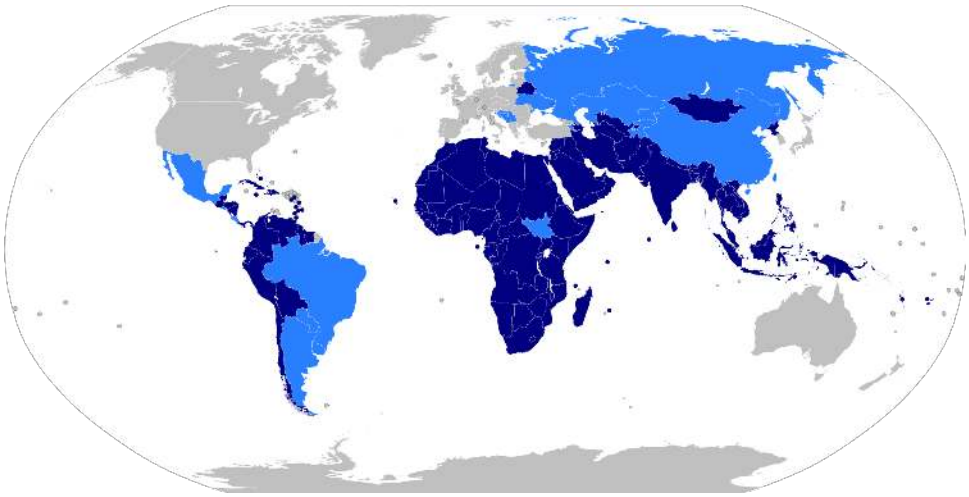
In the context of the Cold War, struggles over decolonization were tied closely to the attitudes and involvement of the US and USSR. Vietnam is perhaps the most iconic example, a struggle for independence became a global conflict because of the socialist ideology espoused by the Viet Minh nationalists. At the same time, many leaders of formerly-colonized countries rejected the idea of having to choose sides in the Cold War and instead sought a truly independence course. Some former colonies, especially those in Africa and Asia, wanted to create a new “superpower” through an alliance system. The result was the birth of the Nonaligned Movement.

Non-Aligned Movement

In 1955, the Nonaligned Movement was "born" as part of the Bandung Conference. In the Indonesian city of Bandung, leaders from countries in Africa, Asia, and South America met to discuss the possibility of forming a coalition that would use their collective strength to compensate for their individual weaknesses and push back against the superpowers. This idea was part of the Pan-Africanism championed by Kwame Nkrumah. At the conference, a French journalist created the term “third world” to describe the bloc of nations: neither the first world of the US and western Europe, nor the second world of the USSR and its satellites, but the allied bloc of former colonies.

A truly united third world proved as elusive as an United States of Africa. However, the real, meaningful effect of the conference was at the United Nations. The Nonaligned Movement ended up with over 100 member nations, wielding considerable power in the UN's General Assembly, successfully directing policies and aid money to poorer nations. In addition, the Nonaligned Movement has served as inspiration for millions around the world, who seek independence for its own sake, as well as a peaceful and prosperous world for all.

MAP: Non-Aligned Movement as of 2009



KEY: Dark blue indicates members. Light blue denotes observers. Source: Wikipedia

Immigration

(Described in the next chapter), a postwar economic boom in Europe created a huge market for labor, especially in fields of unskilled labor. Thus, Africans, Caribbeans, Asians, and people from the Middle East came in droves to work at jobs Europeans did not want, because those jobs still paid more than even skilled work did in the former colonies.

Initially, most immigrant laborers were single men, “guest workers” in the parlance of the time, who were expected to work for a period, send money home, then return to their places of origin. However, in the mid-1960s, families followed, demographically transforming the almost all-white Europe into a genuinely multi-ethnic society. For the first time, many European societies grew ethnically and racially diverse. Within a few decades, a whole generation of non-white people were native-born citizens of European countries.

The result was an ongoing struggle over national and cultural identity. Particularly in places like Britain, France, and postwar West Germany, European culture was colorblind, and anyone who culturally assimilated could be a productive part of society. As soon as significant minority populations became residents of European countries, there was an explosion of anti-immigrant racism among whites. In addition, in cases like France, former colonists who had fled to the metropole were often hardened racists who openly called for exclusionary practices and laws. Europeans were forced to grapple with the idea of cultural and racial diversity in a way that was entirely new to them. (In contrast to countries like the United States, which has *always* been highly racially diverse following the European invasions of the early modern period.)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

24: Postwar Society

24.1: Second-Wave Feminism

24.2: Social Democracy

24.3: The Postwar Boom and Cultural Change

24.4: Philosophy and Art

24.5: The Youth Movement and Cultural Revolution

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24.1: Second-Wave Feminism

The youth movement's legacy was profound. While a genuine political revolution did not occur, Western culture as a whole became much more accepting of personal freedoms, especially regarding sexuality, and less puritanical and rigid in general. Likewise, the youth movement's focus on social justice would acquire momentum in the following decades, leading to the flourishing of second-wave feminism, anti-racist movements, and a broad (though far from universal) acceptance of multiculturalism and blended cultures.

Second-Wave Feminism

In the late 1960s, second-wave feminism emerged. In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir wrote an enormous (over 1,000 pages long) book about the status of women in Western societies. Titled *The Second Sex*, the book argued that throughout the entire history of Western Civilization, women had been the social and cultural "other". In other words, when men wrote about "human history" they were actually writing about the history of men, with women lurking somewhere in the background, having babies and providing domestic labor. (In English, consider phrases like "since the dawn of mankind" or "man's relationship with nature" - the implication is that men *are* the species). Historically, almost every state, empire, and nation had been controlled by men, and women were legal and political non-entities.

In the postwar period, many women were dissatisfied and unhappy with social roles, overtly sexist laws, and oppressive cultural codes. To cite a few examples, it was perfectly legal for flight attendants ("stewardesses" in the parlance of the time) to be fired at the age of 30. They were considered too old to maintain the standards of attractiveness enforced by airlines. Pregnancy was also grounds for losing one's job. Unmarried women were generally paid far less than men since it was assumed they would eventually marry and quit their jobs. White women in the United States made 60% of the earnings of men doing the same work, with black women earning a mere 42%. Domestic violence remained commonplace. In short, while the first-wave feminist movement had succeeded in winning key legal battles, a vast web of sexist laws and cultural codes ensured that women were held in precisely the "secondary" position identified by Beauvoir.

Starting in the mid-1960s, the second-wave feminist movement came into existence to combat precisely these forms of both legal and cultural oppression and discrimination. The French Women's Liberation Movement emerged. Likewise, in the United States, the so-called "Women's Lib" movement gained members.



Figure 14.4.3: Members of the (American) Women's Liberation Movement marching in 1970.

The goals of second-wave feminism were to create laws that

- expressly forbid sexual discrimination in the workplace and schools
- promote a broader cultural shift that saw women treated as true social equals of men

For second-wave feminists, the movement was not simply about women having access to the same forms of employment and equal wages as men, but about attacking the sexual objectification and double standards to which women were held. For instance, why were promiscuous women the subject of shaming and mockery, while promiscuous men were celebrated for their virility?

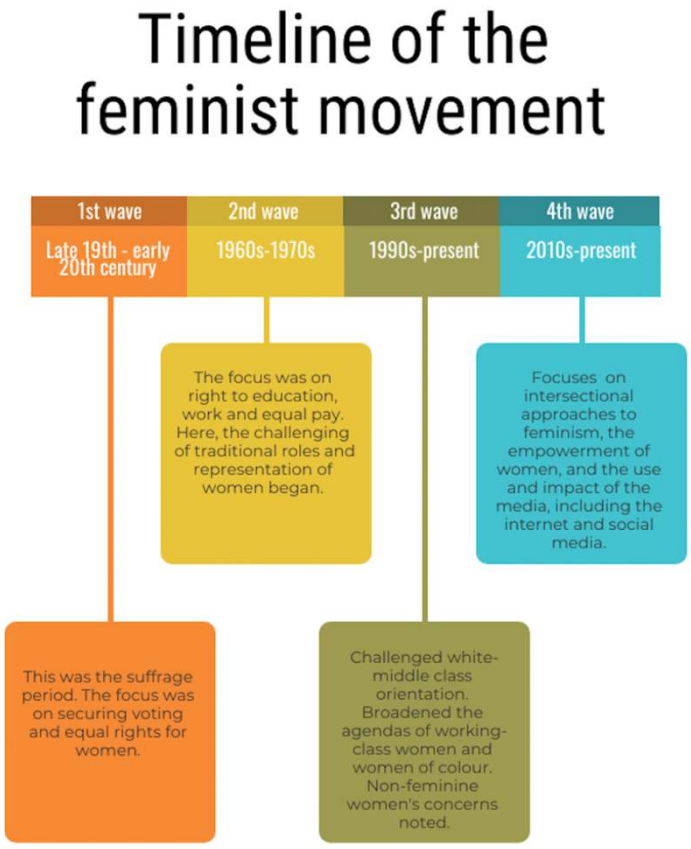
While the battle for sexual equality is obviously far from over, second-wave feminism did achieve many important goals. Legally, many countries adopted laws banning discrimination based on gender itself, as well as age and appearance. Laws pertaining to both sexual assault and domestic violence were often strengthened and more stringently enforced. Culturally, sexual double standards,

the objectification of women, and prescribed female social roles were all called into question. Eventually, a third and fourth wave of feminism would emerge.

Third and Fourth Wave Feminism (1990-present)

Third-wave feminism began in the early 1990s. Influenced by the postmodernist movement, third-wave feminists sought to question, reclaim, and redefine the ideas, words, and media that have transmitted ideas about womanhood, gender, beauty, sexuality, and femininity. Political activism was centered on expanding civil rights and social equality for women. For example, feminists advocated for a woman's right to make her own choices about her body, including a basic right to have access to birth control and abortion.

The Fourth-wave builds on the third wave's emphasis on inclusivity and asks questions about empowerment, equality, and freedom. In addition, it continues to examine the intersectionality of various groups, such as the LGBTQ+ movement. Social media activism has propelled the movement firmly into the technological age. As such, its beginnings are usually dated to around 2008. The #MeToo movement is one example of the wave's political and social activism.



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24.2: Social Democracy

During the Interwar period, democratic experiments often ended in fascism. After World War II, stable democratic governments emerged that still exist today, albeit in modified forms such as France. The governments of Western Europe, except Spain and Portugal, granted the right to vote to all adult citizens after the war, including women. (Although Switzerland would not give women the right to vote until 1971!)

