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## CONFLICT AND COOPERATION AFTER THE WAR

### ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

The foundations of the post-war world were laid before the end of World War II, in meetings between Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The second meeting between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin—the “Big Three”—took place at Yalta, on the Russian north shore of the Black Sea. There, the Allied leaders discussed the shape Eastern European borders should take after the war. Poland would be shifted to the west; losing the east to Russia but gaining territory in the west from Germany. Germany would be temporarily divided into four zones, occupied by Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The big three also agreed that the eastern European countries would have free elections. But Stalin had very different goals than the western leaders, and tensions began to appear by the end of the war. At the last conference, in Potsdam, Germany, Stalin backed away from the agreement on free elections in Eastern Europe. It was becoming clear that Stalin had no intention of relinquishing the Red Army’s hold in the region.

As agreed at Yalta, Germany was divided after the war. France, England, and the United States held the west and south, while the Soviets held the northeast. Berlin, deep inside the Soviet zone, became a microcosm of Germany. It was also divided into sections, with the western powers holding the western part of the city, and the Soviets holding the east. The western Allies, feeling that the harshness of the Versailles treaty had helped Hitler rise to power, set about rebuilding their zones, hoping to establish democracy and prosperity as soon as possible. The top Nazi leaders were tried for crimes against humanity, and several were executed. Lower level Nazi officials were not punished officially (though many were executed by vigilantes). Most of the symbols and apparatus of Nazi rule were torn down, though some, such as the death camps, were preserved as reminders of what had happened. The Soviets, who had suffered the most under the Nazis, were not feeling so conciliatory. German citizens in the Soviet zone were treated harshly, while industrial infrastructure was dismantled and sent back east.

Stalin also tightened his grip in Eastern Europe by setting up communist governments, effectively turning Eastern European countries into satellite states of the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, Soviet-supported Communist movements were also gaining ground in Greece, Turkey, China, and Southeast Asia. Harry Truman, Roosevelt's less-compromising successor, responded by issuing the Truman Doctrine, proclaiming that the United States would support states that were fighting communism. This was part of the policy of *containment* of communism, which originated around the same time. American aid money helped the Greeks and Turks escape Soviet control. In 1947, the United States initiated the Marshall Plan, which provided funding for economic recovery in Europe. Marshall Plan aid was also offered to the Soviet satellites, but Stalin prevented them from accepting it.

In 1948, the western Allies began combining their occupation zones in Germany into a single unit. Stalin, however, did not want to see Germany re-unified. He held on to the Soviet zone, and tried to take control of all of Berlin by blocking supplies into the western zones of the city. The United States responded with a massive airlift into West Berlin that continued until the Soviets lifted the blockade in 1949. That year, the western zones of Germany were united as the German Federal Republic (often called West Germany). The Soviet zone became the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), which in fact was not a democracy at all but a tightly controlled satellite state of the USSR. Berlin would remain a point of contention, as thousands of East Germans fled to the west through West Berlin.

In 1946, Winston Churchill had warned that an "Iron Curtain" was descending across Europe. By 1949, he had been proven correct. Europe was divided into two realms. The east was communist, authoritarian, and dominated by the Soviet Union, while the west was democratic, capitalist to varying degrees, and closely tied to the United States; to which it turned for economic and military aid. In 1949, the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), pledging to aid any member nation threatened by an outside aggressor, such as the Soviet Union. In 1955, the Soviet Union responded to NATO's growing membership by forming the Warsaw Pact, a mutual defense agreement with its Eastern European satellites.

After the Soviet Union tested its first nuclear device in 1949, the Soviet Union and United States began a race to build a larger stockpile of ever more terrible weapons. By 1959, both had Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM's) capable of reaching the other country in less than 30 minutes. The threat of an apocalyptic nuclear war helped keep the two superpowers from direct

military engagement. Instead, they would fight wars by proxy, backing opposing factions in small nations trying to find their way after years of colonial rule. The tense, bipolar order of the Cold War would dominate the world for decades.

## **THE UNITED NATIONS**

World War II had re-emphasized the need for an international organization for maintaining peace, but it had also proven that the League of Nations was not up to the task. Early in the war the Allies agreed to form a more effective organization, which they began referring to as the United Nations. At the Yalta summit, the US, UK, USSR, and China called for a conference to draw up a charter for the new organization. In 1945, fifty nations convened in San Francisco for the United Nations Conference on International Organization. The United Nations was officially born on October 24. To insure that the United States would continue to participate in the new organization (it had not joined the League of Nations), its headquarters were established in New York City.

According to its Charter, the United Nations has four main purposes, which are worth quoting in full:

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an

economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and

4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of the common ends.

The Charter also set up the six major *organs*, or divisions, of the United Nations: the Security Council, General Assembly, Secretariat, International Court of Justice, Economic and Social Council, and Trusteeship Council. The Security Council is the most powerful, because it can make binding decisions about peacekeeping operations. It is made up of 15 member nations. Five of these—China, France, Russia (formerly the USSR), the United Kingdom, and the United States—are permanent members. These, the most powerful allied nations in 1945, were given the power to veto any Security Council decision. This was meant to insure their continued participation, but the veto has severely limited the effectiveness of the United Nations in keeping the peace. The other ten members of the Security Council are elected to two year terms by the General Assembly.

The General Assembly is, as the name suggests, an assembly of all member nations. While the General Assembly's decisions have a strong moral authority, they are non-binding recommendations (except for budget decisions, which are binding). However, many vital UN "programmes and funds" are administered by the General Assembly, included the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), among others. The International Atomic Energy Agency, which regulates atomic weapons as well as energy, reports to both the General Assembly and the Security Council. The World Trade Organization (WTO), is another important organization that cooperates closely with the General Assembly, though it is not officially a part of the UN. The WTO regulates international trade, settling disputes between member nations. It was formed in 1995 to carry out the provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which was established in 1947.

The administrative staff of the United Nations is provided by the Secretariat. Staff members pledge their loyalty to the UN itself, and pledge not to take orders from their home country. At the head of the Secretariat is the Secretary-General, the chief administrator and most visible individual at the United Nations. To satisfy all members of the security council, Secretaries-General have come from relatively neutral countries. Kofi Annan, is from Ghana. Another UN organ, the Economic and Social Council, is charged with social and economic development. The council works with several *specialized agencies*, which are autonomous organization that have agreed to cooperate with the United Nations. These include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. The IMF, World Bank, and WTO have been the subject of controversy in recent years, as we will discuss later. Another important organ of the UN is the International Court of Justice, based in The Hague, Netherlands. The court was set up to settle disputes between nations, but its power depends on each nation agreeing to submit disputes to the court, and to abide by its decisions. The least important organ of the United Nations today is the Trusteeship Council, which was founded to administer colonies of other nations. All these colonies have gained their independence, so the Trusteeship Council is dormant.

In the 60 years since its birth, the UN has done a great deal of good, but it has not been as effective at keeping the peace as its founders hoped. At the time the UN was founded, its charter members were united by the common cause of fighting Axis nations. Once World War II was over, its members, including the all-important permanent members of the security council, began going their own ways. The United States and the Soviet Union drew apart as the chill of the Cold War set in. Britain, and to a lesser extent, France, remained allied with the US. China's nationalist government was overthrown by the communists in 1949. Having fled to Taiwan, the nationalist government there held China's seat on the Security Council until they were ousted from the UN and replaced by the Communist government of China in 1971. By this time, China and the Soviet Union had drifted apart, so the two countries did not necessarily form a unified voting bloc. In the first decades of the UN, the Soviet Union often crippled the UN with its Security Council veto.

Another vast change since 1945 is that most of the world was still colonized by western

powers then, but they have since become independent. The founding members of the UN were mostly from the Americas and Europe, and tended to ally with western, especially US, interests. Later, Latin American countries moved away from the US, while newly independent countries began promoting issues that concerned them. Since many of these new nations were poor, economic and social development came to be major themes of the General Assembly. As US dominance at the UN faded, so did US cooperation. The US began to use its veto more, and chose not to participate in UN programs and agreements. The US congress also refused to pay UN dues (which comprised 25 % of the UN budget). This contributed to a major financial crisis at the UN, which was alleviated in the early 2000's, when the US agreed to pay back dues in exchange for a decreased share in the UN's budget. Around the same time, relations between the US and UN were deteriorating. The US invaded Iraq without UN backing, while evidence of corruption in a UN-run oil for food program in Iraq decreased its standing.

The UN has not always been able to do its job, but then, it has one of the hardest jobs on Earth. In the pages that follow, we will encounter one major conflict after another, most of them related to the Cold War, decolonization, or both. The UN has tried to manage many of these conflicts, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. The failures have occurred for several reasons, and in some cases the UN itself has stumbled. Generally, however, the UN is hobbled by a lack of cooperation and funding from member nations, especially the permanent members of the Security Council. Many would argue that this handful of powerful nations should not have such a tight grip on the UN, but none of the permanent members are eager to loosen theirs.

## **THE SOVIET SPHERE AND ITS BREAKUP**

### **THE SOVIET UNION AND AFTER**

1946 TO 1991

In 1946, Stalin announced a new five-year plan to expand heavy industry and strengthen the military. The plan was effective, and the Soviet Union grew steadily more powerful, but at a terrible cost. Much of the labor driving the expansion was provided by millions of people sent to

labor camps for perceived disloyalty to Stalin and his state. The collectivization of agriculture continued, as Stalin sought to turn farming into another centrally-controlled industry, but food production remained stagnant, as did the production of consumer goods. Stalin renewed his purges within the communist party, expanded his secret police force, and generally grew more paranoid. In early 1953, just as he was planning an expanded purge, Stalin had a stroke and died. Astonishingly, millions of Russians mourned his loss.

Stalin was succeeded by a group of his associates, who began to relax his repressive policies somewhat as they struggled amongst themselves for control. By 1953, Nikita Khrushchev had emerged as the leader of the Soviet Union. Blustery, uncouth, and intensely intelligent, Khrushchev tried to repair the damage done by Stalinism. Focusing on agriculture, he helped increase production by expanding incentives and cultivating new lands. Soviet standards of living gradually began to improve. In 1956, Khrushchev inaugurated a program of “de-Stalinization” in a speech that openly denounced Stalin’s violence, as well as the “cult of personality” he had cultivated around himself. Stalin’s images were soon being torn down, and Stalingrad was renamed Volgograd. Following Lenin, Khrushchev began speaking of “peaceful coexistence” with the Western capitalist countries, and even visited the United States in 1959.

While diplomatic relations were easing between the United States and the Soviet Union, the arms race was intensifying, as nuclear weapons grew more formidable every year. Russia’s launch of Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, sparked a “space race”, as both countries launched enormously expensive space exploration programs. After an American spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960, diplomatic relations began to unravel again. The next year, the Soviet Union and East Germany constructed the Berlin Wall to keep people from escaping to the west through West Berlin. The most serious crisis came in 1962. Fidel Castro had overthrown the government of Cuba in 1959, establishing a communist dictatorship allied with the Soviet Union and seizing control of many American possessions. In 1962, the Soviet Union began installing missiles in Cuba. President Kennedy ordered a naval blockade and demanded that the missiles be withdrawn. The crisis came within a hair’s breadth of starting a nuclear war. After several days of intense, behind-the-scenes negotiations (in which the United States secretly agreed to withdraw missiles from Turkey), the Soviet missiles were withdrawn.

