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## EUROPEAN THOUGHT AND CULTURE IN THE 1800'S

### NATIONALISM

The last two hundred years have seen the rise of secular ideologies which inspired in many of their adherents the kind of visceral, unswerving faith that had previously been reserved for religions. Marxism and liberalism, in their various forms, would become matters of faith for millions of people. Another powerful ideology which came into its own around the same time, which may have been even more pervasive and influential, is nationalism. Nationalism is a feeling of loyalty and pride in one's **nation**—a group with a shared language, culture, and history whose members are conscious of belonging to that group—combined with the desire for political unity and independence for that nation. In other words, nationalists want their *nation* (an ethnic or cultural unit) to correspond with their *state* (a political unit).

Nationalism has become so pervasive in the modern world that many assume it has always existed. It hasn't. Nationalism is not much more than 200 years old, and in many parts of the world, it is much more recent than that. People have always had powerful feelings of group allegiance, of course. Before the rise of nationalism, however, people saw themselves more as members of tribes, cities, feudal domains; or on wider scales, as members of a community of religious faith, such as Islam or Christianity. In the large multicultural empires that existed through most of history, people didn't expect national borders to coincide with state borders, nor did most people typically feel any allegiance to the empire (except among the dominant group who controlled the empire, such as the Romans or Persians in their respective empires). The average farmer didn't care what ethnic group his imperial masters belonged to, as long as they treated him reasonably well (leaving him enough grain to feed his family, for example).

Nationalism first emerged in Europe as some western countries, such as France, England, and Spain, were becoming true nation-states. Political power was being centralized under monarchs, who were becoming more powerful than feudal lords or the church, while the people were beginning to see themselves as a coherent nation. Indeed, they were *becoming* a coherent nation for the first time. France, for example, was at one time a patchwork of Franks, Burgundians, Normans, and others. Gradually, these diverse groups developed a more or less common culture and language. Improvements in communications (such as printed books and the

rise in literacy) and the speed of travel greatly accelerated this process. This is a vital point about nationalism—national groupings change over time, and they depend on the people’s perceptions of nationhood. If most members of a group consider themselves to be part of a nation, then they are.

At first, nationalism in Europe was closely associated with liberalism or democratic republicanism. In the early 1800's, as we will see, most conservatives were loyal to the ruling classes of multicultural empires such as the Austrian or Russian empires, so they were very anti-nationalist. Since then, of course, these ideological alignments have shifted somewhat, so that conservatives may be more fiercely nationalistic than liberals. In the 1800's, nationalism spread eastward in Europe, as Germans, Belgians, Hungarians, Italians, Serbs, and many others demanded independent, unified states. In some places, such as the Austrian and Ottoman empires, this led to fragmentation. In others, such as Germany and Italy, it led to unification. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, nationalism became a potent force throughout the world, as former European colonies gained their independence, and struggle to align state borders with national borders.

It was a painful process in many cases. One problem with nationalism is that different ethnic groups may not be arranged into discrete blocks that lines can be drawn around. Often they are mingled together in one place. This isn’t the only drawback to nationalism. While most people consider their own nationalist pride a virtue, nationalism can be a negative force as well as a positive one. It can be positive when it unites a people toward a common purpose, *if* that purpose is a constructive one. That’s a big if. Oftentimes, political leaders play on nationalist feelings to get people to do what they want, whether or not it’s a good thing. And nationalism does not always coincide with liberalism or democracy. In extremely nationalistic settings, leaders may become dictators by convincing people they are the embodiment of the national spirit. This is what Napoleon did, and what many others have done since. Finally, of course, nationalism can easily turn into a sense of national superiority or entitlement that can, and has, turned very ugly. Whatever the pros and cons of nationalism, it is about to become a major theme in our story.

## **EVOLUTION IN SCIENCE**

### **NEW DISCOVERIES, CHANGING PARADIGMS**

The empirical approach, with its reliance on observing, measuring and testing to see how things really work (instead of relying on past assumptions) was at the heart of the revolutions in human life that we have been discussing. The new worldview brought on by the scientific revolution—a vision of a huge and impersonal, but intricately ordered, universe—inspired the Enlightenment, whose ideas lead to social and political revolutions. The methods of the scientific revolution, meanwhile, drove the expansion of knowledge and technology that helped power the Industrial Revolution (which would lead to further social and political revolutions). But the scientific revolution didn't dissolve into the other revolutions that it spawned. It continued, and even accelerated, and factual knowledge continued to expand and improve. As the data accumulated, the scientific view of the world began to change. Throughout the 1800's, scientists continued to find unity and order in nature, but the clockwork universe image from earlier years began to fade, as they discovered that nature is characterized by change and development as well as order.

The physical sciences matured in the 1800's, as many phenomena were put on a firm theoretical basis. John Dalton proposed his atomic theory of matter in 1803, around the time that Thomas Young was suggesting that light was composed of waves instead of particles. In the 1820's Oersted showed that moving electric fields produce magnetic fields, and Faraday showed the reverse in the 1830's. By the 1860's, Maxwell had shown that light waves are electric and magnetic fields propagating each other through space. By this time, scientists had also realized that heat is a form of mechanical energy (not a flowing fluid), and some of them guessed that it is the vibration of atoms and molecules. This led to the law of the conservation of energy (the first law of thermodynamics) and the law of increasing entropy (the second law of thermodynamics). In 1869, Mendeleev arranged the known elements into the Periodic Table, thus showing the trends and regularities in their properties. Based on gaps in his table, he predicted unknown elements that would be discovered later. All these discoveries highlighted nature's order and unity. By the end of the century, some scientists were suggesting that the basic laws of physics would soon be a solved problem. Such optimism, common in the late 1800's, would soon be demolished by 20<sup>th</sup> century reality.