The people of Europe had simply fought too hard to return to the conditions of the Great Depression or the bitter class struggles of the pre-World War II period. Thus, one of the plans anticipated by wartime governments was recompense for the people who had endured and suffered through the war - this phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the "postwar compromise" between governments and elites on the one hand and working people on the other. In addition, a specific form of democratic politics and market economics emerged: "social democracy," the commitment on the part of governments to ensure the legal rights of its citizens, a base minimum standard of living, and access to employment opportunities.

Within the commitment to social democracy, the modern welfare state came into being. The driving principle is that it is impossible to be happy and productive without certain basic needs being met. The most important ones are adequate healthcare and education, both priorities that the governments of postwar Western Europe embraced. By the end of the 1950s, 37% of the income of Western European families was indirect, subsidies "paid" by governments in the form of housing subsidies, food subsidies, health care, and education. European governments devoted four times more income to social services in 1957 than they had in 1930.

The results of state investment in citizen welfare were striking. By the end of the 1960s, most Western European states provided free high-quality medical care, free education from primary school through university, and various subsidies and pensions. Because of the strength of postwar leftist (both communist and socialist) parties, trade unions won considerable rights, with workers entitled to pensions, time off, and regulated working conditions. Thus, as the economies of the Western European states expanded, their citizens enjoyed standards of living higher than any generation before them, in large part because wealth was distributed much more evenly than it had ever been.

The welfare state was paid for by progressive taxation schemes and a very large reduction in military spending. Western Europe's alliance with the US, and European commitment to the UN, made it politically feasible to greatly reduce the size of each country's military. Quite simply, countries expected the US to keep the threat of a Soviet invasion in check. Even as military spending skyrocketed for the US and the Soviet Union, it dropped to less than 10% of the GDP of the UK by the early 1960s and steadily declined in the following years. Likewise, as a result of the decolonization trend, there was no longer a need for large imperial armies to control colonies. Instead, "control" shifted to a model of economic relationships between the former colonial masters and their former colonial possessions.

Meanwhile, the far right had been completely compromised by the disastrous triumph of fascism. In the aftermath of World War II, far-right politicians were forced into political silence by the shameful debacle that had resulted in their prewar success. In turn, the far left, namely communists, were inextricably tied to the Soviet Union. In the immediate postwar period, the USSR was widely admired for having defeated the Nazis on the eastern front at a tremendous cost to its people. However, over time, the USSR quickly came to represent a threat of tyranny to most people in the West, especially as it came to dominate the countries of the eastern bloc. As the existence of Soviet gulags became increasingly well known, western communist parties struggled to appeal to anyone beyond their base in the working class. For example, 30% of the electorate in France and Italy voted communist in the immediate aftermath of the war, but that percentage shrank steadily in the following decades.

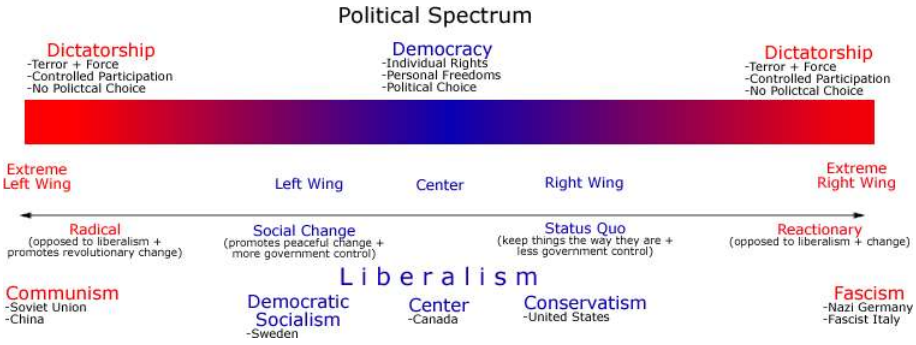
Thus, with the right compromised by fascism and the left by communism, the parties in power were variations on the center-left and center-right, usually parties that fell under the categories of "Socialists" (or, in Britain, Labour) and "Christian Democrats." For at least thirty years following the war, neither side deviated significantly from support for social democracy and the welfare state. The ideological divisions had to do with social and cultural issues, such as support or opposition to women's issues and feminism, the stance toward decolonization, the proper content of the state-run universities, and so on, rather than the desirability of the welfare state.

These "socialists" were only socialistic in their firm commitment to fair treatment of workers. In some cases, socialist parties held onto the traditional Marxist rhetoric of revolution as late as the early 1970s, but it was increasingly obvious to observers that revolution was not in fact a practical goal that the parties were pursuing. Instead, socialists tended to champion a more diffuse, and

prosaic, set of goals: workers' rights and protections, support for the independence of former colonies, and eventually, sympathy and support for cultural issues surrounding feminism and sexuality.

In turn, Christian Democracy was an amalgam of social conservatism with a now-anachronistic willingness to provide welfare state provisions. Christian Democrats (in the case of Britain, the Conservative "Tory" Party) tended to oppose the dissolution of empire until decolonization was in full swing by the 1960s. While willing to support the welfare state in general, Christian Democrats were staunchly opposed to the more far-reaching demands of labor unions. Against the cultural tumult of the 1960s, Christian Democrats emphasized what they identified as traditional cultural and social values. Arguably, the most important political innovation was that the European right accepted liberal democracy as a legitimate political system for the first time. Generally, there were no further mainstream political parties or movements that attempted to create authoritarian forms of government.

Political Spectrum with Historic Examples



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24.3: The Postwar Boom and Cultural Change

The governments of Western Europe sought to ease trade across their borders, forming federalist bodies meant to make economic cooperation easier. In 1957, central continental Europe founded the European Economic Community (EEC), also known as the Common Market. The resulting free trade zone and coordinated economic policies increased trade fivefold in the years that followed. Britain opted not to join; and as a result, its growth rates lagged significantly.

Fueled by coordinated government action and Marshall Plan loans, the Western European countries were able to vault to higher and higher levels of wealth and productivity by the mid-1950s. Between 1950-1970, real wages in England grew by 80%. French industrial output doubled between 1938 and 1959, and West Germany's exports grew by 600% in the 1950s. The years between 1945 and 1975 were described by a French economist as the *trente glorieuses*: The Thirty Glorious Years. Regular working people experienced an enormous, ongoing growth in their buying power and standard of living.

With the welfare state in place, many people were willing to spend on non-essentials, buying on credit and indulging in new consumer items like cars, appliances, and fashion. In short, the postwar boom represented the birth of the modern consumer society in Europe, which was paralleled in the United States. Increasingly, only the very poor were *not* able to buy non-essential consumer goods. Most people were able to buy clothes that followed fashion trends. Middle-class families could afford creature comforts like electric appliances and televisions. Increasingly, working families could even afford a car, something that would have been unheard of before World War II.

Part of this phenomenon was the baby boom. While not as extreme in Europe as in the US, the generation of children born in the first ten years after WWII was very large, pushing Europe's population from 264 million in 1940 to 320 million by the early 1970s. As the generation became teenagers in the 1960s, a massive explosion of popular music witnessed the most iconic musical expression of youth culture: rock n' roll. These "boomers" were also eager consumers, fueling the demand for fashion, music, and leisure activities.

Meanwhile, the sciences saw breakthroughs of comparable importance. The basic structure of DNA was identified in 1953. Terrible diseases were treated with vaccines for the first time, including measles and polio. Organ transplants became a reality in the 1950s. Thus, life itself could be extended in ways hitherto unimaginable.

Church attendance was dramatically different between the U.S. and European cultures. Consumerism (in a way) replaced religiosity in Europe. The postwar period saw church attendance decline across the board in Europe, hovering around 5% by the 1970s. In an effort to combat this decline, Pope John XXIII called a council, known as "Vatican II" (1962-1965), which revolutionized Catholic practices in an effort to modernize the church and appeal to more people. One of the noteworthy changes was that mass was increasingly conducted in vernacular languages instead of in Latin - over four centuries after that practice had first emerged during the Protestant Reformation.

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24.4: Philosophy and Art

Ironically, the major intellectual movements focused on the premise that life was, and probably would remain, alienating and unjust. Despite the real, tangible improvements in the quality of life for most people in Western Europe between 1945 - 1975, there was a marked insecurity and pessimism reflected in postwar art and philosophy. The devastation of the war, the threat of nuclear war between the superpowers, and the declining power of Europe on the world stage led to this outlook. New cultural struggles emerged against the backdrop of economic prosperity and the threat of nuclear war.

The postwar era began in the shadow of the war and the fascist nightmare that had preceded it. British writer George Orwell noted that “since about 1930, the world had given no reason for optimism whatsoever. Nothing in sight except a welter of lies, cruelty, hatred, and ignorance.” Moral exhaustion was the result of the war, something that lingered over Europe for years and grew with the discovery of the extent of the Holocaust. There was also the simple fact that the world itself could not survive another world war. Indeed, once the Cold War began in earnest in the late 1940s, the world was just a few decisions away from devastation, if not outright destruction.

Existentialism

The quintessential postwar philosophy was existentialism, influenced by French writers and philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus. During World War II, Sartre and Beauvoir had played minor roles in the French Resistance, while Camus wrote and edited a clandestine anti-Nazi paper, *Combat*. Sartre and Beauvoir were products of the most elite schools and universities in France, while Camus was an Algerian-born French citizen who took pride in his “provincial” background. Even before the war, Sartre was famous for his philosophical work and for his novel *Nausea*, which depicted a "hero" who tried unsuccessfully to find meaning in life after realizing that his actions were all ultimately pointless.



Figure 24.3.1: Lifelong companions and fellow philosophers Beauvoir and Sartre.

While existentialism is a flowery word, its essential arguments are straightforward. First, there is no inherent meaning to life. Humans just exist: they are born, they do things while alive, then they die. During life, people are forced to constantly make choices. Sartre wrote that humans "are condemned to be free." Most people find this process of always having to make choices frightening and difficult, so they pretend that something greater and more important provides the essential answers: religion, political ideologies, the pursuit of wealth, and so on. Sartre and Beauvoir called this "bad faith," the pretense that individual decisions are dictated by an imaginary higher power or higher calling.

There was no salvation in existentialism. However, there was at least the possibility of embracing the human condition, of accepting the heroic act of choosing one’s actions and projects in life without hope of heaven, immortality, or even being remembered after death. The existentialists called living in this manner "authenticity" - a kind of courageous defiance of the despair of being alive without a higher purpose or meaning. Increasingly, the major existential philosophers argued that authenticity could also be found as part of a shared project with others, but only if that project did not succumb to ideological or religious dogmatism.

Existentialism had its heyday from 1945 until about 1960. It enjoyed mainstream press coverage and even inspired self-styled “existentialists” in popular culture who imitated intellectual heroes by frequenting cafes and jazz clubs on the Left Bank of the Seine River in Paris. While the existentialists continued to write, debate, and be involved in politics (most became Marxist

intellectuals and supporters of third-world uprisings against colonialism), existential philosophy eventually went out of fashion in favor of various theories loosely grouped together as "postmodernism."