The Soviet Union was deeply chagrined in 1963, when it had to import US grain. This and

the Cuban missile crisis hurt Krushchev's popularity, and he was removed from office in 1964. Power came to be divided between Aleksei Kosygin and Leonid Brezhnev, who was dominant by the mid-1970's. Brezhnev followed a policy of *detente*, seeking to mend fences between the Soviet Union and the West. The Soviet army grew more powerful under his watch, but the economy remained stagnant. Detente was shaken when Jimmy Carter came to office and began denouncing the USSR's human rights record. Relations further disintegrated with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Afghan resistance fighters were supplied with arms by the United States, and the war there became a nightmarish stalemate, very much as the war in Vietnam had been for the US.

By the early 1980's, many of the old Soviet leaders were growing very old. Brezhnev died in 1982. He was succeeded by Yuri Andropov, who died in 1984, and then Konstantin Chernenko, who died the following year. Mikhail Gorbachev, a much younger and more forward looking man, then became head of the Communist Party, and therefore the leader of the USSR. Gorbachev introduced the policies of *perestroika*, or "restructuring" of the economy with free-market mechanisms, and *glasnost*, or "openness", which expanded freedom of expression. The Soviet economic infrastructure had a great deal of inertia, however, and was not easily retooled for free markets and competition. Inflation and shortages began crippling the Soviet economy, as glasnost allowed people to voice their displeasure. Still, openness was maintained. Limited free elections were held in 1989, and non-Communist political parties were allowed in 1990. These changes stripped the Communist Party, whose conservative members opposed Gorbachev, of a great deal of its former power. Gorbachev was elected president of the Soviet Union in 1990.

Gorbachev made great strides in improving relations with the west, especially after the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in the late 1980's. But economic problems were making him unpopular at home, while many of the republics constituting the Soviet Union began clamoring for independence. Gorbachev negotiated a treaty that would have given the republics a great deal of independence, but a coup attempt by Communist hardliners prevented the treaty from taking effect. The coup soon failed, and Boris Yeltsin, the president of the Russian republic, won acclaim for his opposition to it. Gorbachev was still president of the Soviet Union, but the Soviet Union was coming apart, as one republic after another declared its independence. Yeltsin met with the presidents of Belarus and Ukraine, and the three announced that they had formed a

new Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S), declaring that the Soviet Union was no more. Gorbachev resigned on December 25, 1991, making the end of the Soviet Union official.

## RUSSIA

By far the largest and most powerful of the former Soviet Republics, Russia has been a turbulent place since the fall of the communist state. Under Yeltsin, the government began removing price controls and privatizing industries. This allowed prices to skyrocket, and standards of living began to fall. A few well-connected individuals gained control of most of the newly privatized industries, becoming spectacularly wealthy in the process. Old, corrupt relationships persisted, and the transitional chaos allowed a surge in organized crime. Yeltsin faced strong opposition in the Russian congress from a coalition of old-guard communists and ultra-nationalists. When Yeltsin dissolved congress in 1993, congress members declared that they had voted him out of office and refused to leave their building. Yeltsin called on the army to arrest the congress members. New elections were held, a new parliament, or Duma, was elected, and a new constitution was approved. In elections thereafter, Communists won a majority of seats in the Duma, but Yeltsin continued to be reelected president.

As Russia's financial woes deepened in the late 1990's, Yeltsin dismissed one prime minister after another, finally settling on Vladimir Putin, a former KGB officer. When Yeltsin abruptly resigned in 1999, Putin became acting president. He was officially elected in 2000. When separatist rebels in the Caucasian province of Chechnya seized several towns, Putin responded with a heavy hand. Soviet troops and airpower took control Grozny, the capital. Many civilians have been killed in the ongoing conflict. Though many other nations criticized Putin's handling of the situation, it has helped his popularity with the Russian people. Nevertheless, the early 2000's have seen devastating attacks by Chechen terrorists, including one at a school that left over 300 people dead. In 2003, a young oil baron and outspoken critic of Putin was arrested on what many saw as flimsy charges of tax evasion. Putin has claimed to be trying to halt terrorism, break the power of wealthy oligarchs, and restore order, but many international observers fear that he is increasing his power at the expense of democracy.

## OTHER FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS

Of course, Russia was only the largest of many Soviet Republics that became independent in the early 1990's. These occupy three geographic clusters. The Eastern European cluster includes the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; as well as Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova. Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia are in the Caucasus; the region between the Black and Caspian Seas. A huge area of central Asia is occupied by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

### *EASTERN EUROPE*

The Baltic States had gained independence from Czarist Russia after World War I, only to be re-conquered by Stalin's forces. Not surprisingly, they were among the first to declare their independence, and the only former Soviet Republics who did not join the Commonwealth of Independent States. Belarus has maintained close ties with Russia, and its authoritarian, Soviet-style government has been criticized for human rights violations. Although the Chernobyl nuclear accident of 1986 occurring in Ukraine, wind patterns caused Belarus to be inundated with radiation, which has caused health problems ever since.

Liberal reforms have been very slow in coming to Ukraine as well. Business has been state-owned and corrupt, and the government authoritarian. The popular and reform-minded Victor Yushchenko was elected Prime Minister in 2001, but then deposed, leading to massive protests against president Leonid Kuchma. When Kuchma resigned in 2004, he backed Victor Yanukovich as his successor. Yushchenko returned to run against him, but he was poisoned with dioxin, leaving him sick and disfigured. After obviously rigged elections, Yanukovich was declared the winner. Massive protests broke out, the Supreme Court invalidated the elections, and Yushchenko won in a runoff. The upheaval, which came to be known as the Orange Revolution, has made reform in Ukraine far more likely. The little country of Moldova is unusual in that the majority Moldovan ethnic group is not Slavic—they are culturally very similar to Romanians, and speak an almost identical Romance language. This led to fighting in the mid-1990's, when ethnic Ukrainians and Russians in Moldova declared independence, fearing that

Moldova would unite with Romania. Peace was eventually made after Moldova declared that it would not.

### *THE CAUCASUS*

In the Caucasus, the conflict between Chechens and Russia has not been the only problem. Nationalist uprisings by Abkhazians and South Ossettians in Georgia have caused turmoil. Armenia, which is mostly Christian, and Azerbaijan, which is mostly Muslim, have fought over Nagorno-Karabakh, a region of Azerbaijan with a large Armenian population. All these countries have had problems keeping stable governments and fair elections.

### *THE "STANS" OF CENTRAL ASIA*

The same is true of the central Asian "stan" countries. These are populated by Islamic descendants of Turkic nomads, except for Tajikistan, whose people are related to Persians (Iranians). The largest of these countries, Kazakhstan, has a large minority of ethnic Russians. The mostly nomadic Kazaks were forced to settle on collective farms during the Soviet era. Irresponsible agricultural practice and Soviet nuclear testing have left Kazakhstan with severe environmental problems. Though the economy has liberalized, the government has grown more authoritarian. Uzbekistan, which was the cotton producing region of the Soviet Union, has similar problems, only worse. It inherited an island in the Aral Sea contaminated by biological weapons, and has an authoritarian leader who has engaged in ghastly human rights abuses, including a crackdown on protesters in May, 2005 which left several hundred dead. Nevertheless, the US has used Uzbekistan as a base in its war on terror, and has delivered prisoners to that country to be interrogated in ways that US law does not allow. In Kyrgyzstan, which has also cooperated with US forces, the authoritarian president recently fled, and new elections have been scheduled. Tajikistan has been plagued by civil strife and rigged elections since independence. Turkmenistan has large reserves of oil, but has had trouble turning them into profits. The country is ruled by a president-for-life, Saparmurad Niyazov, who has promoted a cult of personality with massive propaganda efforts, including renaming January after himself and April after his mother.

## **EASTERN EUROPE**

### **EAST GERMANY**

After the war, Austria and Greece were the only Eastern European countries that did not come to be ruled by one-party Communist governments. East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania were all dominated by the Soviet Union, each joining the Warsaw Pact as well as COMECON, a Soviet economic growth plan designed as a response to the Marshall plan. By the time the Soviet zone of Germany became the German Democratic Republic (usually called East Germany) in 1949, it had been converted to authoritarian communism. Industries and agriculture were nationalized and collectivized, and political dissidents were imprisoned. In 1953, workers were instructed to work longer hours for the same wages. The ensuing protests were quickly crushed. Before the Berlin Wall was built in 1961, over three million East Germans had fled to the west. Many continued to try after the wall went up, and many were shot in the attempt. But the wall stopped the hemorrhage of labor, and the east German economy began to grow in the 1960's. Soon it was the richest country in the Soviet Bloc, but its people knew they were poor and repressed compared to their western neighbors.

In the late 1980's, East German leaders resisted the liberalization of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, and even censored Soviet newspapers. When Hungary and Czechoslovakia opened their borders, however, East Germans once again began to flee to the west through those countries. Massive protests against the communist government brought down its leader, Erich Honecker, in October, 1989. The Berlin Wall was taken down the next month. People in both Germanies began calling for reunification, which was accomplished in 1990.

### **POLAND**

After World War II, Poland was run on the Stalinist model until Krushchev began his de-Stalinization in 1956. Wladyslaw Gomulka, who gained control of the Polish Communist party that year, ended collectivization of agriculture and restrictions on religious practice. Gomulka ran

a relatively moderate regime until 1970, when he resigned in the wake of major labor unrest caused by price hikes. Ten years later, massive strikes broke out again. The government was forced to grant workers the right to form labor unions, and soon 9.5 million workers had joined Solidarity, an association of trade unions led by Lech Walesa, a former electrician. In December, 1981, the Polish government, fearful of Solidarity as well as a Soviet invasion to restore order, declared martial law and arrested Solidarity leaders. The communist party grew weaker as Poland's economy deteriorated. After a new round of strikes in 1988, Solidarity was legalized again, and swept elections the next year. Walesa became president in 1990. The shift to a market economy was accompanied by inflation and unemployment. Communists were elected again in 1993, but free market restructuring continued. Soon the country was attracting foreign investment seeing strong economic growth. Poland joined NATO in 1999, and sent troops to fight in the US led war in Iraq in 2003. In 2004, Poland became a member of the EU.

## CZECHS AND SLOVAKS

Czechoslovakia came under the control of a pro-Soviet communist government in 1948. It was a hardline Stalinist state until 1968, when Alexander Dubček gained control of the communist party, and began loosening restrictions on political expression. This "Prague Spring" was quickly ended by an massive invasion of Soviet-led forces. The next twenty years saw a decline in standards of living, increasing pollution, and growing discontent with communist rule. When the pro-democracy rallies of 1989 spread to Czechoslovakia, they were forcefully put down, but the protesters kept coming back. Finally, the communist leaders began resigning. A new government was elected, with Václav Havel, a playwright and human rights activist, as president. The relatively peaceful transition came to be called the Velvet Revolution. In 1992, Slovak separatism lead to the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Under the sometimes repressive rule of Vladimír Mečiar, Slovakia was slower to adopt liberal reforms than the Czech Republic, but both have moved toward the mainstream of European politics, and have become members of NATO and the EU.