In the meantime, the other sciences were coming into their own. Back in 1669, Nicolaus Steno had laid the foundations of geology by noting that sedimentary rocks are built up in

horizontal layers, or strata, and that deeper strata must be older than those closer to the surface. In the 1795, James Hutton suggested the principle of uniformitarianism—that most geological structures are formed gradually, through common processes such as erosion and sediment formation. In the early 1800's, William Smith noted that different strata contain different kinds of fossils. Charles Lyell wrote an influential textbook of geology in the 1830's, summing up the latest ideas and supporting uniformitarianism. Louis Agassiz studied Swiss glaciers, and suggested that great ice sheets had once covered wide areas. All these things suggested that the Earth was much older than generally thought, and that it had been very different in past ages.

Knowledge of the biological world exploded during the 1800's. The French Baron Cuvier helped establish comparative anatomy, showing that most organisms can be classified according to a few basic body types. He also studied extinct species, and thus helped found the field of paleontology. A bridge between biology and chemistry was built by the German chemist Friedrich Wohler in 1828. At the time many people were vitalists, who held that organic substances could only be produced by life, because only life had a “vital force”. Wohler was able to synthesize urea, an organic compound, from non-organic substances, thus helping to disprove vitalism. Two other Germans, Schleiden and Schwann, suggested that all living things are composed of cells. Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch originated the *germ theory* of disease; the idea that many diseases are caused by microorganisms. This gave a great boost to public sanitation efforts, and led to procedures for sterilization in hospitals, pioneered by Joseph Lister. Countless lives have been saved ever since. Pasteur also disproved the idea of spontaneous generation, which held that living things arise spontaneously from non-living things. Living things, Pasteur showed, are produced by other living things in the process of reproduction. Another great medical advance was the use of ether and chloroform as general anesthetics for surgical procedures, both pioneered during the 1840's. Among the greatest scientific studies of the 1800's were made by Gregor-Mendel, an Austrian monk, who discovered the basic principles of heredity by doing careful breeding experiments with pea plants. Mendel's work was published in the 1860's, but went unnoticed until it was rediscovered in 1900.

## DARWIN AND HIS IMPACT

The most important breakthrough in biology in the 1800's (or any century, probably), was the theory of evolution by natural selection, proposed simultaneously by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace. Darwin actually came up with the theory earlier than the younger Wallace, but he delayed publishing for fear of the public outcry that would result. His hand was forced when he received a letter from Wallace describing a theory almost identical to his, so he arranged to present a joint paper with Wallace to the Royal Society of London in 1858. In 1859, Darwin published the *Origin of Species*, a more detailed exposition of his theory, which he had been working on for years. Darwin's theory was more detailed, and his name has become more closely attached to the theory than Wallace's, so we will look at the development of his thinking.

Other thinkers before Darwin had suggested that species might change over time, but they had not proposed a convincing mechanism for the change. The French naturalist Lamarck had noted the fact that individual organisms change in response to their environment. For example, a person who stays in the sun a lot will get darker. Lamarck suggested that such acquired characteristics could be passed across generations, resulted in the alteration of the species over time. It wasn't a bad guess, but it was wrong. Acquired characteristics, such as suntans, are not inherited.

Darwin first considered the idea of the changeability of species when he served as a ship's naturalist on the HMS Beagle from 1831 to 1836, on an expedition to survey the coasts of South America. One of the books Darwin took with him was Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, which argued for gradual change in geological forms (uniformitarianism). Darwin took detailed notes of the geology, flora, and fauna of South America and nearby islands. Becoming convinced of geological uniformitarianism, he began to wonder if species might also transform slowly over time, by the cumulative effect of many small changes. He was especially taken with the creatures of the Galapagos Islands—bizarre finches, giant tortoises, and aquatic iguanas—which, though strange, bore clear resemblances to species from the South American mainland. They almost seemed like modified versions of them.

When Darwin returned to England, he was convinced that species change, but he had no mechanism. Then he read Malthus' *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, which argued that expanding human populations were checked by a limited food supply. Darwin realized the same thing must be true for other species—there are not enough resources to support an unlimited

population. In a varied population of organisms facing limited resources, some will be better suited to surviving and reproducing than others. Those with traits that help them survive will pass those traits on to their offspring. In time, this will result in a change in the entire population. It will have evolved, through natural selection of certain traits. Darwin also realized that different environments might select for different traits. This could cause different populations of the same species, living in different environments, to diverge; as the creatures of the Galapagos had diverged from their mainland ancestors.

The intellectual impact of Darwinism was among the most profound in history. The *Origin of Species* quickly sold out in its first edition, and Darwin's theories soon came to be accepted by the majority of scientists. By the 1930's, his theories had been combined with Mendelian genetics into the *synthetic theory* of evolution, which, in refined form, is still the standard theory. For the field of biology, Darwin was like a combination of Copernicus and Newton. Like Newton, he offered a unifying theory that shed light on all sorts of disparate phenomena. And like Copernicus, he removed humanity a step further from its presumed central place in nature. Humans were not specially created in God's image, all at once, a few thousand years ago. Noteworthy though we may be, we are one of millions of other species that has evolved over enormous lengths of time through the process of random variation and selective retention of useful traits. Of course, this idea didn't sit well with a great many people, and it hasn't ever since. Darwin's impact was not confined to the field of biology. It sparked a wave of reaction from biblical literalists who believed in the account of creation in Genesis. Just as he had feared, Darwin was ridiculed and made out to be a villain, or even an agent of Satan, by many orthodox Christians. Even among those who accepted Darwin's theory, the implications were deeply shocking, and forced them to re-think many of their basic assumptions about the human condition.