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is complex. The term has been used to describe many different things, often lacking a core definition or even basic coherence. TTe basis of postmodernism is the rejection of big stories, or “meta-narratives,” about life, history, and society. Whereas in the past intellectuals tried to define the “meaning” of history, Western Civilization, or “mankind,” postmodern thinkers exposed all of the ways in which those “meanings” had been constructed, usually in order to support the desires of the people doing the storytelling. In other words, to claim that history led inevitably to greater freedom, plenty, or happiness had almost always been an excuse for domination and some kind of conquest.

For example, during the highpoint of European imperialism, high-minded notions of the civilizing mission, the culmination of the liberal and nationalist political aspirations, and the emergence of truly modern science all coincided with the blood-soaked plundering of overseas territories. The postmodern historical critique of imperialism argued that the very notion of history moving “forward” to a better future was obviously incorrect. Based on this perspective, history has no overarching narrative - things simply change, with those changes generally revolving around the deployment of social and economic power.

Perhaps the most famous and important postmodern philosopher was the Frenchman Michel Foucault, who analyzed the history of culture in the West, covering everything from the concept of insanity to state power, and from crime to sexuality, while demonstrating the ways that ideas about society and culture had always been shaped to serve power. In addition, Foucault’s examined how the definition of crime and the practices of punishment had changed in the modern world to justify a huge surveillance apparatus, one set to monitor all behavior. In this model, “criminality” was an invention of the social and political system that justified the system’s police apparatus.

Postmodernism came under fire. Theorists, such as Frenchmen Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, argued that authorial intent in writing was meaningless because the text became entirely separate from the author at the moment of being written down. Likewise, both worked to demonstrate that texts were elaborate word games, with any implied “meaning” simply an illusion in the mind of a reader. At its most extreme, postmodernism went a step beyond existentialism: not only was life inherently meaningless, but even a person’s intentions and actions amounted to nothing.

There was often a joyful, irreverent play of ideas and words at work in postmodern thought, even if it was largely indecipherable outside of the halls of academia. Postmodern art often both satirized and embraced the breakdown between mainstream culture and self-understood “avant-gardes.”



Figure 24.3.2: Warhol’s Campbell’s Soup, *1968*

The iconic example of postmodern art was pop art, including the work of New York-based Andy Warhol. Pop art consisted of taking images from popular culture - in Warhol's case, everything from portraits of Marilyn Monroe to the Campbell's Soup can - and making it into "fine art." In fact, much of pop art consisted of blurring the line between commercial advertising and fine art.

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24.5: The Youth Movement and Cultural Revolution

Existentialism and postmodernism critiqued many aspects of Western culture, from the progressive narrative of history to traditional religious beliefs. Ironically, radical philosophy flourished in the midst of postwar consumer society: discontentment with popular values and a demand for greater social freedom grew along with, even in spite of, the expansion of economic opportunity for many people. Part of the explanation for the fertile reception of radical thought was a straightforward generational clash between the members of the generation that had survived World War II and that generation's children: the baby boomers.

Youth Movements

Much more significant than postwar philosophy was the global youth movement of the 1960s and 1970s, as an unprecedented number of young people reached adolescence right at the height of postwar prosperity. Enormous numbers of young people from middle-class and working-class backgrounds became first-generation university/college students. Meanwhile, the contentious political climate of the Cold War and decolonization contributed to an explosion of discontent that reached its height at the same time.

There were essentially two distinct, but closely related, manifestations of the 1960s youth movements:

- a largely apolitical counterculture of so-called "hippies" (a term of disparagement invented by the mainstream press; the contemporary analog is "hipsters")
- an active protest movement against various forms of perceived injustice.

Of course, many young people were active in both aspects, listening to folk music or rock n' roll, experimenting with the various drugs that became increasingly available, and/or joining in the anti-war movement, the second-wave feminist movement, or other forms of protest.



Figure 24.4.1: The album cover from The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, 1967. The individuals pictured behind the band members include everyone from their fellow musical pioneer Bob Dylan to the "godfather of the beat generation," William S. Burroughs, to the Beatles' younger selves (on the left).

During the 1960s, Western society faced an unprecedented problem: there were more highly-educated young people than ever before. Up until the mid-20th century, the purpose of higher education was to reinforce class divisions: a small elite attended university and were credentialed representatives of their class interests. However, in the relative social mobility brought about by the postwar economic boom, far more young people from non-elite backgrounds completed secondary schools and enrolled in universities. In turn, these college students formed the core of the politicized youth movement of the time: taught to think critically, be globally aware, and well informed.

The Cold War threatened the human species with annihilation. The corresponding wars, as well as the decolonization process, provided an ongoing litany of human rights violations and bloodshed. The U.S.-led alliance in the Cold War claimed to represent the side of freedom and prosperity, but many young people felt that U.S. policy abroad was as unjust and violent as Soviet policy in Eastern Europe. On the domestic front, many young people chafed at what they regarded as outdated rules, laws, and traditions, especially those having to do with sexuality.

A key factor in the youth movement was the U.S. war in Vietnam. Despite Soviet control of the Eastern Bloc, the U.S. government was a much more visible oppressor than the Soviet Union. U.S. atrocities in Vietnam were perceived as visible proof of the inherently oppressive nature of capitalism and imperialism, especially because the Viet Minh was such a relatively weak force in comparison to the U.S. military juggernaut. Thus, Vietnam served as a symbolic rallying point for the youth movement the world over, not just in the United States itself.

A radical philosophical movement called the New Left became associated with the youth movement. These leftist thinkers came to reject both the obvious injustices of Soviet-style communism as well as their own capitalist societies. The key term became "liberation" – sexual, social, and cultural. Liberation was meant to break down social mores as much as effect political change. For example, the idea that it was perfectly acceptable to live with a romantic partner before marriage went from being a marginalized, "bohemian" concept to one that enjoyed widespread acceptance.

Elements of the youth movement and the New Left came to champion aspects of social justice that had often been neglected by earlier radical thinkers. In the United States, youth movements campaigned for the end of both racist laws. A new feminist movement emerged to champion women's rights before the law, and the idea that the objectification and oppression of women were unjust, destructive, and unacceptable in supposedly democratic societies. In addition, for the first time, a movement emerged supporting homosexuality as a legitimate sexual identity, not a mental illness or a "perverse" threat to the social order.

The youth movement reached its zenith in May of 1968. From Europe to Mexico, enormous uprisings led mostly by college students temporarily paralyzed universities, infrastructure, and even whole countries. The most iconic uprising began in a grungy suburb of Paris called Nanterre. There, the newly-opened and poorly-designed university faced student protests over a policy forbidding male students to visit female dormitories. When a student leader was arrested, sympathetic students in Paris occupied the oldest university in France: the Sorbonne. Soon, the entire Latin Quarter of Paris was taken over by thousands of student radicals, wallpapering buildings with posters calling for revolution and engaging in street battles with riot police. Workers instituted a general strike in solidarity with the students, occupying factories and in some cases kidnapping supervisors and managers. At its height, French infrastructure was largely paralyzed.



Figure 24.4.2: Leftist workers outside of their occupied factory during the Events of May.

At first, the French public sympathized with the students, especially since it was well-known that French schools and universities *were* highly authoritarian and often unfair. But, as the strikes and occupations dragged on, public opinion drifted away from the uprisings. By late June, workers accepted significant concessions from business owners in return for calling off the strike. Finally, the students agreed to leave the occupied universities. In the aftermath, major changes did come to French universities and high schools, such as students having the right to meet with professors, questioning grading policies, and demanding quality education. Likewise, the more stultifying rules and policies associated with gender and sexuality within schools and universities were slowly relaxed over time.

The "Events of May" (as called in France) were the emblematic high point of the European youth movement. The "thirty glorious years" of the postwar economic boom ended in the early 1970s, and the optimism of the youth movement tended to ebb along with it. Likewise, the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 robbed the movement of its most significant cause: opposition to the war.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

25: New Horizons

25.1: Introduction
25.2: Population and Climate Change
25.3: Growth in Technology
25.4: Towards the Present
25.5: Conservatism
25.6: Eastern Europe
25.7: The European Union
25.8: Globalization

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25.1: Introduction

In 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed. Like the proverbial sorcerer's apprentice who unleashed an enchantment he cannot control, the Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev had begun a series of reforms that ultimately resulted in the dismantling of the Soviet state. In 1989, the communist regimes of the Eastern Bloc crumbled as it became clear that the USSR would not intervene militarily. Nationalist independence movements exploded, and the entire system fell apart to be replaced by sovereign nations. In 1991, Russia reemerged as a distinct country rather than just the most powerful part of a larger union.

In 1992, following the Soviet collapse, the U.S. political theorist Francis Fukuyama published a book entitled *The End of History and the Last Man*. It's central argument was that humanity was entering into a new stage in which the essential political and economic questions of the past had been resolved. Henceforth, market capitalism and liberal democracy would be conjoined in a symbiotic relationship. Human rights would be guaranteed by the political system that also provided the legal framework for a prosperous capitalist economy. All of the alternatives had already been tried and had failed, from the old order of monarchy and nobility to modern fascism and, as of 1991, Soviet communism. Thus, former dictatorships would (if they had not already) join the fold of U.S.-style democracy and capitalism soon.

As it turned out, Fukuyama's predictions were true for some of the former members of the Eastern Bloc. East and West Germany were reunited The countries of Eastern Europe including Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic elected democratic governments and sought to join the capitalist western economies. Russia did initially. However, almost immediately, its economy foundered in the face of the "shock therapy" led by western advisors: the rapid imposition of a market economy and the dismantling of the social safety net that had been the one meaningful benefit of the former Soviet system for ordinary citizens.

In the long run, countries all over the globe were as likely to embrace an economic and political system unanticipated by Fukuyama in 1992: authoritarian capitalism. To the surprise of many people, there is nothing about market economics that requires a democratic government. So long as an authoritarian state was willing to oversee the legal framework, and occasional economic interventions, necessary for capitalism to function, a capitalist economy could thrive despite the absence of civil and political rights. This pattern remains true even of those states that remain nominally "communist," such as the People's Republic of China. Starting with the election of Vladimir Putin in 2000, Russia would also adopt the model of authoritarian capitalism, with a single political party controlling the state and exercising enormous influence, if not outright control, of the press.

Meanwhile, in the countries of central and western Europe, economics and politics had been resolved in favor of the democracy/capitalism hybrid. Yet, social and cultural problems developed by the 1970s remain largely unresolved today.

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25.2: Population and Climate Change

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 is the impact of population growth and resource scarcity. 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. 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.