## HUNGARY

Hungary joined the Axis during World War II, but Hitler soon took control of its government. Soviet troops remaining in Hungary after the war helped the communist party seize power. In 1956, major revolts against communist rule broke out, and were supported by Imre Nagy, the head of the government. Soviet forces moved in and crushed the revolt. Nagy and many others were executed, and nearly 200,000 people fled the country. Under Janos Kadar, Hungary's communist regime grew somewhat more liberal over the next decades. The communist party collapsed in 1989, and Hungary has been a multi-party democracy ever since.

## ROMANIA

The communist government of Romania grew increasingly independent of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, especially under Nicolae Ceausescu, who took control in 1967. But Ceausescu was no liberal reformer. He maintained a murderous secret police force, and ran the economy into the ground by building monuments to himself and exporting vital goods to pay off foreign debts. When pro-democracy protests broke out in 1989, his security forces injured and killed thousands. Soon the army turned against him. Ceausescu and his wife were captured, convicted of genocide, and executed. In less-than-free elections, the National Salvation Front, composed of former communist party officials, gained control of the government in 1990. They were defeated in 1996, but came back in 2000. Romania has moved toward democracy, rule of law, and freer markets, but slowly, and it remains one of the poorer countries in Europe. Ultra-right wing elements are prominent in Romania, and its Hungarian and Roma (Gypsy) minorities are sometimes mistreated. The country joined NATO in 2004, and is scheduled to join the EU in 2007, pending further economic, environmental, and democratic reforms.

## BULGARIA

Under Communist Party leader Todor Zhivkov, Bulgaria was the eastern European country most loyal to the Soviets, but it also displayed a streak of Bulgarian nationalism. This combination could be very ugly. After more than 500 years of (often harsh) Ottoman rule, Bulgaria's population is still about 10% Turkish and Muslim. In the mid-1980's, Turks were

forced to take Bulgarian names and abandon Turkish culture. Many who refused were executed or deported. This policy ended in 1989. Zhivkov was ousted that year, and replaced by Peter Mladenov. In apparently free elections, the communists (now called the Bulgarian Socialist Party) remained in the majority in the National Assembly. Mladenov resigned in 1990 after being accused of using tanks against protesters the previous year. In 1991, the more liberal Union of Democratic forces won elections. Both the BSP and the UDF have remained major forces, but neither have been able to prevent economic turmoil and widespread corruption and gangsterism. IMF austerity measures were enacted in the late 1990's, but many feel that they have done as much harm as good. In 2001, Simeon II, the former king of Bulgaria, who had been deposed at the age of nine, was elected Prime Minister. Like Romania, Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004, but membership in the EU will depend on further reforms.

## ALBANIA

Ruled by the Ottomans from the late 1400's until 1912, Albania remains about 70 % Muslim. The country was invaded by Italians and Germans in World War II. After the war, Albania came under the control of former Communist resistance fighters, lead by Enver Hoxha. Hoxha closely allied himself with Stalin, and eagerly imitated his totalitarian methods. He considered Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin and reconciliation with the west a betrayal of Communist principles, and allied with China, which still advocated an eventual violent overthrow of capitalist governments worldwide. After Mao died in 1978, Albania broke off relations with China, growing more isolated and remaining poor and repressive. The communist government fell apart in the early 1990's. Moves toward democracy and economic liberalization were troubled, however. Many Albanians began investing their meager savings in pyramid schemes. When they began losing their savings in 1997, the government was thrown into turmoil. Another source of chaos was the huge influx of Kosovar Albanians during the Serbian campaign against them in 1999. Albania remains a poor country, hobbled by continuing political deadlock.

## THE FALL OF YUGOSLAVIA

In 1918, South Slav nationalists formed the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which was renamed Yugoslavia in 1929. But the term “South Slav” glosses over a great deal of difference between the groups it encompasses. The Slovenes, who were long controlled by Austria-Hungary, are mostly Catholic, speak Slovenian, and write in the Roman alphabet. Croats, Serbs, and Muslim Slavs (or Bosniaks) all speak dialects of Serbo-Croatian, but the Croats and Bosniaks use the Roman alphabet, while the Serbs use the Cyrillic alphabet. Most Croats are Catholic, while most Serbs are Serbian Orthodox. Montenegrins are culturally quite similar to Serbians. Muslim Albanians live in the region of Kosovo, in what is now Serbia. The southernmost region of the former Yugoslavia is populated by Macedonians, who, unlike the ancient Greek-speaking people of that region, speak a Slavic language similar to Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian. In addition, the region also contains small numbers of Jews, Turks, Hungarians, Slovaks, Romanians, and others.

From the beginning, Yugoslavia was ruled by a Serbian royal family. Serbians were the most numerous and powerful group, and their dominance was resented by others. During World War I, Yugoslavia was occupied by Germany. A resistance group called Partisans, led by Communists under Josip Broz Tito, gradually expelled the Axis powers with Allied help. After the war, Tito set up a communist government, but he was able to stay independent from the Soviet Union. Tito remained studiously neutral in the cold war, and was active in the non-aligned movement. Yugoslavia was a federal state, with each of its six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Macedonia) maintaining a good deal of autonomy. The country had severe economic problems beginning in the 1970's. After Tito died in 1980, the leaders of the constituent republics served rotating one-year terms as the leader of the country. This proved ineffective, and many of the people of Yugoslavia were intensely dissatisfied with its government when the waves of reform hit in the late 1980's.

In free elections in 1990, only Serbia and Montenegro retained communist-dominated governments. Slobodan Milosevic, who became the leader of Serbia's communist party in 1989, kept his party in power by appealing to extreme Serbian nationalism. Kosovo and Vojvodina, ethnically distinct parts of Serbia, were stripped of their former autonomy. Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia declared their independence in 1991. Fighting soon broke out between Serbian forces, who controlled most of the arms of the old federation, and Croats. The next year, Serbia and

Montenegro federated as a new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but they did not receive international recognition. Bosnia-Herzegovina voted for independence in a referendum that Bosnian Serbs boycotted, and soon fighting began between Serbs and other Bosnians. Serbian forces captured large parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and began an “ethnic cleansing” campaign against Muslim Bosniaks, involving displacement and murder. International intervention was slow, and did not stop the killing until 1995, when peace accords were signed between the warring parties in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Afterward, the union of Serbia and Montenegro gradually began to receive international recognition as Yugoslavia. In 1997, Milosovic was elected president. In Kosovo (still part of Yugoslavia), some separatist Albanians had formed the Kosovo Liberation Army. Milosovic used this as an excuse to begin an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Kosovo Albanians. This time, the international community intervened faster. NATO forces began bombing Yugoslavian military targets. For a while, the situation deteriorated, as Serbian forces stepped up attacks on Albanians, who flooded into the nearby country of Albania. Eventually, the Serbian army was brought under control. UN peacekeepers took control of Kosovo, and its people slowly began to return. Sporadic violence, including reprisal killings of Serbs by Albanians, continued. After Milosevic was defeated in elections in 2000, he tried to invalidate the results, but an enormous public uprising forced him from power. He was arrested in 2001, and turned over to the UN’s war crimes tribunal, where he was charged with genocide and crimes against humanity. After the constitution was changed in 2003, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia changed to a loose federation called Serbia and Montenegro.

## **WESTERN DEMOCRACIES**

### **THE UNITED STATES**

The United States lost about 400,000 soldiers in World War II. This was a great tragedy, but one which must be put in perspective. Over 18 times as many Soviet soldiers died in the war, to say nothing of civilians. The United States lost very few civilians, and suffered hardly any damage on its home soil. Meanwhile, government spending for the war finally pulled the country

out of the depression. Overall, World War II solidified the US position as a global superpower.

After years of depression and war, most Americans wanted to settle down into quiet, comfortable, prosperous lives. Many of them got their wish. The huge demand for scarce consumer goods after the war caused a brief period of inflation, but soon the economy was booming like never before. The automobile and housing industries really took off. Most American families in the fifties had at least one car, which allowed millions of middle class people to move out of cities to newly built suburbs. People who had postponed getting married or raising families during the war now made up for lost time, and the post-war baby boom began swelling the population. Labor-saving devices such as vacuum cleaners and dish washers made house work easier for the millions of women who left their wartime jobs to be homemakers. The only other device as influential as the automobile was the television. Most families bought a TV during the 1950's, and were soon spending a large portion of their evenings in front of it. Advertisers pushed the stereotypical image of the 1950's family—happy, decent, stable, white, and surrounded by the latest wonderful products. For many American families, this image was truly the American dream.

But not all Americans were so happy and united as the images suggested. For one thing, the fear of war with the Soviet Union—possibly nuclear war—cast a shadow over the fifties mood. This well-founded fear sometimes grew into paranoia. Senator Joseph McCarthy claimed that the government was infiltrated by communists, and launched an inquisition to root them out. McCarthy was eventually discredited, but thousands of people lost their jobs and reputations as the accusations flew. Another blemish on the American dream was the treatment of minorities, especially African Americans. Many remained poor, and discrimination was open and widespread; especially in the south, where African Americans and whites were still segregated. In *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka*, the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that segregation in schools was unconstitutional and ordered them to integrate. Many schools dragged their feet, and in some cases, police and even army troops had to escort African American students into schools. African Americans and other minorities increasingly demanded equal rights, but they faced strong opposition. The struggle would grow more bitter in coming decades.

A final challenge to the clean cut image of the fifties came from the children born after the war. Adolescents had more money and mobility than ever before, and were increasingly able to

influence American cultural life (and thus, global cultural life). Not surprisingly, they began to rebel against the conformity and morals of the time. One result was the rise of rock and roll music. Rock and roll was a combination of African American electric blues with white country music. Many of its pioneers, such as Chuck Berry and Little Richard, were African American. When Elvis Presley, a white man who performed like the African American artists, appeared on the Ed Sullivan show, he became the first rock and roll superstar.

By the early 1960's, the cracks in 1950's conformity were growing wider, and the mood was growing darker. In 1961, John F. Kennedy, a young and glamorous Democrat, became president; replacing Eisenhower, a Republican and former World War II general. Kennedy was inspiring to many, especially minorities, young people, and Catholics (he was the first Catholic president). He promised to end racial discrimination, and captured imaginations by announcing a program to put Americans on the moon. But Cold War tensions were climbing. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba by US-trained Cuban refugees was a great embarrassment, and the Cuban missile crisis was one of the most dangerous events in human history. Both Eisenhower and Kennedy sent a growing number of military "advisors" to support the government of South Vietnam against communists in the north. In November, 1963, Kennedy was shot and killed. His vice president, Lyndon B. Johnson, was sworn in as the new president.