## NEW FIELDS OF STUDY

### *PSYCHOLOGY*

In the late 1800's, a few people began trying to understand the human mind in scientific terms, instead of theological or philosophical terms. This was the beginning of the science of

psychology. The first psychological laboratory was established by Wilhelm Wundt at the University of Leipzig. Wundt and his students came to be called *structuralists*, because they were interested in enumerating the various mental structures that make up the mind. The structuralists also came to be called *introspectionists*, because they tried to focus inward on their own minds, in order to tease apart the elementary sensations, perceptions and emotions that combine to produce the workings of the mind. Critics of introspectionism pointed out that the mind may not be constructed for examining itself, and introspection was eventually abandoned as too subjective.

In the United States, a school of thought called *functionalism* arose as an alternative to structuralism. As the name suggests, functionalism was more concerned with what the mind does than with the basic components that make it up<sup>1</sup>. William James and John Dewey, the chief proponents of functionalism, thought of the mind in adaptive, practical terms—as a tool for helping people get along in their environment. Both men are also remembered as philosophers, who were instrumental in the distinctly American philosophy of pragmatism (discussed in Chapter 2, Volume I). Dewey also helped found the field of educational psychology. He strongly opposed the traditional educational style of passive, rote memorization. Dewey believed that students learn best when motivated to do so, and that they became more motivated when they actively participate in the learning process. James left psychology for philosophy later in his career, but not before writing *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890. This beautifully written classic is still widely read today.

## THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

One of the key themes of the Enlightenment was that society could be understood, and even perfected, by examining it in secular, rational terms. During the Enlightenment, however,

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<sup>1</sup>The terms *functionalism* and *structuralism* would also become widely used in the social sciences, though with slightly different meanings. Structuralism came have a more holistic sense, in that structures—such as societies or languages—were seen as emergent systems arising from the dynamic interaction of their parts. Functionalism retained its sense of an emphasis on what things do, rather than what components they are made of. Obviously, most complex systems can usefully be seen in terms as structure as well as function, and sometimes the distinction is not a terribly useful one. In sociology and anthropology, for example, structure and function would not always be rigidly distinguished.

the study of society had mostly been the province of philosophy. It had not split off as a science, the way the natural sciences had. This began to change in the 1800's. But society is far more subtle and multidimensional than falling bodies or expanding gases, and the effort to establish a science of society got off to a rocky start. Early on, many thinkers believed they could establish a single, unified social science that could obtain the same sort of empirical precision as physics or chemistry. They were wrong on both counts. Social science differentiated into several discrete fields by the end of the 1800's, including economics (which came into its own early on, as we have seen), sociology, anthropology, archaeology, and others. This differentiation of disciplines and sub-disciplines has continued to this day. And it was quite necessary. However, so far differentiation has vastly outpaced its necessary complement, integration. The early social scientists were also wrong about the precision social science would obtain. Though some branches of social science, especially economics, have been fairly successful at quantitative measurement and analysis, society just isn't as simple and precise as physics..

The term *sociology* was first used by August Comte in the 1830's. Comte was the first to expound a philosophy of strict **positivism**, which purported to rely only on objectively verifiable facts. Comte believed that societies advance through three stages in their understanding of the world: a theological stage, which relies on religious explanations; a metaphysical stage, which relies on abstract thought; and finally, a positive stage, which relies solely on verifiable facts. Western society, he believed, was entering the positive stage (Evidently, it's taking a while to get through the doorway). Marx, though his aims were very different from Comte's, also believed he was discovering objective, ironclad laws of society. He also wanted to found a unified science of society, and did not distinguish between economics and sociology. Today, many of Marx's ideas, unlike Comte's, are still alive in both fields (though more so in sociology).

After the publication of the *Origin of Species*, many social thinkers tried to apply Darwinism to human society, often in self-serving ways that rationalized the dominance of western societies. Many misinterpreted evolution as a climb to march of progress, and imagined a ladder of perfection with white European males at the top. This was the view of the first people to call themselves anthropologists, including Edward B. Tylor and Henry Lewis Morgan, both of whom arranged various cultures around the world in a continuum from "savagery" to "civilization". However, Morgan, who studied Native Americans, was a pioneer in observational

anthropology, and the study of kinship patterns.

The Social Darwinists, especially the philosopher Herbert Spencer (who actually coined the term “survival of the fittest”) applied Darwinian ideas about a struggle for existence to human society. They argued that the “fittest” in society would rise to wealth and power, while the “unfit” would sink into poverty. Extending the analogy to whole societies, they argued that stronger societies dominate weaker ones because they are inherently superior. The power of Europe in the world, and the power of the wealthy in society, were seen as evidence of that superiority. Not much was said about chance factors, such as the accident of being born in a wealthy family, or the tendency for wealth and power to be self-reinforcing, or the fact that cooperation, as well as competition, is a factor in evolution. Social Darwinism was a half-baked philosophy, not a science.

The biggest problem with Social Darwinism was that it turned a “scientific” theory into an ethical system. “Fitness” was equated with “rightness”, and “is” was confused with “ought”. It is not that ideas about selection, fitness (in the sense of fitting in successfully with one’s environment), and adaptation have no place in theories of society. This author personally believes they do, although many, many social theorists would disagree. Some people have traits that make them more dominant than others in their social environment, and some cultures have traits that make them more dominant than others in global relations. But that does not necessarily mean that those traits are innate or biologically determined, or that they imply superiority or moral correctness.

In the late 1800's, social scientists began to react against evolutionary explanations. In sociology, Emile Durkheim was a pivotal figure. Durkheim was a pioneer in basing sociological theory on empirical data. He was also an early advocate for a holistic, systems approach, arguing that society is a whole system which should be studied at its own level, not just in terms of individual psychology or evolutionary biology. Durkheim pointed out that societies display different types of unity, which he called *solidarity*. *Mechanical solidarity*, he said, is based on the cultural similarities that bind a group or society together. He contrasted this with *organic solidarity*, in which people are differentiated by a division of labor, but united by mutual dependence (organic solidarity combines unity and diversity). Durkheim’s work helped sociology come into its own as a distinct discipline.