Figure 22.2.1: Thomas Robert Malthus, one of the first philosophers to concern himself with the question of overpopulation

Malthus's theory

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 became instantly controversial on both sides of the Atlantic. In simplest terms, he indicated that the population grows as long as there is food and water to support it, and when these resources run out, the population is brought back down through famine, disease, and war. These three causes of depopulation are often termed "Malthusian disasters."

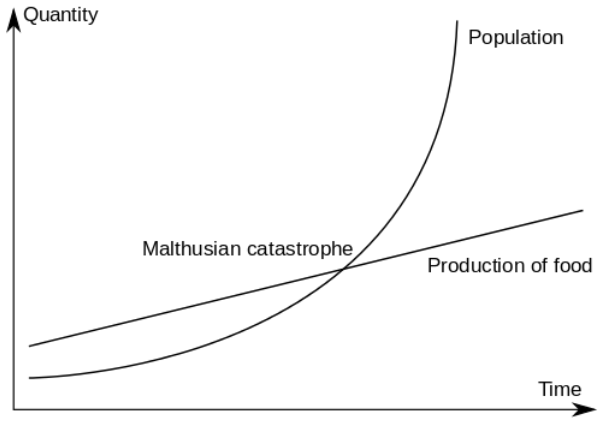


Figure 22.2.2: The Malthusian catastrophe simplistically illustrated

Malthus went on to observe that

- populations tend to increase geometrically (two people become four, four become eight, eight become sixteen, etc.)
- food supplies at best increase only arithmetically (two bushels of wheat become four, which become six, which become eight)

According to theorists, society can easily outrun its ability to feed itself if the population is not kept down by reducing births or increasing deaths. This idea also explains why early modern Europeans were so obsessed with acquiring new territories to improve their food production abilities.

Today, population scientists agree 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 parents have fewer children. In the developed world, family sizes decreased from an average of six children per family in the early 19th Century to 1.6 in the 20th Century. Many developed nations now face decreased growth or even shrinkage in their native populations.

According to Malthusian theory, food production was to increase much more slowly than population. The Green Revolution proved this theory wrong to some degree. In addition, contemporary biologist Justus von Liebig popularized Liebig’s Law, which states that growth is dictated not by the total resources available, but by the scarcest resource or limiting factor. So the question is, will we be able to keep outrunning Malthus forever, or will a limiting factor end our exponential growth?

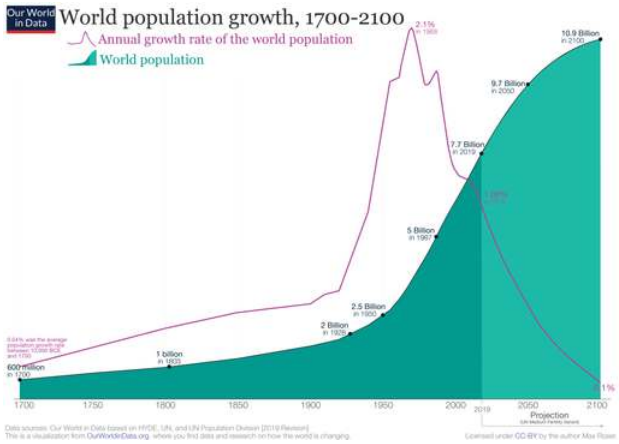


Figure 22.2.3: World population (green shaded area) and world population growth rate (red line) for the period: 1700 - 2100 based on data from the UN Population Division, 2019 revision Full screen version is available at Wikipedia.

Peak Oil

Marion King Hubbert was an American geophysicist, who created the Peak Oil theory, which correctly predicted that oil production in the continental US would peak between 1965 and 1970, and then begin to decline. He further suggested 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. New technologies, such as fracking and converting tar sands, have added some new sources to the supply. However, these new additions do not refute the logic of Hubbert’s predictions. Rather, they potentially push back the timing of the supply crunch that will cause oil prices to rise. Industrial production and food supplies depend heavily on the price of energy. Thus, a reduction in the supply of oil, an increase in its cost, or an increase in pollution could all negatively impact our world.

Some have argued that possible future discoveries of more oil could postpone society’s shift to a non-fossil fuel energy economy. But, for the most part, even the oil industry 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?

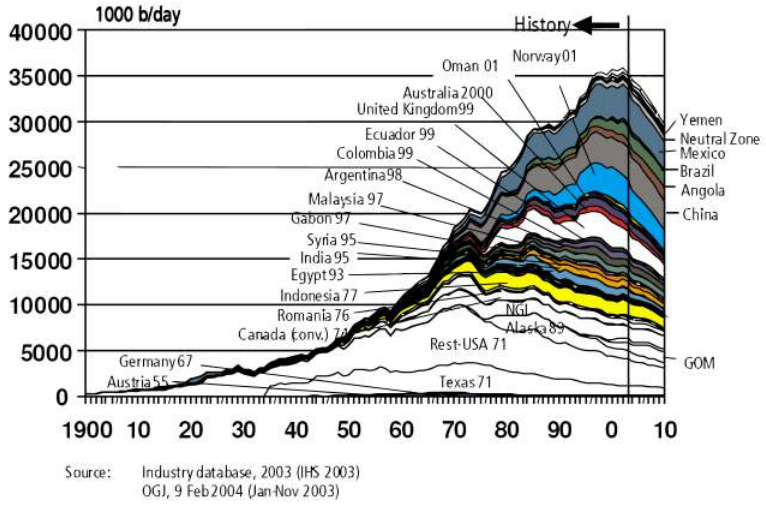


Figure 22.2.4: 2004 U.S. government predictions for oil production other than in OPEC and the former Soviet Union using Hubbert's theory. Full screen version can be found on Wikipedia.

Carbon Emissions

Some climate activists suggest that for the sake of the environment, we ought to switch from fossil fuels to other energy sources. According to this argument, burning oil (and coal) reserves are the biggest contributors to atmospheric carbon that leads to global warming. While this is true, other factors such as deforestation and even agribusiness release comparable amounts of carbon. Stopping the use of oil will not solve the whole climate change problem, although it may help stabilize the global climate.

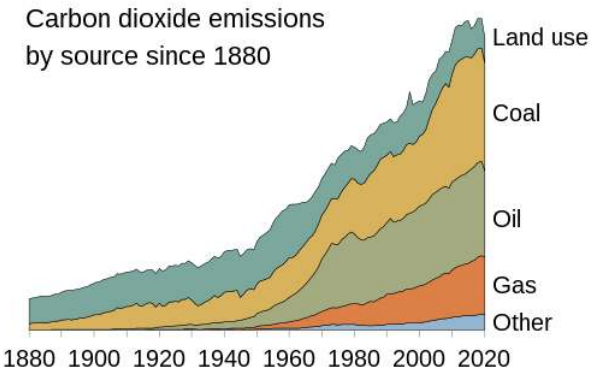


Figure 22.2.5: Carbon dioxide emissions by source since 1880 as calculated for the 2020 Global Carbon Budget. Carbon dioxide generated by land use changes (deforestation) has been added to as coal, oil, and natural gas consumption have each ramped up in turn.

Energy is such a large part of the economies of developed nations. Thus, any changes can be highly controversial. Global energy corporations have an incredible ability to influence politics. In 2017, BP (British Petroleum 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 suggested that the word 'oil' needs to include 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 on 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 the world community. The idea that the planet’s climate has been adversely affected by human activity is very controversial in the media, politics, and popular culture. According to the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), at least 97% of climate scientists agree that global warming over the past couple of centuries is due to human activities. 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, agree that we must reduce emissions of greenhouse gases beginning now.

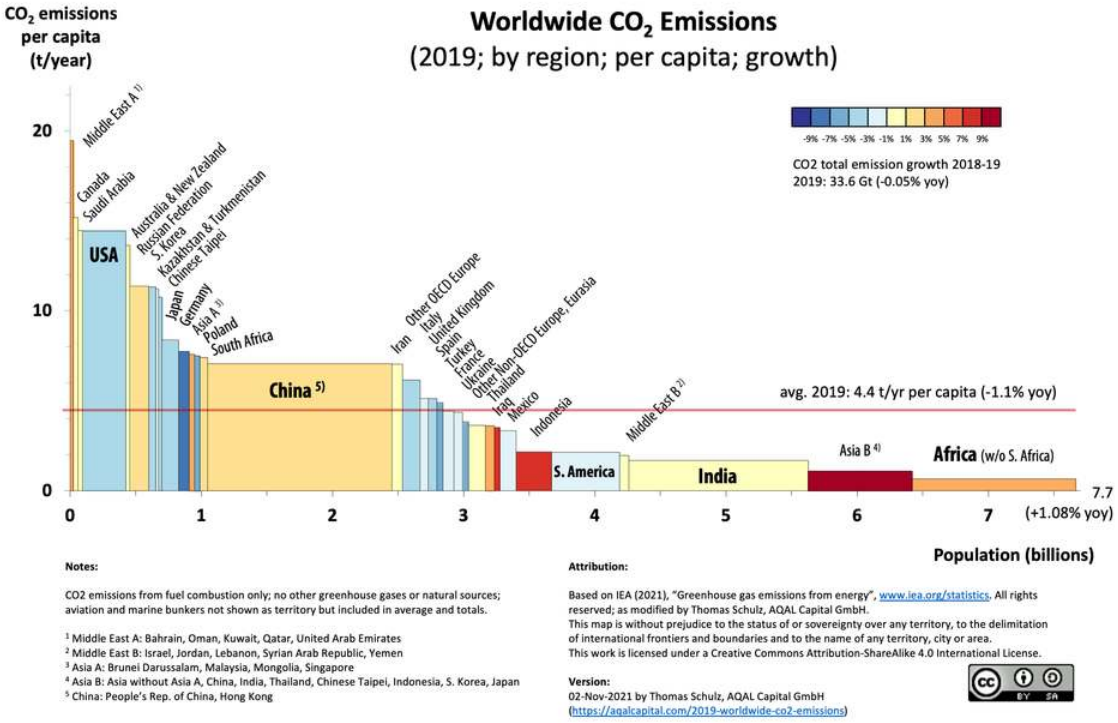


Figure 22.2.6: Per capita carbon emissions by country. Height = per capita emission; width = size of population. Color = rate of change.

Climate Change

Climate science is complicated and it can be difficult for some people to understand. Some people believe that science seems to contradict their most cherished religious doctrines about the nature of the world and their place in it. Sometimes climate change has been identified with a particular political orientation. The claim that only liberals care about the environment is not true, and ignores the traditional meaning of the word conservative. In reality, this is not a liberal vs. conservative issue. In addition, political action committees and foundations represent corporations that oppose changes in fossil fuel energy policy. Thus, it is difficult to find a solution that all will support.