Johnson was brilliant at getting legislation through congress. Civil rights laws helped alleviate discrimination against blacks and other minorities, while the "War on Poverty" launched programs aimed at improving life in poor rural and urban communities. But Johnson faced increasingly turbulent times. Other minorities, such as Hispanics, joined blacks in demanding equal rights. The women's movement also gained momentum during the sixties. Most of these movements were studiously peaceful, but some became chaotic, as in the violent race riots that rocked inner cities in the mid-sixties. Another source of protest was US involvement in the war in Vietnam. A growing number of US troops supported non-communist South Vietnam against communist North, but fighting the communist guerrillas in the jungles was a losing battle. As American casualties climbed and more and more civilians were drafted into the military, the protest movement against the war grew stronger. Many young people grew more rebellious against mainstream culture. As more of them experimented with marijuana, L.S.D, and free love, fashions and music took on a wild, psychedelic tone that horrified their conservative elders. With

the war going badly and losing support fast, Johnson decided not to running for reelection in 1968.

Richard Nixon, a Republican, won the election by promising to restore “law and order”, shrink government programs, and withdraw from Vietnam. American troops in Vietnam were brought home, but very slowly, with the last leaving as Saigon fell to the communists in 1975. Nixon dramatically improved foreign relations in other realms, however, by meeting with Chinese and Russian leaders. He easily defeated George McGovern in the 1972 presidential election. During the election, however, men were caught breaking into the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate Hotel. In spite of an enormous cover up effort, it was apparent by 1974 that they had been acting on Nixon’s orders. Nixon was forced to turn over tapes of White House conversations to Congress, which revealed that the burglary was just a small part of the illegal activities going on there, which also included bribery, illegal wiretapping, and perjury, among others. Facing impeachment, Nixon resigned in August, 1974, and Gerald Ford became president.

By this time, the US economy was reeling from a Middle Eastern oil embargo. Oil prices shot up, and many drivers of big American cars gradually began switching to more economical Japanese ones. At the same time, the economy suffered an unusual bout of stagnation combined with inflation, which came to be called “stagflation”. These problems plagued Ford, and then Jimmy Carter, a Democrat who replaced him in 1976. Carter had a major success in negotiating a ground-breaking peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. Soon afterward, however, Iranian revolutionaries seized the US embassy in Tehran, taking many Americans hostage. Unable to resolve the hostage crisis or domestic economic troubles, Carter lost to Ronald Reagan in 1980. The hostages were released the day Reagan took office.

A former Hollywood actor, Reagan was handsome, charismatic, and very conservative. According to Reagan’s “supply-side” economics, cuts in taxes and government spending, combined with economic deregulation, would encourage enough economic growth to maintain government revenue. Inflation began to subside, while recessions in the early 80's gave way to rapid growth. However, while social programs were cut drastically, government spending did not decline, partly because of increases in military spending. Tax cuts were made up for with borrowing, and the deficit skyrocketed.

Reagan was an anti-communist crusader. He sent aid, weapons, and military “advisors” to

El Salvador to aid its government against leftist rebels, and to Nicaragua to aid rebels (called “Contras”) against a leftist government. Aid to the contras was declared illegal by Congress, but a secret program was uncovered whereby arms were sold to rebels in Iran, and the proceeds sent to the Contras. This “Iran-Contra” scandal led to criminal charges against some in the administration, and hurt its image, but Reagan was never directly connected to the affair. At the same time, the Soviet sphere was becoming more open under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. The Reagan administration encouraged this trend, and talks between Reagan and Gorbachev led to significant nuclear arms reductions. The US mood through Reagan’s eight year tenure was conservative, mainstream, and materialistic; in many ways reminiscent of the 1950's. While the economy grew as a whole, the rich got richer and the poor got poorer (the usual result of very fiscally conservative economic policies), while violent crime rates climbed along with the deficit.

Reagan’s Vice President, George Bush, was elected in 1988. Bush’s term saw a shift in global politics. The Berlin Wall fell in 1989, and most Eastern European countries abandoned Communist rule. The Soviet Union broke up in 1991 as Communists fell from power there. The Cold War was over, and Bush had to decide how to steer the only remaining superpower in a multipolar, instead of bipolar, world. While communism was declining as a factor in international politics, oil remained central. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Bush began sending troops to the Persian Gulf and gathering international support at the United Nations for a multinational military intervention. In 1991, this force quickly drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait. While this was widely seen as a great success, Bush was having trouble at home. Facing large deficits, he was forced to break a campaign promise not to raise taxes, just as the economy was falling into a recession.

Bush was defeated in 1992 by Bill Clinton, a charismatic but moderate southern Democrat, who focused public attention on Bush’s economic troubles with the slogan “It’s the economy, stupid”. The first baby boomer president, Clinton brought a more youthful, forward looking air to the White House. His first term was troubled, however, as he was bogged down in an effort to allow gays in the military. By trying to please everybody at once, Clinton alienated many. Voters elected a conservative congress in 1994, which ruined Clinton’s effort to introduce a national health care system. Clinton responded by moving to the right, acting with congress to

place restrictions on welfare in 1996, and was re-elected the same year.

A long term transformation in the US economy sped up during the Clinton years. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) furthered economic globalization by eliminated most tariffs between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. This encouraged efficiency and economic growth, but hurt manufacturing and labor in the US as factories moved to Mexico. Employment stayed high, because jobs opened in service industries as they declined in manufacturing. But for those without college degrees, these were jobs like food service or retail sales, far less lucrative and secure than the old manufacturing jobs. As firms became leaner and more efficient, goods got better and cheaper. It was great for consumers of goods and services, but only if they had decent jobs as *producers* of goods and services. As computers and software (often produced in the US) got cheaper and more powerful, with the Internet increasingly linking them together, the high tech industry acted like a turbocharger on the economy. One of Clinton's big achievements was to combine disciplined spending with the growing economy to eliminate the huge deficit he had inherited. But Clinton's last years in office were tarnished. A (very zealous) commission investigated questionable real estate dealings discovered that Clinton had carried on an affair with a young intern. Clinton denied this, and for this lie he was impeached by the House and tried by the Senate, but found not guilty. Liberals excused him more than he deserved, while conservatives hated him more than he deserved.. But times were peaceful and prosperous, and the public was generally apathetic. Many decided that things could be a lot worse.

In the 2000 elections, Al Gore, Clinton's Vice President, ran against George W. Bush, the son of George H.W. Bush and the governor of Texas. The election was the closest in US history, and it was not clear for several weeks who had actually won, as disputed votes were recounted in Florida. Finally, the Supreme Court stopped the Florida recount. Florida's electoral votes went to Bush, giving him the majority of electoral votes and making him president, even though Gore had won the popular vote.

During the election, Bush had promised tax cuts, education reform, and a reluctance to intervene in international affairs. This last stance soon vanished. On September 11, 2001, the al Qaeda terrorist organization crashed hijacked planes into the Pentagon and the twin towers of the World Trade Center, which collapsed. Over 3,000 people were killed in the attacks. The nation was profoundly shaken, and a much more serious mood fell across the population. American

flags appeared everywhere, as people declared their patriotism and called for national unity, but these sentiments quite often shaded over into jingoism, groupthink, and aggressive xenophobia. After gaining international support, the United States invaded Afghanistan, cooperating with local rebels to attack al Qaeda camps and topple the Taliban regime, an ultra-fundamentalist group which had sheltered them. Osama bin Laden, however, was never captured.

Soon after the September 11 attacks, it became apparent that intelligence agencies had missed clues that might have helped prevent them. One big problem was rivalry between the CIA and FBI, which had failed to share important leads. This led to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, a unified department combining several previously separate agencies. The powers of law enforcement agencies were generally expanded, making them more effective in investigating terrorism, but also more able to invade the privacy of law-abiding citizens. The terrorist attacks hit the economy hard. The Internet and high tech boom of the late 1990's had already shown itself to be overblown. When stock markets opened a few days after the attacks, traders unloaded stocks and indexes fell. Soon the country was in a real recession, with growth slowing and jobs disappearing. The euphoria of the late 1990's was over.

The atmosphere of paranoia, and the widespread interpretation of patriotism as an obligation to support US policy without question, was welcomed by the Bush administration. Bush abandoned his earlier, non-interventionist stance, and adopted the unilateral, hawkish thinking of some of his top advisors. These advisors had long wanted to topple Saddam Hussein's murderous, internationally aggressive regime in Iraq. After the first Gulf War, many suspected the regime of developing weapons of mass destruction. Iraq had been made to allow UN weapons inspectors, but Saddam had expelled the inspectors in 1998. In 2002, the Bush administration began focusing on Iraq, claiming that Saddam's regime was supporting international terrorism and developing weapons of mass destruction. With the US rattling its saber, Saddam agreed to let UN weapons inspectors return. But the US soon argued that he was not cooperating, and sought a UN resolution to use force. Many member states wanted to continue the inspections, and would not sign on, so the US assembled a "coalition of the willing", which, after an ultimatum that Saddam step down, invaded Iraq.

Saddam's regime was quickly toppled, and he was eventually captured, but no weapons of mass destruction, or hard evidence of cooperation with terrorist organizations, was ever found.

While many Iraqis were thrilled to have the murderous dictator gone, they did not like being occupied by foreign armies. Soon an insurgent movement arose, which has killed more soldiers and foreign workers than the initial invasion. While hardly anyone doubts that Iraq is well rid of Saddam Hussein, many question whether the war was justified. It has caused deep divisions between the US and many of its long time allies such as France and Germany, who did not support the war. International feelings of sympathy after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks have given way to fear that the country is moving towards aggressive imperialism. Supporters of US policy argue that it will eventually succeed in introducing democracy into the Middle East, making the region more stable. Workers and troops in Iraq are trying hard to make that a reality, as are many Iraqi citizens, and democratic elections have been held. But the insurgency and killing continues, and many young Middle Easterners have responded to US policy by joining terrorist groups.

In the 2004 elections, George Bush ran against John Kerry, a Democratic senator and decorated Vietnam veteran. Both candidates tried to show how tough they would be against terrorism, while Kerry promised a more cooperative international stance, and more liberal domestic policies. The deeply conservative Bush was like Clinton in reverse—idolized by many conservatives and despised by many liberals. The election divided the nation, as the dialogue between liberals and conservatives became increasingly polarized and nasty. Those in cities and on the coasts voted predominantly for Kerry, while rural middle Americans voted for Bush, who won by a narrow margin. The Republicans also maintained a strong hold on Congress. Bush saw the election as a validation of his policies, and began a renewed push for his conservative agenda. A plan to partially privatize social security, however, has become mired in disagreement. While the country remains deeply divided, it has clearly shifted to the right after the September 11 attacks. The United States remains vibrant, diverse, and creative on the one hand; brash and domineering on the other. It is not clear how long the fear and conflict of the past few years will last. What is clear is that the rest of the world will be paying close attention.