In the 1800's, people first realized that humans had been around far longer than the 6000 or so years generally accepted by biblical scholars. This was when archaeology and physical anthropology got their start. When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, he brought along scholars to study the antiquities they found there. The most important find was the Rosetta Stone, which allowed Jean Francois Compollion to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics. These fabulous discoveries gave Europeans became a fascination with ancient civilizations. Unfortunately, this lead to widespread looting in Egypt and Mesopotamia by treasure seekers, but these reckless types were being replaced by careful archaeologists by the mid-1800's. Meanwhile, the discoveries kept coming fast. Mesopotamian cuneiform writing was deciphered in 1846, and Arthur Evans rediscovered the Minoan civilization in the late 1800's. The Sumerian civilization was discovered around the same time. Europeans were shocked to hear that the Sumerians predated the Egyptians, and that they had a flood myth that seemed to be the basis for the biblical story. By this time, however, the cave art in France and Spain, as well as the discovery of Neanderthal bones, had opened up longer views into the past. With the discovery of the Java man fossils (*Homo erectus*) by Eugene Dubois in 1892, the true antiquity of human origins was becoming clear.

### “SCIENTIFIC” RACISM

People have always had a tendency to think of members of their culture or ethnic group as innately superior to others. In the 1800's, however, this tendency took on an especially sinister tone. The combination of growing nationalism (and its common partner, xenophobia), European world dominance and smugness, and pseudo-scientific thinking all came together to produce ideologies of hate that masqueraded as science. Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, for example, argued that the European “race” (especially northern Europeans, whom he mistakenly called Aryans) is inherently superior to other races, and that intermingling would degrade that superiority. Gobineau’s follower, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, also argued for “Aryan” superiority, and considered Jews to be a threat to Aryan greatness. This was a new rationale for anti-Semitism, which had previously been justified more on religious grounds. With books becoming more widely distributed, and more Europeans learning to read, such thinkers (who were stating fairly

common public sentiments) reached wide audiences. Anti-Semitism was pervasive in the late 1800's, as we will see. Some Jews, such as the French journalist Theodor Herzl, responded by developing a Jewish nationalism, called Zionism, that advocated the establishment of a Jewish state in the ancient homeland of Palestine. Beginning in the late 1800's, some Jews began settling there.

## ROMANTICISM, REALISM, IMPRESSIONISM, AND POST-IMPRESSIONISM

By the late 1700's, many artists and intellectuals were moving away from the rationality and classicism of the Enlightenment. This was the beginning of the Romantic movement. The romantics rejected cities and industrialism in favor of idealized visions of the rural, the natural, and the long ago and far away, and they rejected rational universalism for nationalism and individualism. In literature, the Romantic movement was defined by Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), in which a passionate young man kills himself after being rejected in love. Romanticism idealized this sort of figure, and many artists of the time actually lived their lives that way, living passionately and dying young. The British poet Lord Byron, for example, went to Greece to fight in their war of independence from the Ottomans, only to die of a fever soon after arriving. Not that all romantics were alike. Some, such as William Wordsworth, celebrated the pastoral, serene aspects of nature. Others focused on the exotic and fantastic. Coleridge wrote about Kublai Khan's Xanadu, and Victor Hugo and Walter Scott wrote about the Middle Ages. Many writers focused on the supernatural and the gothic, as in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, or in Edgar Allan Poe's brilliantly morbid poems and stories. Romanticism's nationalistic tendency was shown by an interest in national folktales. Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, for example, compiled their collection of German fairy tales during this period.

Other arts showed similar tendencies. Architecture revived the Gothic style of medieval cathedrals, as in the new Houses of Parliament in England, built in the mid-1800's. Some painters produced idealized, rural landscapes, while others celebrated the power of nature in paintings of high mountains and thunderstorms. Eugene Delacroix painted people in emotionally charged, often exotic scenes. His *Massacre of Chios* is a romantic interpretation of a horrible massacre of Greeks by Turks in 1824. The Greek victims are depicted as defeated but heroic as they wait for

the murderous Turks to approach.. While Delacroix gave war scenes a terrible beauty, the Spanish painter Francisco Goya protested the horror of war, as in his *Third of May*, which shows Spaniards being shot by Napoleon's troops. Goya's unflinching portrayal of social injustice foreshadowed the Realist movement later in the century.

Music clearly expressed the tendencies of Romanticism. Beethoven's work had grown more romantic and emotional as the 1700's gave way to the 1800's. Composers like Schubert, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Mahler extended this musical romanticism. In keeping with the nationalism of the movement, composers such as Chopin, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner adapted folk melodies in their compositions, and folk tales and legends in their operas. As the middle classes grew bigger and richer, music and opera were performed less in aristocratic courts, and more in public concert halls. In keeping with the romantic idealization of the heroic individual, performance artists such as Franz Liszt and Niccolo Paganini were the idolized celebrities of their day.

By the mid-1800's, writers and painters were rejecting romanticism in favor of realism, attempting to accurately portray society, including the cities, factories, and workers that the romantics had tried to forget. Writers such as Gustave Flaubert and Emile Zola in France, Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy in England, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy in Russia, and Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) in the United States all offered vivid, critical portraits of their times. Particularly noteworthy was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe. This novel about the injustices of slavery in the United States boosted the abolitionist movement there, and helped intensify the conflict between North and South that would culminate in civil war. Dramatists such as George Bernard Shaw and Anton Chekhov also embraced realism, as did painters such as Gustave Courbet and Honore Daumier.