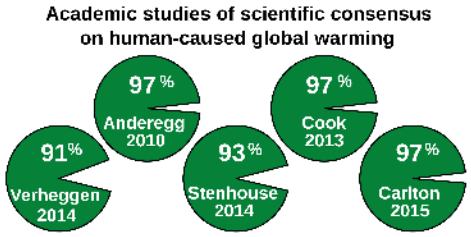


Figure. 22.2.7 Pie-chart representations of scientific consensus among publishing climatologists on human-caused global warming, based on data collected by Cook et al., "Consensus on Consensus" (2016) (Wikipedia)

In 2016, Pew Research surveyed a group of people living in the United States. Roughly half of adults (48%) said climate change is mostly due to human activity. Two-thirds (67%) of U.S. adults indicated that climate scientists should have a major role in policy decisions about climate issues. They also found wide differences among political party and ideology groups on whether or not

human activity is responsible for warming temperatures. Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court decided in the Citizens United *v.* Federal Election Commission (2008) case that corporations could hide their political spending on opposing climate change theories.

A 2014 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)." These tanks sponsored the publication of 108 books denying climate change through 2010. Some U.S.-based think tanks have also funded anti-global warming books, pamphlets, and videos in foreign countries.

The same study 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."

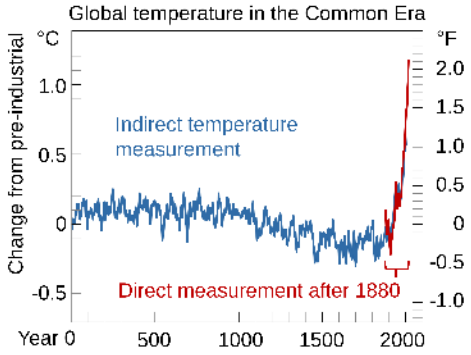


Figure 22.2.8: Global surface temperature reconstruction over the last millennia using proxy data from tree rings, corals, and ice cores in blue. Observational data is from 1880 to 2019.



Figure 22.2.9: The Solar Settlement, a sustainable housing community project in Freiburg, Germany.

The ongoing controversy is unfortunate. But, there are some positive notes.

- Germany is becoming a world leader in solar energy deployment, in spite of receiving only as much sunlight as the U.S. state of Alaska
- Britain is mapping its shift to a post-oil based economy with its "transition towns"

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. Economists argue that 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 negatively affected by 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.

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25.3: Growth in Technology

Global culture has been permanently changed by communications technology. Computer networks and cell phones continued a process that began 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 the internet, smart phones, and social networks have helped spread the news of events, such as the Arab Spring, the controversy surrounding the United States presidential election of 2020, and the Russo-Ukrainian War. In spite of the efforts of some nations to censor media and limit internet access, it is increasingly difficult to firewall societies from the global media culture.

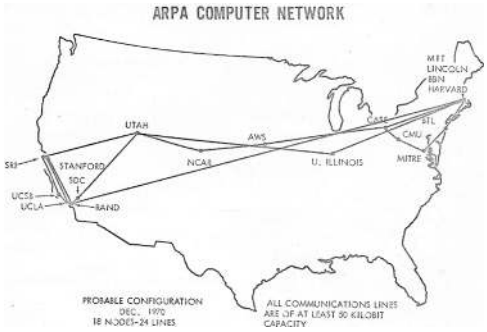
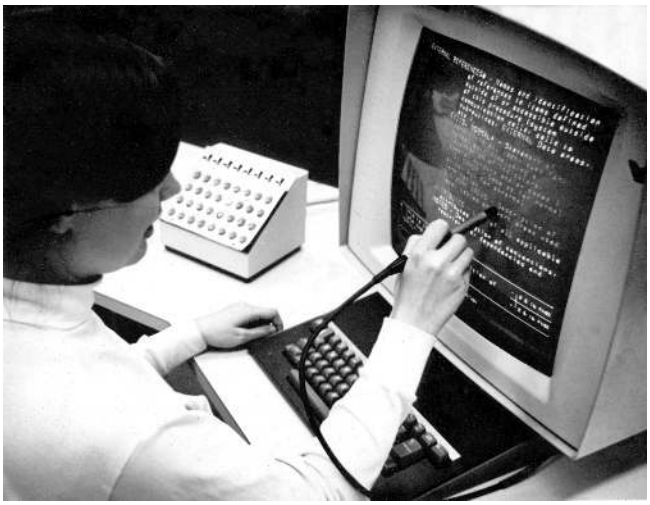


Figure: ARPANET in 1970

Launched by ISM in 1960, the semi-automatic business research environment (SABRE) initially connected two mainframe systems and grew into an airline reservation system. In 1963, American psychologist and computer scientist JCR Licklider proposed the "Intergalactic Computer Network" when he became the first director of the Pentagon's Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA). This network was described as "an electronic commons open to all, the main and essential medium of informational interaction for governments, institutions, corporations, and individuals."

From this idea came ARPANET (1969), a network of networks joining government facilities and research universities on a system dedicated to official communications. Researchers and users could occasionally communicate personally with each other using email. However, commercial and political communications were strictly forbidden. Ted Nelson, a computer scientist, 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. This ideal was never really achieved, because even though storage was expensive, bandwidth was even scarcer.


Figure: Photo of the Hypertext Editing System (HES) console in use at Brown University, circa October 1969.

In the 1980s, Apple Macintosh and IBM Personal Computers were introduced, as well as the online communication and file-sharing service called Compuserve. In 1992, an online game provider called Quantum Link renamed itself America Online (AOL). AOL provided a free trial CD with the software on it. By 1997, AOL had passed both Prodigy and CompuServe, and provided

internet access to over half of all U.S. homes. The economic power of 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 inventor of the World Wide Web, Tim Berners-Lee, was a scientist at CERN in Switzerland, who was given time to work out the details on a NeXT computer in his lab. This resulted in 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)
- HPPT (Hypertext Transfer Protocol), which allows retrieval of linked resources.

Being a government-funded research facility, CERN decided to make the protocols freely available.

From 1991 to 1994, when Yahoo launched, the number of websites rose to 2,738. The following year, with the launch of Altavista, Amazon, and AuctionWeb, the number 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 are referred to as Web.1, 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.

In 1999, a new generation of the web called Web 2.0 was announced, which focused on participation by users rather than people simply viewing content passively. One example of this participatory nature is the proliferation of social media. Another is people posting videos on YouTube. The web has also become a site of commerce, where consumers are buying stuff, such as Netflix videos, iTunes music, or real-world goods on e-commerce sites like Amazon.

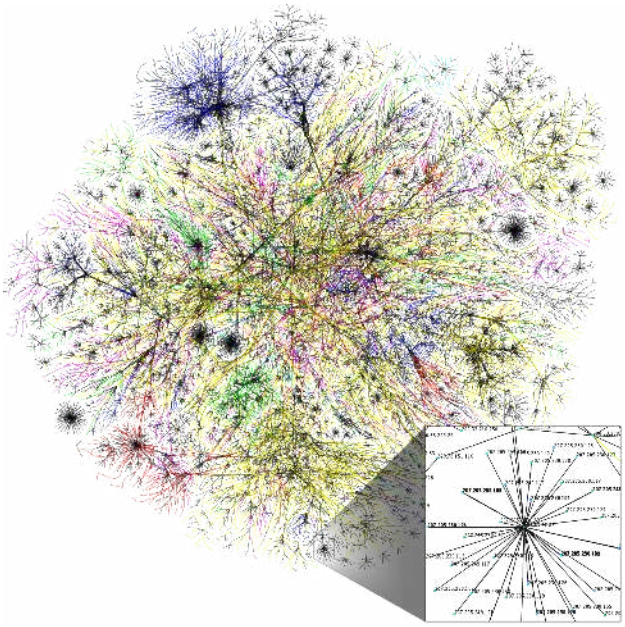


Figure: Map of the internet about 2005.

By 2001, when Wikipedia began, there were over a half billion internet users and over 29 million websites. When YouTube and Reddit began in 2005, growth had slowed to only 64,780,000 websites and with a larger percentage being 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 the first time, to about 207,000.

Between 2015 and 2017, the number of people using the web grew to 3 billion with over 1.7 billion websites. Since then, the number of websites has decreased, dropping by nearly 10% per year. 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.

Dark side of Web Technology

Increasing computing power enables increasingly complex artificial intelligence (AI) systems. These systems can control financial trading systems, power grids, and scientific research. Plus, they facilitate technology competitions between businesses and even countries.

But even the new web technology has its dark side. Russian 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 elections. As a result of this investigation, details showed how compromised social media sites like Facebook have become and how much of their users' data they hold. In addition, in 2013, American whistleblower Edward Snowden released information showing that intelligence agencies, such as the United States 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.



Social Media

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. Why? So, more ads can be placed and sold.

As a result of 'engineering', users are directed to information that conforms to their “profile” of beliefs and biases. Information that does not conform to the user’s belief system is often presented in an adversarial way, to generate anger (which is another way to ensure 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.

Conclusion

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 networks and the worldwide web created the opportunity to communicate using images and ultimately streaming video. For example, 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, which 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-created material. An explosion of websites, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, Instas, Snapchat, and YouTube channels has definitely expanded the ability of regular people to be heard.

Net neutrality is the principle that Internet service providers (ISPs) must treat all Internet communications equally, and not charge users different rates based on content, website, platform, application, type of equipment, source address, a destination address, or method of communication. In the United States, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has begun to eliminate net neutrality so corporations can buy “fast-lane” access that will turn the web into a platform for corporate media. 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.

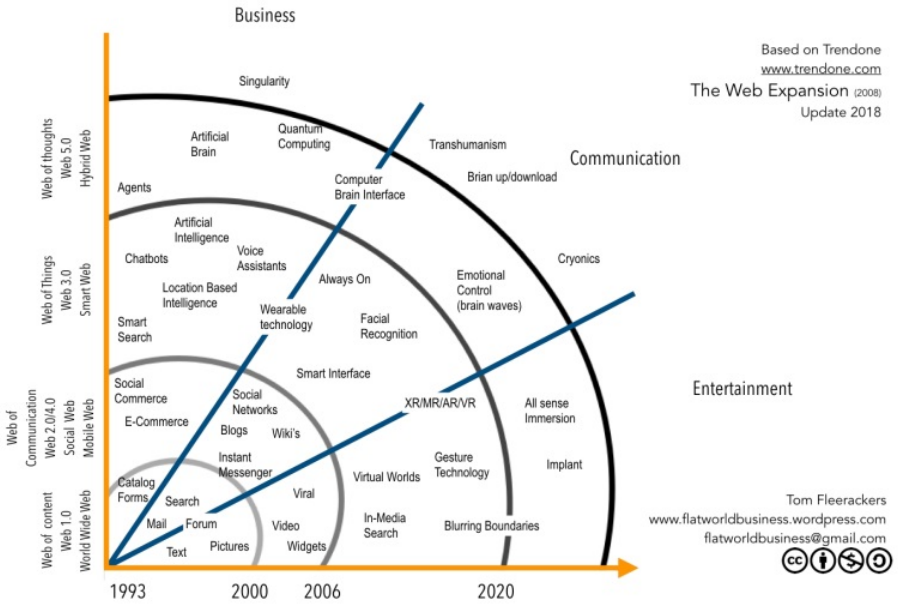


Figure: Web Expansion. Full-screen resolution can be found here.