## **CANADA**

Canada became an independent member of the British Commonwealth in 1931. For much of the next decade, the newly independent nation struggled with the economic devastation of the

Great Depression. Canada joined Britain in declaring war on Germany in 1939. Canadian troops were vital in the war effort, but Canada, like the United States, suffered relatively little compared with European nations. During the war, social programs, including child welfare and unemployment insurance, expanded. Afterward, the Canadian economy boomed as the country joined many other developed nations in a transition from predominantly rural and agricultural to predominantly urban (or suburban) and industrial. The country reached its current size in 1949, when Newfoundland became a Canadian province. Joining the UN in 1945 and NATO in 1949, the country participated in the UN effort in the Korean War, and was instrumental in negotiating a peace settlement in Egypt after France, Britain, and Israel invaded in 1956. Despite many successes, the governing Liberal Party angered many Canadians in 1956 by breaking parliamentary rules to push through a bill for a natural gas pipeline. They lost to the Progressive Conservative party in the 1957 elections.

The Progressive Conservatives won a larger majority in Parliament after the new Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker, called elections in 1958. Another triumph for them was the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959, allowing large ships access to the Great Lakes. But the 1960's brought political controversy and economic decline. A new provincial government in Quebec began pushing for broader rights for French speakers. This led to a rise in French activism, and some began calling for the separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada. The Liberals returned to power in 1963. A national pension plan was introduced the next year, followed by a sweeping national health insurance system. Canada celebrated the centennial of its confederation in 1967, and the Montreal Expo (world's fair) of that year was a great success. Prime Minister Lester Pearson resigned in 1968, and was succeeded by the popular Pierre Trudeau.

Trudeau would serve almost continuously until 1984. He tried to heal English-French relations with the Official Languages Act, which required government services to be available in French as well as English. But the separatist movement continued, and even turned violent in 1970, when a terrorist group kidnaped two officials, murdering one of them. During the seventies, Canada established better relations with the USSR and China, but relations with the US cooled. The US was angered by Canada's acceptance of young men escaping the Vietnam War draft, while Canada resented excessive US cultural influence, US ownership of Canadian

factories, and pollution from US factories. The French-English controversy deepened in 1976, when the separatist Parti Québécois gained control of the Quebec government, and passed laws making it illegal to use English on signs (these laws have since been moderated). Meanwhile, the worldwide oil crunch and recession of the seventies hurt many Canadians, although high oil prices fueled a boom in the oil-producing western provinces. By 1980, unemployment had become a major problem. A new constitution and bill of rights adopted in 1982 allowed Canada to modify its own constitution. Canada was now fully independent of Great Britain, though Queen Elizabeth II remained queen of Canada. Quebec, however, did not ratify the new constitution. This would prove to be a lingering problem.

The Progressive Conservatives returned to power in 1984, with Brian Mulroney as Prime Minister. Mulroney signed a free trade agreement with the United States in 1988. This was expanded in 1994, when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) opened up trade between Canada, the US, and Mexico. In an attempt to get Quebec to ratify the constitution, concessions were offered in proposed constitutional amendments called the Meech Lake Accords. The accords had to be ratified by every province as well, however, and Newfoundland and Manitoba rejected them. Calls for Quebec's independence immediately grew stronger. A second attempt at compromise, which would have introduced a new constitution, failed in a referendum in 1992. The problem of national unity, along with an economic recession that many blamed on the free trade agreements, fostered discontent with the Progressive Conservative government. Mulroney resigned in 1993.

The next year, the Progressive Conservatives lost all but two seats in Parliament. The Liberals, lead by Jean Cretien, gained control, while the separatist Bloc Québécois and the right-wing Reform Party also gained many seats. The people of Quebec held a referendum on separating from Canada in 1995. It was defeated by a very thin margin. Soon after, the Canadian Parliament tried to mend fences by recognizing French Canadians as a distinct society. In 1999, the eastern half of the Northwest Territories became the new territory of Nunavut, governed by its Inuit majority. Canada contributed troops to the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, but refused to support the invasion of Iraq in 2003, leading to tensions between Canada and its southern neighbor. Cretien resigned in 2003, and fellow Liberal Paul Martin succeeded him as Prime Minister. The Liberal Party has recently been hurt by a scandal involving financial

irregularities in the payment of advertising firms. This has given conservatives, now united as the Conservative party of Canada, a great deal of ammunition, but so far the Liberals have held on to power. They have promoted socially liberal policies that have angered those on the right, including legalizing medical marijuana and gay marriage. Controversy, between Liberals and Conservatives and English and French speakers, continues in Canada, but the country has been remarkably successful in keeping its disagreements civil, and its quality of life high.

## **WESTERN TRADITION DOWN UNDER: AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

In 1901, the 6 colonies of Australia federated as the (mostly) independent Commonwealth of Australia. During World War I, ANZAC, the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps, suffered heavy losses, especially during the failed Gallipoli campaign in the Dardanelles. The shared difficulty of the war helped crystallize a sense of Australian national identity, and ANZAC Day is still an important national holiday. In 1927, Canberra became the capital of Australia. The Great Depression hit Australia even harder than most countries. During World War II, the Japanese invaded New Guinea and were threatening to invade Australia itself before they were driven back with American help. During and after the war, the Labor Party controlled the Australian government. They were defeated in 1949 by a coalition of the Liberal Party (which is actually rather conservative) and the Country Party (a conservative party defending rural interests, now known as the National Party). This coalition would control the government until 1972. A founding member of the UN, Australia sent troops in the Korean War. In 1951, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States signed a mutual defense pact called ANZUS, and Australia sent troops to help US forces in the Vietnam War. Like many countries, Australia saw a steady economic expansion after the war, but Australia's economy has remained unusually dominated by natural resource extraction and agriculture.

In 1972, the Labor Party gained control of the House of Representatives, electing Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister. The Liberal/National coalition, however, retained control of the Senate. As the Labor government grew unpopular in the face of economic problems, the Senate began withholding funds in an effort to force Whitlam to resign. Finally, the British Governor General stepped in and replaced Whitlam with the head of the Liberal Party until elections could

be held. The Liberal/National coalition won the elections, and controlled the government until 1983. Labor returned that year, and governed until 1996.

The White Australia immigration policy was gradually relaxed in the 1960's, and abandoned in the 1970's. Since then, many Asians have settled there, making a homogenous population a bit more diverse. The Aborigines still have many social and economic problems, but their rights have expanded since the 1970's. They were not given the vote until 1991.

The Liberal/National coalition returned to power in 1996. In the late 1990's, many Australians began calling for Australia to sever its ties with the British crown and replace the Governor General with a president. In 1999, however, they rejected this change in a referendum, mostly because the president would have been appointed by Parliament instead of elected by popular vote. Australia has moved to the right in recent years under Liberal Prime Minister John Howard. As in many developed countries, anti-immigrant feelings have increased. Howard's decision to deny entrance to refugees, many of them from the Middle East, gained Australia international criticism, but it was supported by many Australians. On the other hand, the majority of Australians opposed the US led war in Iraq in 2003, but troops were sent to aid US forces anyway.

New Zealand became a semi-independent British dominion in 1907, and an independent member of the Commonwealth in 1947. As with Australia, New Zealand's sense of itself as a separate nation was crystallized during World War I, when New Zealanders suffered heavy casualties. New Zealand drew closer to the United States during the Second World War, and joined with Australia and the US in ANZUS in 1951. The first country to give women the vote (in 1893), New Zealand has remained one of the world's most progressive countries. This has occasionally led to tension with other nations. For example, New Zealand has strongly opposed nuclear weapons, announcing in 1984 that it would not allow nuclear powered submarines in its harbors. This led the US to suspend the ANZUS agreement with New Zealand. New Zealand also protested French nuclear tests in the South Pacific in the mid-1980's. The relationship between the two countries grew quite cold after French commandos sank a Greenpeace ship, which was going to be used for protesting the tests, in a New Zealand harbor. New Zealand's behavior toward the indigenous Maoris, who make up about 15 % of the population, has improved over the years, especially after the establishment of a tribunal in 1975 to hear Maori

grievances. New Zealand adopted a system of proportional representation in 1993, whereby any party with over 5 % of the vote gets seats in Parliament proportional to the votes it receives. This has forced New Zealand's two main parties, the Labour and the National Parties, to form coalitions with smaller parties to form governments. New Zealand's liberal tradition has continued into the new millennium. Prostitution was legalized in 2003, and in 2004 same sex couples were given the same rights as married opposite sex couples.

## **WESTERN EUROPE**

If the first World War had left Europe reeling, the second knocked it flat. It soon became clear that western Europe had lost its global preeminence. Power had shifted east and west, to the United States and the Soviet Union, while around the world, one former colony after another gained independence. Within Western Europe, the three main trends after the war were economic recovery and growth, disputes within nations over how much the government should control national economies, and increasing economic and political integration between nations. All this occurred within the context of the Cold War, as the specter of Soviet aggression pushed Western Europeans to band together, and to ally themselves with other democratic nations, especially the United States. Europe relied on the United States for most of NATO's military strength, and for Marshall Plan aid.

Still, Western Europe had a skilled, educated, and politically-experienced population, so economic recovery was not long in coming. West Germany made the most amazing comeback. The old factories smashed by the war were replaced with newer and more efficient ones with the help of Marshall Plan aid, and industrial production exploded. By the late 1950's, West Germany was a stable democracy and had one of the highest standards of living in the world. In West Germany, and in much of Western Europe, the experience with Nazism and fascism had discredited extreme right-wing politics. The most influential parties ranged from moderately conservative (such as the Christian Democrats on the mainland, or the Conservative Party in Britain) to moderately socialist (such as the Social Democrats on the mainland, or Labour Party in Britain). Communists had played a large role in resistance movements during the war, so the Communist Party remained fairly strong in many countries as well.

## THE EUROPEAN UNION

After the war, many Europeans felt that the best way to avoid another was to bring the European countries closer together—both economically and politically. In 1951, France, West Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Italy formed the European Coal and Steel Community, which reduced tariffs for coal, iron, and steel, and allowed workers in those industries to work in any of the member nations. The ECSC was so successful that it was used as a model for two other cooperative organizations, both founded in 1957. The European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) established common policies for nuclear power among its members, while the European Economic Community (EEC, often called the Common Market) promoted further economic integration between members. The ECSC, EEC, and Euratom were merged in 1967 to form the European Community, or EC. The pooling of resources and elimination of tariffs was extremely successful, and EC member's economies did well.

Britain's application for membership in the Common Market was vetoed by France's Charles de Gaulle in 1963 and in 1967. Britain was finally allowed to join the EC in 1973, along with Ireland and Denmark. Greece joined in 1981, followed by Spain and Portugal in 1986. After the fall of the Soviet bloc in the late 1980's, eastern European countries began clamoring to join the EC. Only the former East Germany, now united with West Germany, was allowed in immediately. The Maastricht Treaty, ratified in 1993, expanded the EC into a more comprehensive cooperative body called the European Union, or EU. It also provided for the creation of a European Central Bank, as well as the establishment of a common currency. Austria, Finland, and Sweden joined in EU in 1995, but the people of Norway decided not to. The common currency of the EU, the euro, was adopted by several member nations in 1999, though others declined to adopt it. The EU expanded greatly in 2004, when Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Malta, and Cyprus joined. Turkey was approved as a candidate for membership in 1999, but has yet been allowed to join.