In Paris in 1874, a group of like-minded artists got together and held an exhibition. One of the works, by Claude Monet, was called *Impression: Sunrise*, which inspired a hostile critic to dub the painters *Impressionists*. The Impressionists, inspired by realism and by the new technique of photography, tried to capture transient scenes; not as they are reconstructed in the mind, but as they actually appear to the eye. Instead of blending their paints continuously, they painted with one stroke of color at a time, and let the viewer's eye combine them. The result was a shimmering, evocative image that truly seemed to capture fleeting impressions. Though most

critics hated impressionism at first, it would become one of the most influential styles in recent history. The work of its practitioners, including Monet, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas, and Berthe Morisot, have become some of the most recognized paintings in the world. The impressionist style also spread beyond painting. Degas and Auguste Rodin produced sculpture with rough surfaces, creating an effect similar to the unblended paint of impressionist paintings. The impressionistic style even found its way into music, as in the evocative compositions of Claude Debussy.

In the last twenty years of the 1800's, impressionism gave way to a diverse set of styles known as *post-impressionism*. One post-impressionist, Georges Seurat, refined the impressionist technique into a style called *pointillism*, in which entire paintings were composed of tiny dots of solid color. Other post-impressionists, including Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh, made the impressionist style of discrete blocks of color far more solid, bold, and emotionally intense by using large swaths of vivid color. These painters not were concerned with faithfully representing an image of the world so much as with expressing intense based on their perceptions, as in the enormous, swirling stars of Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. This move away from pictorial accuracy set the stage for the abstract, modern art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## PHILOSOPHY: FRAGMENTATION AND EXISTENTIAL ANGST

By the 1800's, western philosophy, like western culture and ideology in general, had fragmented into several very different, often contradictory, streams. One common thread was that philosophers after Hegel generally abandoned the attempt to construct great, all-encompassing systems. In the time of Descartes and Leibniz, before science and philosophy were really considered separate fields, people optimistically tried to construct grand theories of the world—not just the physical world, but the metaphysical and moral worlds as well. As we have seen, this goal came to be seen as unrealistic, misguided, or at best, premature. Meanwhile, science split off from philosophy as it refined its methods, thus achieving spectacular results while limiting its scope. The physical sciences were the first to separate. Other sciences remained bound up with philosophy for a while longer. Bentham, Mill, Marx and Spencer, for example, all straddled philosophy, sociology, political science, and economics. By the late 1800's, all of these

fields had become more distinct from each other, and from philosophy, which was more and more defined by its focus on whatever questions could not be answered by science (at least not yet).

Of course there were many such questions, which is one reason philosophy divided into so many separate streams. We have already discussed some of these streams. There was the liberal stream, in which Mill and Bentham advanced the Enlightenment goal of human progress through a combination of freedom, private property, reason, and reform. This tradition was strongest in the English speaking world. There was also the radical stream of Marx and his brethren, who believed in revolution and communal property. As different as they were, both of these streams were consciously based on reason, in that they both tried to find rational, universal laws for ordering society. There was another stream, however, which followed the romantics in rejecting reason in favor of emotion. Philosophers like Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche all believed the task of philosophy was not to find objective truth, but to try to determine the proper emotional response to the human condition, which they considered uncertain, tragic, and even absurd.

Following the German idealists, Schopenhauer believed that the fundamental feature of reality is spiritual and emotional, not material. For Schopenhauer, this feature is what he called *will*—a constant, insatiable striving that pervades nature and human culture. Drawing on Buddhist thought, he claimed that if will is in fact insatiable, then it is fruitless to try to satisfy it. The best hope for human happiness, Schopenhauer thought, was abandoning senseless striving in favor of quiet appreciation of artistic beauty. Like Schopenhauer, the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard had a fundamentally pessimistic, angst-ridden outlook. Kierkegaard was concerned with being a good Christian in a fundamentally absurd world. True Christianity, he believed, had nothing to do with reason, and everything to do with a deeply emotional faith in God. It is the nature of faith that it can never be rationally justified. And for Kierkegaard, this makes it all the more meaningful.

The most influential philosopher in this general vein was Friedrich Nietzsche, a complex, provocative, and widely misunderstood thinker. Like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche believed that human responsibility consists in the correct emotional response to a more or less absurd universe. But Nietzsche was no Christian—he was an atheist who famously proclaimed that “God is dead”. Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche was preoccupied with will, and claimed that a “will to power” is a fundamental human drive. Unlike Schopenhauer, however, Nietzsche believed in embracing will,

and striving for power. Nietzsche believed that morality and religion were essentially human constructs, and he tried to understand morals by looking at their historical development. He believed that in ancient, warrior cultures, strength was defined as “good” and weakness was defined as “bad”. Nietzsche called this a “master morality”. He saw Christianity as a slave mentality, which had redefined strong as “bad” and weak as “good”, thereby encouraged conformity and meekness and discouraging creativity. Nietzsche’s ideal human was the “Superman”, who has transcended conventional morality, embracing strength and creativity.

It is easy to see why a crude reading of Nietzsche’s thought was embraced by the Nazis several decades later, and used as a justification for their ideology of power and aggression. But the Nazis misread Nietzsche. Nietzsche himself was a frail, sickly man, and what he admired was not physical power, but intellectual power, which he saw as a blend of creativity and self-control. The “superman” achieves great things by gaining mastery over his own primal urges, turning them to creative, not destructive, purposes. Nietzsche would very likely have been appalled by the crude, anti-intellectual thuggery of the Nazis. He was certainly appalled by anti-Semitism, as well as extreme nationalism. But Nietzsche lost his sanity in 1889, and died in 1900, probably as a result of terminal syphilis. His ideas were given a very ugly spin by his anti-Semitic sister, Elizabeth. In any case, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Schopenhauer had pushed philosophy in new directions. Their focus on the drama and tragedy of existence, and their provocative, ironic writing style—as literary as it is philosophical—would prove well suited to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **EUROPEAN POLITICS:**

### **THE BALANCE OF POWER AND THE CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES**

#### **FROM THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA TO THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1848**

After the defeat of Napoleon in 1814, leaders from across Europe assembled at the Congress of Vienna, with the goal of restoring order and stability after years of revolution and war. The proceedings were dominated by representatives from Britain, Prussia, Russia, and the Austrian Empire. The most influential personality was the Austrian foreign minister, Prince Klemens von Metternich. Metternich and many of the other powerful representatives had two

major goals. One was restoring the old social order of pre-French Revolution Europe, with traditional ruling families keeping a tight reign on the other classes and their dangerous ideas. To this end, ruling families were re-established in Spain, Sardinia, Portugal, and France, where Louis XVIII became king. The other goal was to maintain a balance of power among European states, to keep any state from starting another destructive war.