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25.4: Towards the Present

During the 1980s, Europe suffered from economic and, to a lesser extent, political instability. Other regions also experienced challenges. In particular, the Middle East entered into a period of bloodshed and chaos as the twenty-first century began. In turn, the shock waves of Middle Eastern conflict reverberated around the globe, inspiring the growth of international terrorist groups on the one hand and racist and Islamophobic political parties on the other.

The US invasion of Iraq in 2002 inadvertently prompted a massive increase in recruitment for anti-western terrorist organizations (many of which came from EU citizens of Middle Eastern and North African ancestry). The Arab Spring of 2010 led to a brief moment of hope that new democracies might take the place of military dictatorships in countries like Libya, Egypt, and Syria. Soon, authoritarian regimes or parties reasserted control.

Syria spiraled into a civil war in 2010, prompting millions of Syrian civilians to flee the country. Turkey, one of the most venerable democracies in the region since its foundation in the aftermath of World War I, has seen its president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan steadily assert greater authority over the press and the judiciary. Meanwhile, Iran and Saudi Arabia have carried on a proxy war in Yemen and funded rival paramilitary (often considered terrorist) groups across the region. Further, Israel continues to face both regional hostility and internal threats from Palestinian insurgents. As a result, the country has tightened its control over the nominally autonomous Palestinian regions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In Europe, fleeing Middle Eastern refugees have brought about a resurgence of far-right and, in many cases, openly neo-fascist politics. Since 2010, far-right parties have grown steadily in importance and obtained more political seats, as worries about the impact of immigration drive voters to embrace nativist, crypto-racist political messages. Even some citizens who do not harbor openly racist views are attracted to the new right, since mainstream political parties often seem to represent the interests of out-of-touch social elites. (Brexit serves as the starkest demonstration of voter resentment translating into a shocking political result).

What seems clear is that both the postwar consensus between center-left and center-right politics is essentially over. Likewise, fascism is not dead and gone but has lurched back onto the world stage. A widespread sense of anger, disillusionment, and resentment haunts politics not just in Europe, but in much of the world.

That being noted, there are also indications that the center approach still holds. In France, the 2017 National Front's presidential candidate, Marine Le Pen, was decisively defeated by the centrist Emmanuel Macron. Further, even though countries have used military force to support their ideological and economic agendas, namely Russia and the United States, they generally refrain from launching large-scale wars. (As of this writing in July 2023, the Russo-Ukrainian conflict is localized, with NATO and other nations only offering humanitarian aid and weaponry, not sending troops.)

History provides both examples and counterexamples of things that have happened in the past that can, and should, serve as warnings for the present. Much of history has been governed by greed, indifference to human suffering, and the lust for power. It can be hoped that studying the consequences of those factors and the actions inspired by them might prove to be an antidote to their appeal.

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25.5: Conservatism

In Europe, the incredible economic boom of the postwar decades came to a screeching halt in the early 1970s, when OPEC instituted an embargo (official ban on trade) of oil in protest of western support of Israel in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Gas prices skyrocketed, and economic growth simply stopped, never to regain the momentum it had from 1945 - 1973. However, the baby boom and economic boom had resulted in social democracy, large immigrant populations, and high standards of living. European politics addressed many of these issues.

The politically 'far right' called for extremely limited quotas for immigration, laws banning the expression of non-Christian religious traditions (mostly associated with Islam), and a broader cultural shift rejecting tolerance. They also attacked non-white citizens of European countries, citizens born in Europe to immigrant parents. However, citizens of immigrant ancestry were legally the same as any other citizen.

While the 'far right' gained strength in many European countries, center-right conservatism, often called "neoconservativism', developed. This group came to reject the welfare state, which often provided free health care and education, subsidies for housing, and strong unions.

The iconic neo-conservative politician was British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who held office from 1979 to 1990. Thatcher acquired the nickname "the Iron Lady" for her blunt manner of speaking and her refusal to compromise. While prime minister, she privatized a number of industries in Britain and took a hard line with unions. For example, she advocated for the shutting down of northern English coal mines rather than giving in to the demands of the coal miners' union. As a result, the English mining industry simply shut down, and never recovered. In addition, she slashed government subsidies for various industries, resulting in an increase in unemployment in manufacturing areas.



Figure 25.1.1: Margaret Thatcher in 1977.

Banks thrived as regulations to protect investors and customers were dropped, and they were allowed to pursue vast profits through financial speculation. During Thatcher's tenure, London became the country's premiere dynamic, wealthy financial and commercial center. Thatcher was reviled by her opponents, and adored by millions of Britons at the same time for her British pride, her hard-nosed refusal to compromise, and her unapologetic, Social Darwinist contempt for the poor. (She once advised the English that they ought to “glory in inequality” because it was symptomatic of the strong and smart succeeding.)

The British economy began to recover as a whole in the early 1980s. In 1982, a brief war over the Falkland Islands in the Pacific Ocean between Argentina and Britain increased her popularity. Plus, the British Labour party was in disarray. Thus, Thatcher remained in power until 1990, when her own party decided she was no longer desirable and replaced her with a somewhat forgettable politician named John Major.

Outside of Britain, the essential characteristics of western and central European politics were in place by the 1980s that remain to this day. Center-right parties from Italy to Germany and from France to Britain correspond to the Thatcherite neo-conservative model, embracing the free market and trying to limit the extent of the welfare state. Note: These parties do not openly advocate getting rid of the welfare state entirely. Generations of Europeans, including people who vote for center-right parties, expect free health care, education, and social benefits to some extent.

On the other side of the political spectrum, the left-wing parties definitively abandoned Marxist ideology. The Labour Party created "New Labour," a political philosophy that supports the welfare state but also accepts that the free market is essential for economic growth. The iconic figure of New Labour in Britain was the prime minister Tony Blair, who held office from 1997 - 2007.

Even in countries whose major leftist parties had the word "socialist" in their titles - France's Socialist Party, for example - the whole notion of revolution was gone by the 1990s. Instead, the center-left parties came to be the custodians of the welfare state while joining the center-right in favoring market economics in the private sector.

Today, the 'far left' in Europe is often represented by the Green parties. Green parties are very strong supporters of environmental legislation and are the most hostile to free market deregulation of any political faction, but they remain limited in their electoral impact. An example can be found in Germany.

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25.6: Eastern Europe

The Cold War ended in 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. For example, Andropov prevented the U.S.S.R. from invading Poland in 1981 to crush the Solidarity movement. 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
- glasnost, a policy of increased openness in politics and support for individual rights including freedom of speech.

The freedom of speech Gorbachev granted included the freedom to criticize the government, which he would be unable to control.

Meanwhile, the Soviet economy continued to spiral downwards. By the second half of the 1980s, Gorbachev simply ended the arms race with the United States, conceding the USSR could not match the US's gigantic arsenal. Starting cautiously in 1988, he also announced to the governments of Eastern Europe that they would be "allowed to go their own way" without Soviet interference. Never again would columns of tanks respond to protests against communism. When Gorbachev made good on his promises and protest movements against the communist states started to grow, it was the beginning of the end for the entire Soviet Bloc. Over the course of 1989, one country after another held free elections, and communists were expelled from governments.

The Berlin Wall

In October 1989, East Germany's longtime leader resigned. Erich Honecker had been instrumental in building the Berlin Wall. During his time as the ruler of the communist nation, Honecker had ordered East German troops to fire on people trying to escape to West Berlin. Over a thousand people were killed over the years. After Honecker's resignation, the wall that physically symbolized the Cold War between the West (democratic-U.S.) and East (communist-U.S.S.R.) came down. As for Honecker, he first fled to Russia and then Chile to evade legal prosecution, where he died in 1994.



Figure: Germans stand on top of the Wall in front of Brandenburg Gate in the last days before the Wall was torn down

Tearing down the wall and reunifying Germany in 1990 were milestones at 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. 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.

After the collapse of the USSR, some Eastern European countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Poland) enjoyed at least some success in modernizing their economies and keeping political corruption at bay. In Russia itself, the 1990s were an unmitigated economic and social disaster. The entire country jumped into a market economy without any planning or oversight, while dismantling social programs and government services. New industries did not suddenly materialize to fill the enormous gaps in the Russian economy

that had been played by state agencies. Unemployment skyrocketed and the distinctions between legitimate business and illegal or extra-legal trade all but vanished.

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25.7: The European Union

After World War II, most of the nations of western Europe sought to improve economic relations and trade between non-communist member countries. This action culminated in the creation of the European Community (EC) in 1967. Despite various setbacks, not the least the enmity between French and British politicians, the EC steadily added new members into the 1980s. In addition to trade, the EC's leadership began to discuss the possibility of aligning currency, law, and policy more closely between countries. This larger vision was originally conceived in hopes of creating a power-bloc to rival the two superpowers of the Cold War.

In 1993, the EC officially became the European Union. In the following years, various member nations of the former EC voted to join the new entity. Over time, requiring a passport to visit other EU member states was eliminated. The member nations agreed to ensure civil rights throughout the Union, as well as economic agreements (e.g. limitations on national debt) meant to foster overall prosperity. Most spectacularly, at the start of 2002, the Euro became the official currency of the entire EU except for Great Britain, which clung tenaciously to the British Pound.

Between 2002 and 2008, the architects of the EU achieved relative success. The economies of Eastern European countries in particular accelerated, along with a few unexpected western countries like Ireland. Loans from wealthier members to poorer ones, generally clustered along the Mediterranean, meant that none of the countries of the “Eurozone” lagged too far behind. While the end of passport controls at borders worried some, there was no general immigration crisis to speak of.

Since the financial crisis of 2008, the EU has been fraught with economic problems.

The major issue is that member nations cannot control their own economics past a certain point.

- they cannot devalue currency to deal with inflation
- they are nominally prevented from allowing their own national debts to exceed a certain level of their Gross Domestic Product (3%, at least in theory)

As a result, weaker economies, such as Spain, Italy, or Greece, find it difficult to maintain or restore economic stability. Instead, Germany ended up serving as the EU’s banker, issuing loan after loan to other EU states while dictating economic and even political policy to them.