With the formation of the EU in 1993, member nations decided to cooperate in three spheres, often called "pillars". One is the European Community, the economic sphere of cooperation. The other two pillars are Justice and Home Affairs, which provides a common legal

framework for member nations, and Common Foreign and Security Policy, which is self-explanatory. The EU has developed its own military forces, which are independent of NATO and have taken peacekeeping roles in Macedonia, Bosnia, and Congo. Citizens of EU nations are considered European citizens; able to travel, work, and even vote in any country in the union. The European Union, in other words, has expanded greatly beyond its roots as a common market. However, Europeans disagree on how much further it should expand. Some want to see Europe closely united, both politically and economically, to form a sort of superstate. Others fear their nations will lose their identity in the larger organization, and oppose further integration. Some oppose the EU for nationalistic reasons, while others believe it is not sufficiently democratic, because it operates in a top down manner without much input from voters. This objection was recently quite apparent. A European constitution drafted in 2004 failed to be ratified by voters in France and the Netherlands the next year, dealing a severe blow to supporters of further integration. While the European Union has yet to find a balance between integration and the national sovereignty of member states, it is nevertheless the most comprehensive union of nations in the world. This makes it one of the world's major powers.

## WEST GERMANY AND UNIFIED GERMANY

The Federal Republic of Germany was formed in 1949, with its capital in Bonn. Konrad Adenauer of the center-right Christian Democrats was elected chancellor at the age of 73. With Marshall Plan aid, Adenauer set about rebuilding the smashed country, and succeeded admirably. By 1955, West Germany was fully independent from the allies, had joined NATO, and had an economy that surpassed pre-war levels for the whole of Germany. Adenauer retired in 1963, but the Christian Democrats controlled the government until 1969, when the Social Democrats were elected, with Willy Brandt as chancellor. Brandt improved relations with East Germany and the Soviets, winning him praise in some quarters and scorn in others. When one of his aides was exposed as an East German spy in 1974, Brandt resigned, but the Social Democrats stayed in power. When the new chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, asked the United States to put intermediate range missiles on West German soil (the Russians had put them in Eastern Europe) massive anti-nuclear protests swept the country. During the same time, the Green party was growing stronger,

and making the environment a serious political issue. Schmidt was disliked by many on the left for the nuclear issue, and by many on the right for his generally good relations with the Soviet sphere. He was replaced in 1982 by Helmut Kohl of the Christian Democrats.

Kohl remained chancellor of the re-united Germany after 1990. Unification came with problems, of course. East German state-owned businesses were sold to private interests, who now had to try to become competitive with western industries. Prices rose in East Germany, as did unemployment. Bringing East Germany into the western economy was thus costly, and most of the cost was born by the richer West. This situation caused some resentment on both sides, but the German economy remained one of the world's strongest, and most Germans were glad their country was reunited. Large numbers of immigrants or "guest workers", many from Turkey, came to Germany looking for work or fleeing chaos in their home countries. This led to a resurgence of neo-Nazi sentiment, especially in the former East Germany. Some immigrants were actually murdered, sparking outrage among the vast majority of Germans. In 1998, Kohl lost to Gerhard Schroeder of the Social Democrats, who formed a coalition government with the Greens. Schroeder was a vocal opponent of US policy toward Iraq, which helped him gain re-election in 2002.

## FRANCE

After the war, Charles de Gaulle, a former general and strong French nationalist, had become the president of the new provisional government. In late 1945, a new constitution was drafted for a Fourth Republic. For the first time, French women had the vote. The economy began to recover, but the Fourth Republic was troubled. De Gaulle resigned in 1946 because he felt that the chief executive did not have enough power. A wide range of political parties, including a strong Communist party, had trouble forming stable coalitions. In addition, France was struggling to retain its colonies. They fought a bitter war to retain Indochina after revolts broke out in 1946, but finally had to withdraw in 1954. Later that year, a revolt erupted in Algeria. Because there were over a million French settlers there, France fought hard to keep control of the colony. By the late 1950's, however, many French wanted to withdraw and let Algeria go. They were fiercely opposed by army officers and Algerian settlers.

As civil war in France seemed imminent, the National Assembly called back Charles de Gaulle, giving him extensive emergency powers for six months. The Fourth Republic was dissolved, and a constitution for the Fifth Republic was created, which greatly expanded the power of the presidency. The war in Algeria continued until 1961, when Algeria gained its independence. De Gaulle retained a great deal of authority in the Fifth Republic, and did all he could to restore France as a world power— independent of both the US and the Soviet Union. In 1963, he succeeded in denying Britain membership in the EEC. Declaring that France should not rely on military alliances for protection, he encouraged the development of nuclear weapons, and in 1966, withdrew French troops from NATO. In the wake of the leftist and countercultural movements of the late 1960's, de Gaulle's government lost popularity, and massive protests among students and workers broke out in 1968. Sometimes turning violent, the protests and strikes shut down the country for two weeks, and seemed close to overturning the government. De Gaulle remained in power, but the next year he called a referendum for minor constitutional changes and declared that he would resign if they did not pass. They didn't, and he left office.

De Gaulle's conservative governance was continued, in a moderated form, by Georges Pompidou, who was prime minister until his death in 1974, and then Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Both were able leaders, but France's economy suffered in the global economic downturn relating to the energy crisis of the early '70's. Socialists and communists, who had remained relatively powerful in France, grew stronger, and in 1981, the Socialist François Mitterrand was elected president. Mitterrand set about nationalizing some industries, while decentralizing control of France's departments (provinces) by replacing appointed officials with elected ones.

Mitterrand was succeeded by the moderately conservative Jacques Chirac in 1995. Later that year, France drew worldwide protests by testing nuclear weapons in the South Pacific. Chirac cut government spending, but was unable to find a solution to high unemployment rates. After terrorist bombings by Algerian fundamentalists protesting French support of the Algerian government, many French became suspicious of Islamic immigrants. The anti-immigrant ultranationalist Jean Marie Le Pen made a strong showing in the 2002 presidential elections. In 2004, France banned Muslim head scarves and other symbols of religious affiliation in public schools. Though weakened greatly by World War II, France has remained proud and assertive, and has angered other countries with its push for its own interests. Recently, France has come

into conflict with the United States, which has an even more aggressive foreign policy, backed by enormous power. France refused to support the US lead war in Iraq, and diplomatic relations between the two countries deteriorated. Anti-American sentiments rose in France and throughout Europe, while anti-French sentiments surfaced in the US. But the two countries have strong economic ties and a long history of alliance, and their leaders have made some attempts to repair the damage.

## BRITAIN AND IRELAND

In 1945, Winston Churchill and his Conservative Party were defeated by the Labour Party, and Clement Attlee became prime minister. The Labour government nationalized the railroad, coal, and iron and steel industries, established a national healthcare system, and greatly expanded unemployment and other social welfare programs. The Conservatives returned to power in 1951, but most of the Labour changes were retained. At first, the economy recovered slowly, and wartime rationing continued. But by the mid-1950's, the economy had returned to pre-war levels, and continued to grow (if not always quickly or steadily). The British Empire began to break up in the late 40's. India, Pakistan, and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) gained their independence, but remained members of the Commonwealth. Burma and Ireland, however, withdrew. British colonies across the globe had become independent by 1965, though most remained in the Commonwealth. Britain declined to join the European Iron and Steel Community and the EEC at first, partly because the Commonwealth gave Britain a global free-trade organization. The British also formed a competing European organization, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), with Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Austria, and Portugal. The EEC was always more successful, however, and most European countries eventually joined it. Britain's economic growth slowed in the early 1960's. The country was refused membership in the EEC in 1963 and 1967, though it finally joined in 1973.

EEC membership did not prevent further economic woes, made worse by the Arab oil embargo. In 1979, the Conservative Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister. Thatcher began rolling back social programs, privatizing industries that had been nationalized after the war, and allying closely with the Reagan administration in the United States. In 1982, Britain and

Argentina fought a short war over the Falkland Islands off the coast of South America. A quick British victory improved Thatcher's popularity in many quarters. The British economy revived somewhat in the mid-1980's, but went into a recession again at the end of the decade. Thatcher was ousted by her fellow Conservatives in 1990, and replaced by John Major. In 1997, Major lost to Tony Blair, who had moved the Labour Party toward the center. Blair tried to balance fiscal responsibility and social welfare, and the British economy experienced a boom under his watch. His great popularity was hurt badly by his support of the US led war in Iraq, which was seen with scorn by many Britons.

In 1979, voters in Scotland and Wales decided against forming independent national assemblies. In 1997, however, both countries reversed this decision. The Scottish and Welsh assemblies now make many internal decisions in each region. The question of independence has been far more divisive in the other non-English part of the UK—Northern Ireland. After Northern Ireland was divided from the rest of Ireland in 1920, its Protestant majority made sure that it remained a part of the UK. But Catholic nationalists throughout the two Irelands wanted a united, independent country. Extreme nationalists in the IRA and other groups launched terrorist attacks against the British. Long discriminated against, Catholics in Northern Ireland began a civil rights movement in the 1960's. When riots broke out in 1968 and 1969, British troops moved into Northern Ireland. This caused an increase in terrorist attacks, so the British took over control of the government of Northern Ireland in 1972. The conflict between Protestants and Catholics grew bloodier all the time, with gruesome violence by both groups.

In 1985, the Anglo-Irish Agreement gave Ireland an advisory role in Northern Ireland. This was intended to satisfy Irish nationalists, but it was rejected by both the IRA and Protestant Unionists. Violence increased in the late 1980's and early 1990's. After a cease fire in 1997, peace talks began between all parties involved. This led in 1998 to an agreement creating three new governing bodies—an independent assembly for Northern Ireland, with control over many internal affairs; a North-South Council with members from Ireland and Northern Ireland, and a British-Irish Council. With growing self-government in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland renounced its claims on the area. The peace process stalled for a while in a dispute over the pace of IRA disarmament, but the situation continues to improve. The Republic of Ireland, meanwhile, has gone from recession and emigration in the 1980's to an economic boom in the new

millennium. Today, it is one of the richest countries in Europe.

## SCANDINAVIA AND FINLAND

Technically, the term Scandinavia refers only to Norway and Sweden (which occupy the Scandinavian peninsula) and to Denmark. The Scandinavian languages are a northern branch of the Germanic languages, and are so closely related that Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes can generally understand each other. Finland is often incorrectly thought of as a Scandinavian country, but the Finns speak a totally unrelated language belonging to the Uralic language family. Iceland, on the other hand, was settled beginning in the late 800's by Scandinavian peoples, and its language remains very similar to Old Norse, the language of the Vikings. While Icelanders could probably have a conversation with their Viking ancestors, they would have more trouble communicating with their modern Scandinavian cousins. Since Iceland has historical links to the Scandinavian countries, we will consider it along with them, and then look at Finland separately. Since these countries have not played a central role in our narrative, it is worth looking farther back into their history, in order to understand them on their own terms.