Ultimately, the Congress was more successful in the second goal than the first. While there were many wars between European states over the next century, none were as devastating as the Napoleonic wars had been. In order to prevent further aggression, France was given a relatively generous peace settlement, which restored its borders to those of 1790. But countries on France's borders were strengthened. Switzerland was recognized as an independent country, the Dutch and Austrian Netherlands were united, the German states were connected in an alliance called the German Confederation, and northern Italy was divided between the kingdom of Sardinia and the Austrian Empire. The great powers agreed to meet every few years in order to preserve the balance of power, a system that became known as the Concert of Europe.

Over the next decades, conservatives, led by Metternich, would do their best to restore the old aristocrat-dominated social order. But ideologies that opposed this order were still there, and would prove impossible to contain. In fact, new ideologies were multiplying. Liberalism, popular among the middle classes, still meant an emphasis on political and economic freedom, but it did not generally embrace universal suffrage, even for males, as more radical groups did. Radicalism was more common among workers and students, some of whom were drawn toward socialism. As the early 1800's progressed, middle-class liberals and the more radical workers grew apart, and a fear of socialism or expanded suffrage led some in the middle classes to side with conservative regimes. Meanwhile, nationalism was on the rise among middle class liberals and rural peasants. Many socialists rightly feared nationalism, because the workers of the world were less likely to unite when they identified more with their nations than with their class. Conservatives like Metternich also opposed nationalism, because many of them were the rulers of multi-ethnic empires such as the Austrian empire. In time, politicians, both conservative and liberal, would learn to appeal to nationalistic feelings in order to shape public opinion to their liking.

At the time of the Congress of Vienna, however, the conservative powers were trying to contain liberalism, democracy, socialism, and nationalism. They were successful for a while. In

the German Confederation, the Carlsbad Decrees suppressed dissent by restricting freedom of speech and press. When revolutionaries in Spain and the Kingdom of Two Sicilies (in southern Italy) forced their rulers to accept liberal constitutions, armies marched in to restore the status quo. But Metternich and his allies could not prevent liberalism in the new Latin American states, or prevent nationalistic Greeks from gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire. The new ideas kept boiling over into revolution.

The biggest revolutions began in France, and then spread across Europe. Louis XVIII had made concessions to liberals, even accepting a constitution. There was an elected legislature, but only the wealthiest Frenchmen were allowed to vote. Louis' successor, Charles X, was far more reactionary. When he tried to dissolve the legislature and impose strict curbs on individual rights in 1830, the people of Paris revolted. Charles fled, and his cousin, Louis Philippe, was installed as king of a constitutional monarchy. The right to vote was extended within the middle class. However, many were disappointed that France had not become a republic with universal male suffrage, instead of a constitutional monarchy. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, many workers turned toward socialism, and the middle classes and working classes grew apart. Meanwhile, the revolutionary spirit of 1830 spread beyond France, leading Metternich to remark that "When France sneezes, Europe catches cold". Nationalist and liberal revolutions sprang up in Italy, Poland, and Germany. They were suppressed, but nationalist Belgians in the Netherlands succeeded in setting up their own state.

In France, Louis Phillippe was unresponsive to demands for real reform. Poor harvests and economic troubles increased discontent in the 1840's. In 1848, the people of Paris revolted once again. Louis Philippe abdicated, and the revolutionaries announced the formation of a Second Republic (the First Republic had existed during the French Revolution). Socialists in the temporary government set up national workshops to employ workers. Taxes were raised to pay for the workshops, alienating the middle classes and many rural peasants. When a newly elected National Assembly closed the workshops, workers in Paris revolted, but this time, the revolution was put down by the army of the republic. The workers and the middle classes were more estranged than ever. Nevertheless, a constitution was drafted which gave the vote to all adult males. When elections were held, Louis Napoleon, the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, was elected. Like his uncle, Louis Napoleon was an effective ruler, but also an autocratic demagogue.

In 1851, he proclaimed himself Napoleon III, Emperor of the French. Recalling France's glory days under Napoleon I, the French people put nationalism before liberalism, and endorsed the transition from the Second Republic to the Second Empire.

In 1848, as in 1830, the fever of revolution spread beyond France. In the Austrian Empire, the people of Vienna demanded a constitution and an end to serfdom, and succeeded in having Metternich dismissed. In other parts of the empire, Hungarians, Czechs, and northern Italians were demanding independence. At first, the emperor promised reforms and withdrew troops from areas of revolt. Within a few months, however, Austrian armies had moved in and re-established control over the empire (with Russian aid in the case of Hungary). Revolutions swept through the many kingdoms of Italy, as people demanded constitutions and a unified nation. The pope did not support the cause of unity, however, and was forced into exile until he was re-installed by the armies of Louis Napoleon. Only Sardinia retained a liberal constitution. Demands for unity and liberal reform also failed in Germany. The king of Prussia, Frederick William IV, allowed the formation of a national assembly, but then called in troops to disband it. He then issued his own constitution, which allowed universal male suffrage and an elected legislature. Meanwhile, an assembly of representatives from smaller German states had drawn up a constitution for a unified Germany. But when they offered the crown to Frederick William, he refused to be coronated by commoners, and disbanded the assembly. At the time, the 1848 revolutions were a failure, although voting rights had been gained by all French and Prussian men. But the leaders of Europe had been put on notice. They could not hold back the tides of social reform and national unity forever.