Figure: Growth of the European Economic Community/European Union.

Another shocking development was Great Britain's decision to leave the Union entirely in 2016 based on its citizens' votes. The United Kingdom officially left the EU on January 31, 2020. That same year, in December, the EU–UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) was signed between the European Union (EU), the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), and the United Kingdom (UK), which focuses on free trade. The political and economic consequences remain unclear: the British economy has been deeply enmeshed with that of the EU nations since the end of World War II, and it is simply unknown what effect “Brexit” will have in the long run.

NOTE: 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.



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25.8: Globalization

Globalization is characterized by the 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.

Russia

In the early 1990s, after the Soviet breakup, Russia began exporting millions of barrels daily into the world market. In Russia, the political elites were suddenly able to buy up state-owned assets the government was selling at sale prices. These opportunities were especially lucrative when Boris Yeltsin was president, and Vladimir Putin the Prime Minister. 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 who run the Russian economy for their own benefit today. Putin's net worth in 2018 was estimated at around $200 billion, or about twice the wealth of Jeff Bezos (founder of Amazon) and four times that of Bill Gates (founder of Microsoft).

Since 2000, President Putin has proved a brilliant political strategist, playing on anti-western resentment and Russian nationalism to buoy popular support for his regime, run by "his" political party, United Russia. While opposition political parties are not illegal, United Russia has been in firm control of the entire Russian political apparatus since shortly after Putin's election. Opposition figures are regularly harassed or imprisoned, and many opposition figures have also been murdered. Some of the oligarchs were also reined in, while some oligarchs were instead incorporated into the United Russia power structure.

Unlike many of the authoritarian rulers of Russia in the past, Putin was (and remains) hugely popular among Russians. Media control has played a large part in that popularity, as has the wealth of money coming from oil prices. Further boosts to his popularity came from Russia's invasion of the small republic of Georgia in 2008 and, especially, its invasion and subsequent annexation of the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine in 2014. While the latter prompted western sanctions and protests, it was successful in supporting Putin's power in Russia itself. At the time of this writing (April 2022), the Russo-Ukrainian War is occurring, and there are some indications that Putin's popularity might be wavering.



Figure: President Boris Yeltsin handing the Presidential Emblem to Vladimir Putin.

Japan

An important element of the shift away from U.S.-centered globalization was the growing economic power of Asia. After World War II, Japan's economy was jump-started by U.S. aid including a $2 billion direct investment while not asking 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 the U.S. The United States no longer considered Japan a threat, but rather a potential ally against communist China. The Japanese people complied with their government's new industrial policy. Japan reinvested its earnings and rapidly grew from a producer of cheap knock-off copies of American products to an innovator in high technology.

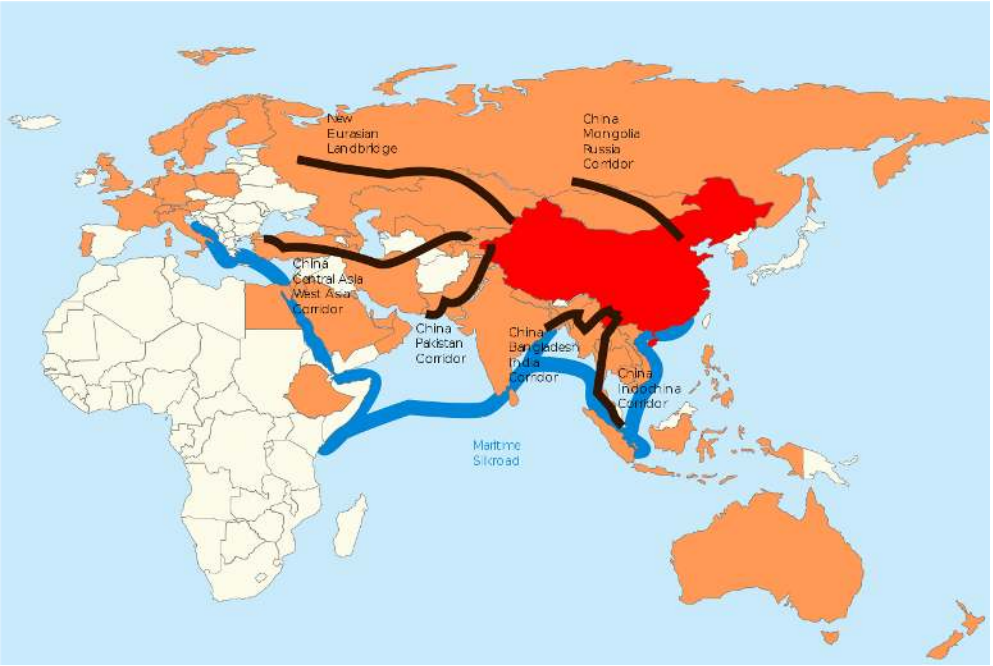


Figure: Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping with US President Jimmy Carter in 1979.

After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, Deng Xiaoping gained 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 U.S. government bonds. As this happened, China became the world's bank, as nations like the U.S. fell deeper into debt. Finally, a rising standard of living in China created a new middle class and a huge consumer market.

In 2002, ninety percent of the Chinese population lived in poverty. 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. At that time, scientists predicted that only 16% of the Chinese people would be living in poverty in 2022. This income demographic is what we would see in nations like the U.S.

China is becoming a dominant force in the world economy once again, and the increased spending power of the Chinese people is beginning to drive the global market. Chinese demand for items like automobiles is expected to outpace the rest of the world for the foreseeable future. Foxconn, which began as a 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. In addition, Lenovo 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 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. 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 in which China finds its natural resources and markets for consumer goods.

Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

Although the TTP was part of the 21st century (and perhaps should be in the next chapter), it makes more sense to address its impact on globalization here.

Influenced by the creation of NAFTA, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TTP) was established in 2016. It sought to eliminate tariff and regulatory barriers to trade between most of the nations on the Pacific rim, and create a common market between Asia and the west coasts of North and South America. TPP would also establish an Investor-state dispute system that would allow global corporations to sue countries for practices they deem to be discriminatory. In other words, 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".

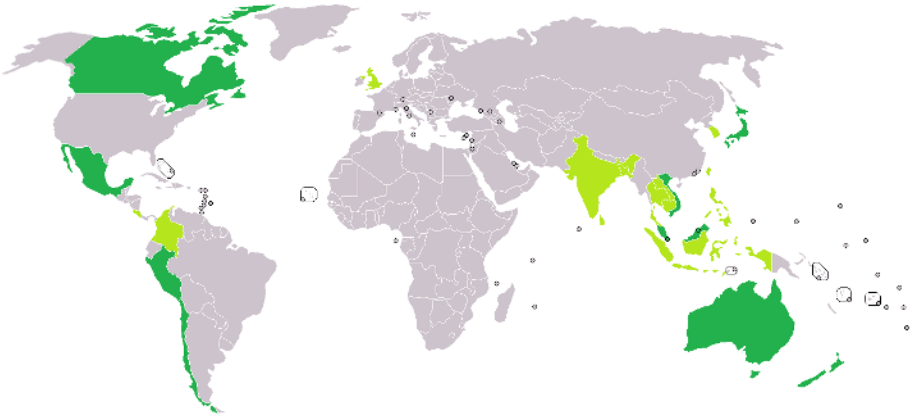


Figure: Map of TPP. Dark green are members; light green nations interested in joining.

According to some critics, this action raises the status of corporations to make them equal or even superior to sovereign nations. Further, some corporations might sue in an "Investor Court" that would favor their economic interests instead of the rights of citizens, the environment, or other local concerns. 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 the Americas, which generally have higher minimum wages, worker safety standards, and/or environmental regulations.

In January 2017, President Trump withdrew the United States from TPP. Some people applauded it, such as Senator Sanders who 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." Interestingly in the last five years of his life, McCain's campaign committees 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. This action has given rise to a growing sense among regular people that U.S. political parties are under the control of their political donors, and no longer governing for the people.

World Trade Organization

Globalization has been driven by 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 non-communist nations. From 1947 to 1999, GATT reduced average tariff levels between member nations from 22% to just 5%. 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.

Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the WTO has 164 member states. 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. This idea can be found in its binding arbitration processes that function like an international trade court, whose decisions take precedence (priority) over local or even national court judgments. The process is designed to take a year (or 15 months with appeals). According to the WTO, since 1995, over 500 disputes have been brought with more than 350 disputes settled. Most of these rulings have benefited transnational corporations, often at the expense of workers, consumers, and the environment.

Concluding Thoughts

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. In 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.

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.

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Index

A

Absolutism
7: Absolutism
Acts of Supremacy and Succession
5.9: The English Reformation
Adam Smith
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
Albert Camus
24.4: Philosophy and Art
Amerigo Vespucci
4.3: Spain, Columbus, the Great Dying, and the Columbian Exchange
Andy Warhol
24.4: Philosophy and Art
Anne Boleyn
5.9: The English Reformation
antipope
1.8: The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism
Aztecs
4.4: The Conquistadors

B

Babylonian Captivity
1.8: The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism
Baldassarre Castiglione
2.2: Important Thinkers
Bohemian Diet
6.6: The Thirty Years' War
bourgeoisie
10.2: Context and Causes

C

Calvinism
5.8: Calvinism
Cardinal Richelieu
7.1: France
Catherine de Medici
6.3: The French Wars of Religion
Catherine of Aragon
5.9: The English Reformation
Catherine the Great (Russia)
10.4: Politics and Society
Catholic Inquisition
6.1: Prelude to Religious Wars
Catholic League
6.3: The French Wars of Religion
Cesare Bonesana
10.4: Politics and Society
Charles I
7.6: England's Civil War
Charles II (England)
7.7: England's Glorious Revolution
Charles X (France)
6.3: The French Wars of Religion
Christian IV (Denmark)
6.6: The Thirty Years' War
Christine de Pizan
2.2: Important Thinkers
Christopher Columbus
4.3: Spain, Columbus, the Great Dying, and the Columbian Exchange
Civic Humanism
2.1: Humanism
Columbian Exchange
4.3: Spain, Columbus, the Great Dying, and the Columbian Exchange
Conciliar Movement
1.8: The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism
conquistadors
4.4: The Conquistadors
Consistory
5.8: Calvinism
constitutional monarchy
7.7: England's Glorious Revolution
Conversos
6.4: Spain and the Netherlands
Council of Trent
5.2: The Inquisition and the Council of Trent
Council of Troubles (Council of Blood)
6.4: Spain and the Netherlands
Cuzco
4.4: The Conquistadors

D

Dante
2.2: Important Thinkers
David Hume
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
Defenestration of Prague
6.6: The Thirty Years' War
Denis Diderot
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
Desiderius Erasmus
2.2: Important Thinkers
Diet of Worms
5.7: Lutheranism
Dutch East India Company
8.3: The Netherlands