The Scandinavian Vikings mostly became Christianized in the decades around the year 1000. Denmark, Norway, and Sweden each emerged as separate countries around the same time, and Sweden conquered Finland in the 1200's. The three countries were united under Queen Margaret in the late 1300's, with Denmark dominating the union. Lutheranism began to replace Catholicism in Scandinavia in the early 1500's. Sweden revolted and became independent (taking Finland with it) in 1523, and grew steadily more powerful until the early 1700's. By this time the Swedes had conquered parts of Norway and much of the eastern Baltic coast. Sweden was eventually defeated by Russia under Peter the Great, whereupon its lands and power began to decline. Sweden's former ruler, Denmark, supported Napoleon in the early 1800's. The Danes were punished by losing Norway to Sweden, but they kept Greenland, Iceland, and the Faeroe Islands (which had originally been colonized by Norway, though the Inuit had colonized Greenland long before any Europeans laid claim to it). While Sweden gained Norway, it lost Finland to Russia. Norway, tired of being ruled by others, struggled against Swedish rule, and finally gained its independence in 1905. All three countries had sweeping democratic and social

reforms in the late 1800's and early 1900's, beginning a tradition of semi-socialist, but democratic government, offering some of the worlds most generous welfare programs. All three countries remained neutral during World War I.

Sweden was also able to remain neutral during World War II, but Denmark and Norway were swiftly overrun by German troops. Denmark was able to save almost all of its 7000 Jewish citizens, by helping them flee to Sweden. The Danes rapidly rebuilt after the war, joining the UN and NATO. When a new constitution was adopted in 1953, the upper house of parliament was abolished, Greenland was upgraded from a colony to a province, and female members of the royal family were made able to inherit the throne. Denmark joined the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) instead of the European Community, but they switched in the early 1970's. Greenland was given home rule, or local self-government, in 1979. Greenland's small population is mostly Inuit or Danish-Inuit. After home rule was granted, the region changed its official name to Kalaallit Nunaat, which simply means "Greenland" in the Inuit language. The worldwide economic recession of the late 1970's increased popular discontent with the Danish government, and in 1982, the long dominant Social Democrats lost control to a conservative coalition. They came back as a part of a coalition in 1993, but they could no longer expect to be the leading party. Denmark made the transition from the EC to the EU in 1993, but Danish voters decided against adopting the Euro in 2000.

Iceland was granted independence from Denmark in 1918, but it did not become fully independent until 1944. The Althing, Iceland's parliament, was established in the year 930, making it by far the oldest in the world. Though Iceland is almost at the Arctic Circle, the warm Gulf Stream makes it much warmer than one might think. As many schoolchildren learn, Greenland is icy while Iceland is green. Actually, Iceland is only partly green. Much of the land is covered by glaciers and lava flows, which is why it is called the Land of Fire and Ice. The island is actually a raised portion of the mid-Atlantic ridge, and is thus quite volcanically active. This confers the advantage of abundant geothermal energy, which heats many Icelandic homes. On the other hand, active volcanoes have forced the evacuation of some towns. Despite Iceland's rather precariously balanced environment, it shares the high standard of living enjoyed by the Scandinavian countries.

Norway, like Denmark, recovered quickly after the German occupation, and joined the

UN and NATO. Since its independence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Norway had been taking advantage of its many fast rivers for hydroelectric power, and had rapidly industrialized. Norway joined the EFTA in 1960. In 1966, the passage of the National Insurance Act expanded an already extensive social welfare program. The country began drilling for oil in the North Sea in the 1970's, just in time for rising oil prices to boost their economy when other countries were struggling. Norwegian voters rejected membership in the EC in 1972, and the EU in 1993. As in Denmark, the last couple of decades have seen the fall of socialist parties from dominance, and a slight shift toward conservatism. Nevertheless, high taxes and extensive social welfare programs keep Norway's population remarkably egalitarian, while a strong economy keeps it comfortable. The country is often said to have the world's highest quality of life. Despite its tradition of independence, Norway has taken a major role in international peace talks, as in the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO. As countries go, Norway is one of the world's great success stories.

Since Sweden was not invaded by Germany during World War II, it did not have to play catch up. The economy boomed after the war, and social welfare legislation kept economic classes from growing too far apart. Sweden joined the UN, but decided to remain neutral and refrained from joining NATO. The long dominance of the Social Democrats ended in 1976. Since then, they have alternated control of the government with various more conservative groups or coalitions. The nation was deeply shocked in 1986 when Olaf Palme, the Social Democrat prime minister, was gunned down. Though Sweden had been a founding member of the EFTA in 1960, it switched to the EU in 1995. Swedish voters, however, declined to adopt the Euro. In the late 1990's, Sweden followed worldwide economic trends by privatizing some industries, but they maintained generous social welfare programs. At the turn of the millennium, the Swedish economy is going strong.

The Finnish language is one of the Uralic languages, which, as the name suggests, seem to have originated around the Ural Mountains of Russia. Related languages include Estonian, Sami (Lapp), and Hungarian. Finland came under the relatively benevolent control of Sweden in the 1200's, and Swedish is still a minority language there. The Finns converted to Lutheranism when Sweden did in the early 1500's. As Russia grew more powerful, it began to fight with Sweden for control of Finland, and finally won in 1809. The semi-independent government left over from

Swedish rule remained in place, but the Finns followed the 19<sup>th</sup> century trend of becoming more nationalistic. The reactionary Czar Nicolas II tried to force the Finns to adopt the Russian language and culture, deepening their discontent with Russian rule. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Finland declared its independence. The country soon split in a civil war between socialists and non-socialists, which the non-socialists finally won. Finland became a republic in 1919.

Finland's relations with the Soviet Union continued to be tense. The Soviets invaded in 1939, taking control of a southern region called Karelia. During World War II, Finns allowed the Germans in to fight the Soviets, but the Soviets kept Karelia, and the German armies laid waste to northern Finland. After the war, Finland joined the United Nations, but maintained a careful neutrality between the Cold War powers. The country switched from the EFTA to the EU in 1995, and adopted the Euro in 1999. In 2000, Finland elected Tarja Halonen, its first female president. Finland's government is often said to be the least corrupt in the world.

The Sami, or Lapps, are linguistic cousins of the Finns. They once occupied large parts of the Nordic countries, but were gradually driven north by Scandinavians and Finns. Today, they mostly live above the arctic circle from Norway to western Russia. A short, dark people, the Sami have traditionally lived by herding reindeer. Only a few of them follow this lifestyle today, and those that do use snowmobiles or trucks instead of the traditional sleds. Many Sami work in the fishing and forestry industry, while others have moved to cities to find jobs there.

## THE LOW COUNTRIES: THE NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, AND LUXEMBOURG

The Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg are often called the Low Countries, because they lie on the coastal plain of the North Sea. Originally inhabited by Celts, the area was conquered and settled by the Romans. Later on, Germanic Franks invaded the region, and settled mostly in the sparsely populated, swampy north. Eventually, they built dikes and drained shallow wetlands, turning them into fertile fields. Meanwhile, Celtic-Roman people remained dominant in the south, and to this day, people in the northern regions mostly speak Dutch, a Germanic language, while people in the south mostly speak French, a Romance language. People in Luxembourg speak French, German, and Letzeburgesch, which is really a dialect of German.

Before they were separate states, what are now Belgium and the Netherlands were ruled by the Spanish Habsburgs. The Netherlands declared its independence in 1581. Spain did not accept this until 1648, but by that time the Dutch had become a major colonial power. Belgium, on the other hand, remained under Habsburg control, so while Protestantism took hold in much of the Netherlands, Belgium remained mostly Roman Catholic. All three of the Low Countries were conquered by Napoleon in the late 1700's. During the Congress of Vienna, they were united to form the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This did not last. Belgium declared its independence in 1830, and Luxembourg did the same in 1890. In 1948, the three countries joined together again in a free trade organization called Benelux.

In the Netherlands the German occupation of World War II did heavy damage. Broken dikes left much of the countryside flooded. Soon after the war the Dutch were rebuilding. They were founding members of the UN. By the mid-1950's, the Dutch economy was far larger than before the war. The days of Dutch colonialism, however, were quickly coming to an end. During the war, the Japanese invasion of the Netherlands Indies (Indonesia) showed the native peoples that the Dutch could be defeated. The Indonesians fought for independence after the war, and won it in 1949. Immigrants from former Dutch colonies soon began moving to the Netherlands, as did many Turks and Moroccans. The South American colony of Suriname became fully independent in 1975. Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles remain part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, though they are mostly self-governing. The Netherlands may be the most socially liberal country in the world, with legalized prostitution, euthanasia, and marijuana, as well as recognition of same-sex marriages. In 2002, however, a right-wing, anti-immigration politician was assassinated, and the shocked population responded by electing a conservative government.

Belgium is composed of three ethnic groups: The Flemings live in the Flanders region in the north, and speak a dialect of Dutch (formerly called Flemish). Walloons live in Wallonia in the south, and speak French. Both languages are spoken in Brussels. A small minority of Belgians speak German. Belgium was quickly overrun by Germany in World War II, but suffered relatively little property damage, which helped it make a fast economic recovery. After the war, revolts broke out against King Leopold III, who was seen as taking a weak stand against the Germans. Leopold resigned, and his son, Baudouin I, became king in 1951. The Congo gained its independence in 1960, and Rwanda and Burundi in 1962. During the 1960's, Flanders began

developing high tech industries, outpacing Wallonia, which had been an early center for heavy industries. Conflict between Flemings and Walloons increased throughout the decade. In 1971, the Belgian constitution was amended to recognize Belgium's three ethnic groups (Fleming, Walloon, and German). Flanders, Wallonia, and the mixed-language city of Brussels were given more administrative independence. In 1993, these three regions gained more autonomy when Belgium was officially made a federal state. Belgium is a prosperous, influential country (Brussels is the headquarters for the EU, for example). However, Flanders continues to outpace Wallonia economically, and conflict between the two groups has made the government less effective than it might be.

Situated between Belgium, France, and Germany, the tiny country of Luxembourg traces its origin to 963 CE, when Count Siegfried of Ardennes built a castle there. Today, Luxembourg is a major steel producing region, though its economy has diversified in recent decades. Like Belgium and the Netherlands, Luxembourg was a founding member of the European Coal and Steel Community, which evolved into the EC and then the EU. The people of Luxembourg are among the wealthiest in the world.

## SWITZERLAND

Switzerland has not figured strongly in this history of the world, simply because so much of history consists of international conflict, and Switzerland has managed to stay neutral. The country began in the late 1200's, when three German-speaking regions in what is now central Switzerland banded together to gain independence from the Habsburgs. Over time, more regions joined the confederation, which came to include speakers of French, Italian, and Romansch (a language descended from Latin), as well as the very distinctive Swiss German dialect. After fighting wars of conquest in the late 1400's and early 1500's, the Swiss decided to remain neutral in international conflicts. With the Reformation, however, conflict was unavoidable. The country became divided between Catholics and Protestants, while Zurich and Geneva became major centers of Protestantism. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the great powers of Europe affirmed Swiss neutrality.