## NATIONALISM AND REFORM

After the 1848 revolutions in Italy, the kingdom of Sardinia (which included the island of Sardinia as well as parts of northwest Italy) became a leader in the quest for Italian unity. Its king, Victor Emmanuel II, wanted to rule all of Italy, and he appointed a brilliant prime minister, Count Cavour, to help him realize this goal. Cavour modernized the Sardinian economy, and gained allies in France and England by joining them in the Crimean War (waged to keep Russia from expanding into the ailing Ottoman Empire, and thus becoming uncomfortably powerful). In

1858, with the support of Napoleon III, Cavour provoked a war with the Austrian Empire, which controlled the northeastern states of Lombardy and Venetia. Lombardy was taken, but then the French withdrew, leaving the Austrians in control of Venetia. Soon, however, several independent northern states voted to join with Sardinia. Then, in 1860, the charismatic republican nationalist Garibaldi took the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, which had been ruled by members of the French Bourbon family since the Congress of Vienna. When Garibaldi marched on the Papal States of central Italy, Cavour intercepted him and convinced him to join with Sardinia. In 1861, Victor Emmanuel was proclaimed king of a constitutional monarchy encompassing most of Italy. Venetia became part of Italy in 1866, and Rome in 1870. But national unity had not ended Italy's problems. The pope's refusal to support the new state put faithful Catholics in a moral bind. Many liberals had wanted a republic, yet few were allowed to vote. Nationalists considered border areas still controlled by France and Austria to be parts of Italy. The north began to industrialize, while the south remained poor, agricultural, and resentful of northern dominance.

As in Italy, unification in Germany was accomplished by a strong state with a cunning prime minister, who was unafraid to use war as a tool for accomplishing his ends. In the case of Germany, the strong state was Prussia, and the cunning prime minister Otto von Bismarck. Prussia was a well-organized state with a growing industrial economy. It had a constitution, and had made some liberal reforms, but it remained an authoritarian state which glorified its military. Otto von Bismarck was a conservative who believed in royal power, military might, and *realpolitik*—the use of any means available to accomplish one's political ends, whether legal or ethical. He illegally bypassed parliament to raise taxes and strengthen the army, then provoked a war with Austria, whose presence in the German Confederation stood in the way of German unity. Prussia's modern and formidable army easily defeated Austria, which was forced out of the German Confederation. Within a year, all of northern Germany had joined with Prussia in a North German Confederation.

The predominantly Catholic states of southern Germany were not eager to join the Protestant north. In order to rally them to his side, Bismarck used the time-honored method of starting a war with a common enemy—in this case, France. Bismarck stirred up a war by altering a telegram describing a meeting between a French ambassador and King William I of Prussia, so that it seemed as if the two had insulted each other. He released the telegram to the press, and

just as he planned, the people of both countries called for war. France declared war, but they were swiftly defeated. In 1871, at the Palace of Versailles, William I was named kaiser of a unified German Empire.

The new empire was called the Second Reich (the Holy Roman Empire had been the first). It had a constitution, and a two house parliament. The lower house was elected by universal male voting, but it had little power. In practice, the empire was ruled by Prussians, especially Kaiser William and Bismarck, whose title was now Chancellor. Bismarck ran a tight ship, and soon had the military, the legal system, and the economy of the empire unified and running smoothly. Always the pragmatist, Bismarck quickly learned which battles he could win, and which he could not. He had laws passed during the 1870's that antagonized the Catholic church, but when he realized that the Catholics were growing more determined in the face of opposition, he had them repealed. Many liberals, at first disappointed with the conservative Second Reich, prospered in the growing economy, and came to support Bismarck. The workers did not, and they lined up behind the new Social Democratic party, which mainly advocated a moderate, non-revolutionary brand of socialism. To Bismarck, however, socialism was an abomination, and he initiated anti-socialist laws which cracked down on socialist writings and meetings. As with the Catholics, however, the socialists simply grew more united. So Bismarck decided to beat them at their own game, by introducing social reforms. This helped pacify the working class, but the Social Democratic party continued to grow. In 1890, the new Kaiser, William II, decided to run his empire on his own, and dismissed Bismarck. Though William lacked Bismarck's skills, Germany continued to grow strong, as an industrial power, a military power, and increasingly, as an imperialist power.

In France, Napoleon III ruled as a dictator, suppressing speech and the press and employing a secret police force to watch for dissent. At the same time, he was successful in modernizing his country. He promoted private industry, but he also used public works programs to rejuvenate cities, provide employment, and build up infrastructure. The French economy grew during his reign, but Napoleon could not maintain his popularity. Many were unhappy with his authoritarian rule. When he began to ease it in the late 1860's, open dissent only made him less popular. What ruined him, however, was an increasingly disastrous foreign policy. He alienated Catholics with his initial support for Italian unity (which the pope opposed). Then he embarrassed

himself by invading Mexico and unsuccessfully trying to set up an empire ruled by his brother, Maximilian (who was executed by Mexican troops). Finally, he was drawn into the Franco-Prussian war by Bismarck, and then defeated and captured by the Prussians. The Second Empire ended, and the Third Republic was proclaimed.