E

Edict of Nantes
6.3: The French Wars of Religion
7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King
Edward III
1.7: The Hundred Years' War
Elizabeth I (England)
5.9: The English Reformation
Emilie de Châtelet
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
encomiendas
4.5: New World Wealth
Encyclopedia
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
English East India Company (EIC)
8.5: Around the Globe
English Navigation Acts
8.4: 8.4 Britain and the Slave Trade
existentialism
24.4: Philosophy and Art

F

Ferdinand II
6.6: The Thirty Years' War
Ferdinand Magellan
4.3: Spain, Columbus, the Great Dying, and the Columbian Exchange
Ferdinand of Aragon (Spain)
3.3: Western Europe
Filippo Brunelleschi
2.3: Art and Artists
Francisco Pizarro
4.4: The Conquistadors
Frederick II (Prussia)
10.4: Politics and Society
Frederick of the Palatinate
6.6: The Thirty Years' War
Frederick the Wise (Saxony)
5.7: Lutheranism
Freemasonry
10.5: The Radical Enlightenment
French and Indian War
11.5: Wars
French Revolution
12: The French Revolution
Friedrich Wilhelm
7.3: Prussia

G

Genghis Khan
1.5: The Mongols
George Orwell
24.4: Philosophy and Art
Glorious Revolution
7.7: England's Glorious Revolution
Great Northern War
11.4: Great Powers--Russia
Great Western Schism
1.8: The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism
Guise family
6.3: The French Wars of Religion
Gunpowder
3.2: War and the Gunpowder Revolution
Gustavus Adolphus (Sweden)
6.6: The Thirty Years' War
Gutenberg Bible
2.9: Print

H

Habsburgs
7.4: Austria
haciendas
4.5: New World Wealth
Henry of Navarre
6.3: The French Wars of Religion
Henry VIII (England)
5.9: The English Reformation
Hernan Cortes
4.4: The Conquistadors
Holy Office
5.2: The Inquisition and the Council of Trent

Huguenots
5.8: Calvinism
humanism
2.1: Humanism
Hundred Years' War
1.7: The Hundred Years' War

I
Ignatius of Loyola
5.3: Religious Orders
Incan empire
4.4: The Conquistadors
indulgences
5.6: Indulgences
Inquisition
5.2: The Inquisition and the Council of Trent
Isabella of Castile (Spain)
3.3: Western Europe

J
James I
7.6: England's Civil War
James II (England)
7.7: England's Glorious Revolution
Janissaries
3.1: The Ottoman Empire
Jean Baptiste Colbert
7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King
Jean Calvin
5.8: Calvinism
Jean le Rond D'Alembert
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
Jesuits
5.3: Religious Orders
Joan of Arc
1.7: The Hundred Years' War
Johannes Gutenberg
2.9: Print
John Locke
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes

K
Katherine Parr
5.9: The English Reformation

L
Leonardo da Vinci
2.3: Art and Artists
Little Ice Age
6.2: The Little Ice Age
Louis XIV
7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King

M
Mamluks
3.1: The Ottoman Empire
Martin Luther
5.7: Lutheranism
Maximilien Robespierre
12.4: The Radical Phase and the Terror
mercantilism
8.1: Prelude to Trade Empires
mestizos
4.5: New World Wealth
Michel Foucault
24.4: Philosophy and Art
Michelangelo Buonarroti
2.3: Art and Artists
Modern Devotion
5.5: The Context of the Reformation
Mongols
1.5: The Mongols
Moriscos
6.4: Spain and the Netherlands

N
Niccolo Machiavelli
2.2: Important Thinkers

O
Oliver Cromwell
7.6: England's Civil War
Ottoman Empire
3.1: The Ottoman Empire

P
Palace of Versailles
7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King
Petrarch
2.2: Important Thinkers
philosophe
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
Pius IV
5.2: The Inquisition and the Council of Trent
Pope Leo X
5.7: Lutheranism
Pope Paul III
5.2: The Inquisition and the Council of Trent
popoli grossi
2.7: Political Setting
postmodernism
24.4: Philosophy and Art
predestination
5.8: Calvinism
Presbyterians
5.8: Calvinism
Prince Henry the Navigator
4.2: Africa and India
printing press
2.9: Print
Protestant Reformation
5: Reforming Christianity
Prussia
7.3: Prussia
purgatory
5.6: Indulgences
Puritans
5.8: Calvinism

R
Radical Enlightenment
10.5: The Radical Enlightenment
Reconquest
3.3: Western Europe
Renaissance man
2.1: Humanism

S
salons
10.2: Context and Causes
science
9.1: The Scientific Process
scientific method
9.1: The Scientific Process
scientific process
9.1: The Scientific Process
Seljuks
3.1: The Ottoman Empire
Seven Years War
11.5: Wars
Siege of Constantinople
3.2: War and the Gunpowder Revolution
slave trade
8.4: 8.4 Britain and the Slave Trade
Society of Jesus
5.3: Religious Orders
Spanish Armada
6.5: England
Spanish fury
6.4: Spain and the Netherlands
Spanish Inquisition
5.2: The Inquisition and the Council of Trent
Spanish Road
6.4: Spain and the Netherlands
St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre
6.3: The French Wars of Religion
Stuarts
7.6: England's Civil War
Suleyman the Magnificent
3.1: The Ottoman Empire
Sun King
7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King

T
tabula rasa
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes
Tennis Court Oath
12.2: Events of the Early Revolution
The Enlightenment
10: The Enlightenment
The Fronde
7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King
The Grand Remonstrance
7.6: England's Civil War
The Great Dying
4.3: Spain, Columbus, the Great Dying, and the Columbian Exchange
The Prince
2.2: Important Thinkers
The Terror
12.4: The Radical Phase and the Terror
Tories
7.7: England's Glorious Revolution
Treaty of Tordesillas
4.3: Spain, Columbus, the Great Dying, and the Columbian Exchange

Treaty of Utrecht
7.2: Louis XIV - the Sun King
triangle trade (slaves)
8.4: 8.4 Britain and the Slave Trade
Tudors
7.6: England's Civil War
tulip craze
8.3: The Netherlands

U
usury
2.6: Economics

V
Valois dynasty
6.3: The French Wars of Religion
Vasco Da Gama
4.2: Africa and India
Voltaire
10.3: Enlightenment Philosophes

W
Wallenstein
6.6: The Thirty Years' War
War of the Spanish Succession
11.5: Wars
Whigs
7.7: England's Glorious Revolution
William of Orange
7.7: England's Glorious Revolution
William the Silent
6.4: Spain and the Netherlands

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- 15.6: Liberalism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 15.7: Socialism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
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- 16.3: The Revolutions of 1848 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
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- 16.6: Russia - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

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- 18.2: Technology - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

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- 18.4: The British Empire - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 18.5: Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
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- 18.7: The Counter-Examples – Ethiopia and Japan - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

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- 19.2: The Start of the War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.3: The Early War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.4: The Evolution of the War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.5: The Eastern Front and the Ottoman Empire - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.6: The Late War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.7: The Aftermath - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

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- 20.2: Fascism in Italy - *Undeclared*
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- 20.4: Fascism- The Spanish Civil War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 20.5: Russian Revolutions - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
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- 20.7: Modernism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
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- 22.6: Conclusion- What Went Wrong with the USSR - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

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- 23.4: Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
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- 14.4: Social Effects - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 14.5: Cultural Effects - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

15: Political Ideologies and Movements - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 15.1: After the Revolution - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 15.2: Conservatism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 15.3: Ideologies - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 15.4: Romanticism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 15.5: Nationalism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 15.6: Liberalism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 15.7: Socialism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 15.8: Social Classes - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

16: The Politics of the Nineteenth Century - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 16.1: The Congress of Vienna - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 16.2: Revolts and Revolutions - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 16.3: The Revolutions of 1848 - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 16.4: National Unifications---Italy - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 16.5: Germany - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 16.6: Russia - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

17: Culture, Science, and Pseudo-Science - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 17.1: Victorian Culture - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 17.2: Scientific and Pseudo-Scientific Discoveries and Theories - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 17.3: Mass Culture - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 17.4: Culture Struggles--Germany - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 17.5: First Wave Feminism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 17.6: Modern Anti-Semitism - *Undeclared*

18: Imperialism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 18.1: Introduction - *Undeclared*
- 18.2: Technology - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 18.3: The Second Industrial Revolution - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 18.4: The British Empire - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 18.5: Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 18.6: Effects - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 18.7: The Counter-Examples – Ethiopia and Japan - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

19: World War I - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 19.1: Background to the War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.2: The Start of the War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.3: The Early War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.4: The Evolution of the War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.5: The Eastern Front and the Ottoman Empire - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.6: The Late War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 19.7: The Aftermath - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

20: The Early Twentieth Century - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 20.1: Political Disappointments - *Undeclared*
- 20.2: Fascism in Italy - *Undeclared*
- 20.3: Fascism in Germany- The Nazis - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 20.4: Fascism- The Spanish Civil War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 20.5: Russian Revolutions - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 20.6: Early Twentieth-Century Cultural Change - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 20.7: Modernism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 20.8: The Great Depression - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

21: World War II - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 21.1: Conclusion - *Undeclared*
- 21.2: Leading up to War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 21.3: The Early War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 21.4: The War in the East - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 21.5: The Turn of the Tide - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 21.6: The Holocaust - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

22: The Soviet Union and the Cold War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 22.1: Marxism-Leninism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 22.2: Stalinism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 22.3: World War II and the USSR - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 22.4: The Cold War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 22.5: The USSR During the Cold War - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 22.6: Conclusion- What Went Wrong with the USSR - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

23: Postwar Conflict - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 23.1: Introduction - *Undeclared*
- 23.2: Major Cold War Conflicts - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 23.3: India, Israel, and Palestine - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 23.4: Africa - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 23.5: The Non-Aligned Movement and Immigration - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

24: Postwar Society - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 24.1: Second-Wave Feminism - *Undeclared*
- 24.2: Social Democracy - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 24.3: The Postwar Boom and Cultural Change - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 24.4: Philosophy and Art - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 24.5: The Youth Movement and Cultural Revolution - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

25: New Horizons - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

- 25.1: Introduction - *Undeclared*
- 25.2: Population and Climate Change - *Undeclared*
- 25.3: Growth in Technology - *Undeclared*
- 25.4: Towards the Present - *Undeclared*
- 25.5: Conservatism - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 25.6: Eastern Europe - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 25.7: The European Union - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
- 25.8: Globalization - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*

Back Matter - *Undeclared*

- Index - *Undeclared*
- Glossary - *Undeclared*
- Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*
- Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*