Sheltered from international conflict by mountains as well as tradition, Swiss banks filled

up with money from around Europe, and then around the world. Switzerland also became a center for international meetings. Geneva is the former headquarters of the League of Nations, as well as the European headquarters for the UN, even though Switzerland didn't join the UN until 2002. During World War II, Switzerland sheltered large numbers of refugees. However, Swiss banks also held funds stolen by the Germans from Jews. Criticized for failing to return these funds, the Swiss government set up a fund in 1997 to compensate Holocaust victims. Conservative as well as independent, Switzerland did not give women the vote in national elections until 1971. The booming economy attracts many foreign workers, and this worries many Swiss. In 2003, a right-wing anti-immigration party won the most seats in the Swiss parliament. Switzerland, with its long tradition of independence, and one of the world's highest standards of living, has done quite well for itself.

## AUSTRIA

After the First World War, Austria and Germany had been forbidden to unite. A sizeable Nazi party developed in Austria as well as Germany, and one of their main goals was to unite the two countries in defiance of international agreements. When German troops seized Austria in 1938, some Austrians welcomed them. After the war, occupation troops did not leave until Austria reaffirmed its commitment not to join with Germany, and promised to remain neutral in all international conflicts. The Austrian economy quickly recovered in the 1950's. The Socialist Party (now the Social Democratic Party) and the more conservative People's Party became the dominant forces in Austrian politics, forming coalitions when they did not have clear majorities. As a neutral country straddling western and eastern Europe, Austria was an important site for international meetings during the Cold War, as in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) between the Soviet Union and the United States. Austria's international image has occasionally been tarnished by surges of far-right sentiment. In 1986, former UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim was elected to the (largely ceremonial) post of President, even though evidence of his involvement in Nazi atrocities during World War II had surfaced during his campaign. In 1999, the far-right, anti-immigrant Freedom Party won a significant number of seats in the Austrian national assembly. Its leader, Jorg Haider, had expressed approval for certain Nazi policies.

When the People's Party formed a coalition government with the Freedom Party in 2000, many nations responded with sanctions. Support for the party has since declined.

## ITALY

After the war, the Italian people voted to end the monarchy and make Italy a republic. Italy became an important member of NATO, and then the EC and EU. The Italian economy boomed in the decades after the war, transforming Italy from a predominantly agricultural to a predominantly industrial country. Much of the growth was in the north, however, and the gap between northern and southern Italy has widened. Italian politics, relying on shifting coalitions among a wide range of parties, have tended toward the chaotic. The Christian Democrats (now called the Popular Party) were the most powerful party until the early 1990's. The Communists also commanded a great deal of popular support, but more conservative parties found ways to keep them out of power. The economic turmoil of the 1970's hit Italy hard, as did a wave of terrorist attacks by the far-left Red Brigades. This led to a crackdown on lawlessness in the early 1980's, which broke up the Red Brigades and dealt heavy blows to the Italian mafia. The Christian Democrats lost their dominance in the 1990's after revelations of corruption brought down some of Italy's top politicians. Since 2001, the conservative media mogul Silvio Berlusconi has been Prime Minister. Observers find it worrying that he owns most of the Italian media, and that he has been charged with bribery and fraud. Italy supported the US invasion of Iraq, but widespread public disapproval, as well as the accidental killing of an Italian intelligence officer by US troops, may lead to the withdrawal of Italian troops.

## SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Spain and Portugal were the last refuges of right-wing dictatorships in Western Europe. Franco remained in power in Spain until 1975. At first, his authoritarian government was shunned, but Franco was a strong anti-communist, so the United States gave his government a great deal of aid in exchange for the right to establish air and naval bases in Spain. This aid helped fuel an amazing economic boom beginning in the 60's. That decade also saw a gradually

loosening of political oppression, and a rise in protests. The regions of Spain whose primary languages are not Spanish (Galicia in the northwest, the Basque regions in the Pyrenees, and Catalonia in the northeast) began to call for greater autonomy. A Basque separatist organization called the ETA began a campaign of terrorism, and Franco's harsh crackdown only increased their support.

Franco died in 1975. He had announced that the monarchy would be restored after his death, so Prince Juan Carlos became king. Many were surprised when the new king helped sponsor a transition to a democratic government. Multiple political parties were legalized in 1976, elections held in 1977, and a democratic constitution adopted in 1978. Regional parliaments were formed in several parts of Spain in the 1980's, decreasing the centralization of the government. Basque extremists, however, were not satisfied with this, and have continued their terrorist attacks. In 1982, the Socialist Worker's Party won elections, and remained in control of the government throughout the 80's and early 90's. Long excluded from EU membership because of Franco's government, Spain finally joined in 1986. The moderately right wing Popular Party won elections in 1996. The new prime minister, Jose Maria Aznar, went against public opinion in sending Spanish troops to support the American-led war in Iraq. In 2004, terrorists affiliated with Al Qaeda blew up four trains, killing nearly 200 people. Three days later, the Popular Party lost to the Socialist Workers Party in national elections. The new prime minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, soon followed through on a campaign promise to remove Spanish troops from Iraq.

Portugal came under the control of the right-wing dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar in the late 1920's, and he kept a firm grip on the country until the late 1960's. Salazar's domestic policies favored the rich at the expense of the poor, who remained backward by western European standards. He had no intention of relinquishing Portuguese colonies around the world. Nevertheless, India took control of Portuguese colonies there in 1961. In Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau, bloody wars for independence claimed many lives, both Portuguese and African. After Salazar had a stroke in 1968, another dictator continued his policies, which were increasingly criticized both domestically and internationally. In 1974, a group of left-leaning army officers overthrew the government. Political parties were legalized and elections held, but violence broke out for a while between competing groups. The African colonies were granted

independence soon afterward, but Indonesia forcibly took over the Portuguese colony of East Timor. Portugal's fledgling democracy grew more stable in the late 1970's and early 1980's. In 1999, the Portuguese colony of Macao was returned to China. Portugal remains one of the poorest countries in the EU, and a small percentage of its population remains illiterate. Nevertheless, by global standards, life in Portugal is good and getting better.

## GREECE

Greece was invaded by the Axis powers during World War II, but resistance groups, especially the communists, put up a strong fight. When the Axis was defeated, British troops forcefully removed much of Greece from the control of the communist resistance movement, and then restored the Greek king to the throne. The communists rebelled in 1946, beginning a brutal civil war that lasted until 1949. The Greek government finally defeated the communists with the help of US aid under the Truman Doctrine. In the 1950's, Greece and Turkey clashed over the island of Cyprus, a British colony with a population divided between Greeks and Turks. These tensions moderated for a while after Cyprus became independent in 1960. In 1967, amidst a dispute between the king and prime minister, three army officers staged a coup and set up a repressive right-wing dictatorship. When Greek officers lead Greek Cypriots in overthrowing the government of Cyprus in 1974, Turkish troops invaded the island. International peacekeeping efforts ended the fighting, and Cyprus was divided into Greek and Turkish sections. The border is still patrolled by UN peacekeepers. The conflict in Cyprus led to the downfall of the military government in Greece, and the country has been a democratic republic ever since. Control of the government has alternated between the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), and the more conservative New Democracy Party. Greece joined the EU in 1981. It remains one of the poorest members, but its economy and government are growing sturdier all the time, as evidenced by the successful 2004 Athens Olympics.

## **THE REBIRTH OF JAPAN**

Like Germany, Japan had been smashed by the war. Its cities lay in ruins, two million

people were dead, and the leadership had been thoroughly discredited. The overseas empire was stripped away by the Allies, and for the first time in its history, Japan was occupied by a foreign power. United States troops, led by Douglas MacArthur, dismantled the Japanese military. Several key figures in the war were tried for war crimes, and some, such as former Prime Minister Tojo, were executed. But US policy was not focused on punishing Japan, especially after relations with the growing Communist world began to sour. Instead, Japan was to be rebuilt as a democratic, capitalist society, which would be both an alternative model to communism and a key US ally. The first step was a constitution, drafted by MacArthur and his assistants and adopted in 1947. The constitution provided for a legislative Diet, whose majority party would elect the Prime Minister. Emperor Hirohito remained in place, but only as a figurehead, renouncing any claim of divinity. The new constitution also renounced “war as a sovereign right of the nation”, allowing Japan to keep only enough troops to defend itself from outside attack.

The constitution also contained a Bill of Rights intended to make Japan less authoritarian. Freedom of speech and the press, as well as equality before the law, were all guaranteed, while women were guaranteed equal rights, including the right to vote. The educational system was expanded, and textbooks were revised to encourage democracy and independent thought instead of authoritarianism and militarism. Labor unions were made legal, and land ownership was reformed, with large landlord-held estates broken up and given to the peasants who had rented space on them. A similar effort to break up the *zaibatsu*, the great business conglomerates, was unsuccessful, and these remained major players in the postwar economy. In 1952, the American occupation forces withdrew (leaving military bases in Okinawa) and Japan was an independent nation again.

Over the next decades, the Japanese economy roared. With few natural resources, Japan concentrated on foreign trade; importing cheap raw materials and exporting much more valuable finished products. Since many Japanese factories had been destroyed, new and efficient ones were built in their place. At first, they concentrated on textiles and cheap consumer goods, but by the 1970's, Japan was focusing on the high tech and automobile industries. Today, Japan's economy is among the largest in the world, and its standard of living among the highest. This economic miracle was a result of several factors. First of all, the Japanese, like the Germans, were a highly-skilled, educated people with experience in industry. They also had a tradition of

loyalty and hard work (or, on the flip side, conformity and deference to authority). Japanese workers put in extremely long hours, and in exchange, many companies employed them for life. The Japanese saved a large portion of their income, which banks reinvested in the economy. The government maintained its tradition of close cooperation with industry. This helped the Japanese economy, but has occasionally led to protectionist practices. Many countries have been unable to maintain a favorable balance of trade, and find themselves buying more from Japan than Japan buys back. A final advantage the Japanese enjoy is their lack of a military. Money that might have gone for tanks and jet fighters can be spent in more constructive ways.

Japan, in short, has done very well in the last half century. But it has also had difficulties. Its extreme dependence on trade for natural resources was highlighted by the 1974 OPEC oil embargo, which rocked the Japanese economy. Japan has experienced intense urbanization as people have streamed from the countryside into its enormous and crowded cities. Many young people, especially in the cities, are moving away from Japanese traditions, as shown by their love of western-style pop music and fashions. Reverence for authority has been replaced somewhat by independence and individualism. Many are questioning the tradition of working long hours; deciding that they should allow themselves time to enjoy their prosperity. These trends are both positive and negative, but they are a source of concern to older Japanese. The status of women is also an issue that remains to be resolved. Women have gained a great deal since the war, but do not enjoy the same social status, educational and employment opportunities, or pay rates, as men.

Japan has experienced some shaky times in recent years, both politically and economically speaking. From the 1950's to the 1990's, the moderately conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) dominated the Japanese government. In the 1980's, major figures in the party were found to have raised campaign funds illegally. Voters turned against the LDP in the early 1990's, and the party lost its dominance. Since then, the LDP has competed against a shifting set of opposition parties and coalitions. In the late 1980's, stocks and real estate prices became inflated amidst widespread speculation. The bubble burst in the early 90's, and Japan entered a steep recession, which was made worse by the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Many companies began downsizing during the recession, and lifelong employment guarantees became much less common. Economic troubles persisted into the early 2000's, but by global standards, Japan remains an extremely prosperous society.