The Third Republic was troubled from the start. The new national assembly was forced to sign an extremely harsh peace treaty which ceded the border provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to the German Empire, agreed to pay damages, and left German troops in France. These indignities, and the fact that the national assembly was dominated by monarchists, enraged liberals and radicals. They revolted and set up a governing body called the Paris Commune, but the Commune was brutally crushed by troops from the National Assembly. Over 20,000 people were killed in the fighting. France's many factions—monarchists, socialists, republicans, and Catholics, among others—were more divided than ever. However, the dominant monarchists were themselves divided over who would reign, which allowed liberals to adopt a constitution for a republic, with a president, a legislature, and male suffrage. But the new republic was unpopular with monarchists and Catholics (who rightly feared that liberals would separate church and state in France). It was also plagued by corruption and scandals. The most severe was the Dreyfus Affair. Albert Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer, was convicted of treason, sparking widespread anti-Semitism. When the truth came out that another officer, a Catholic monarchist, had been the actual traitor, the army refused to re-open the case. This polarized the country. Republicans and socialists made Dreyfus a symbol of repression and injustice, while Catholics, monarchists, and the army went on the defensive. Eventually, Dreyfus was pardoned. The republicans, having gained power in the Dreyfus affair, ended state sponsorship of the Catholic church, and introduced some minor social reforms.

Although both classical liberalism and the industrial revolution began in Britain, at the beginning of the 1800's Parliament was dominated by aristocrats with little regard for the working classes, and no inclination toward social reform. Both the conservative Tory party and the more liberal Whig party were dominated by aristocrats. Only the House of Commons elected its members, and only a small percentage of the population was able to vote. In addition, representation in Parliament had not adapted to fit the population. The newly populous industrial towns were hardly represented, while small rural areas were represented disproportionately. In

1815, Parliament passed the Corn Laws, which placed enormous tariffs on imported grain. This raised prices on British grain, benefitting aristocratic landowners, but no one else. Protests were loud, especially among the growing class of urban workers. When soldiers fired on a peaceful demonstration in Manchester, most members of parliament approved.

But the liberal middle class was growing richer and more powerful, while the working class was becoming more organized, and thus, more powerful. Many members of Parliament realized they faced a choice between reform and revolution. In 1832, the Reform Act was passed, which updated representation in the House of Commons, and lowered property restrictions so that most middle class men were given the vote. In the late 1830's, the Chartist Movement began. Hundreds of thousands of workers signed petitions demanding universal male suffrage. Their petitions were rejected, but their demands would eventually become law.

Queen Victoria took the throne in 1837, beginning what would become known as the Victorian Age, which would last until her death in 1901. This was the height of British domination of world affairs, but the Victorian Age began with widespread depression and poor harvests. The Corn Laws were finally repealed under popular pressure in 1846. Grain prices fell, and Britain became more committed than ever to free trade and economic liberalism. But the repeal created deep divisions in Parliament. Free-trade advocates left the Tory ranks to join the Whigs, who became known as Liberals. The Tories became known as Conservatives. For the next few decades, British politics focused more on foreign affairs than domestic reform. Then, beginning in the 1860's, reform increased again as the result of a rivalry between the Conservative Benjamin Disraeli, and the Liberal William Gladstone. The two men alternated as prime minister until the 1880's, competing for the support of the working classes. Gladstone introduced a bill in 1866 to extend the vote among urban workers. It failed, but Disraeli was able to pass a similar bill the next year, hoping to attract working class voters to the Conservative party. The number of eligible voters doubled, but they voted Liberal, and Gladstone became prime minister. Over the next few years, public education was made mandatory, a secret ballot was introduced, the vote was extended to all males, and the House of Commons gained power relative to the House of Lords. Social insurance laws were passed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1801, the Act of Union had joined Ireland and Great Britain, forming the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. This was intended to pacify turmoil with Ireland, by giving

the Irish representation in the British parliament. But what many Irish wanted was independence from the British, and the growth of nationalism only served to sharpen that desire. Long isolated at the edge of Europe, the Irish were a very different people than the English. To understand Ireland, we need to look back into Irish history. Like the Welsh and the Scots, the Irish were a Celtic people who had escaped most of the influence of the Romans, as well as the Germanic invaders after the fall of Rome. Since the days of St. Patrick, in the late 400's, the Irish have been Catholic (with a distinct Celtic flavor at first). Indeed, Celtic Catholic monasteries were the preservers of some classical writings during the dark ages. Many of these monasteries were destroyed by Vikings in the 800's and 900's, who eventually settled and assimilated with the Irish. Later, Normans gained control of Ireland, but they also became assimilated.

By the time of Henry VIII, England really controlled only a small region around Dublin, called The Pale (hence the term "beyond the Pale"). Henry re-established English control over Ireland, and tried to convert the Irish to Protestantism. His successors encouraged English Protestants to settle in Ireland by giving them Irish land. This eventually created a Protestant majority in Ulster (Northern Ireland). Catholics were harshly discriminated against, which resulted in periodic revolutions that were always put down by the English. Many Irish Catholics became poor tenant farmers renting land at high prices from Protestant landlords. During the late 1700's, they regained religious freedom and the ability to own land. After the Act of Union, they were allowed to participate in Parliament. But they still had to pay taxes to the Anglican church, and extortionist rents to their landlords, and many Irish still hated the English.

Then the potato crop failed in the late 1840's. Over a million Irish died in the famine, and many of the survivors were evicted by their landlords. A million more left the country, many for the United States. The Potato Famine was one reason for the repeal of the Corn Laws, but for the most part, the British government did nothing. Later, under Gladstone, Parliament ended the taxes to the Anglican church, and reformed rent and eviction laws. Still, a revolutionary nationalist movement began to grow, demanding *home rule*; a separate parliament and control over domestic affairs. Irish Protestants opposed home rule, because they would lose control to the Catholic majority. Home rule bills were defeated in the late 1800's, but in 1914, a bill passed which would give home rule to all of Ireland except Ulster. Then World War I broke out, preventing the bill from going into effect.

Austria-hungary

## RUSSIA

After Russia's pivotal role in the defeat of Napoleon I, Czar Alexander I was a major player at the Congress of Vienna. Russia was a powerful state by virtue of its sheer enormity, but it remained backward—harshly authoritarian and reliant on outdated agricultural methods. Serfdom, which had been outlawed in most of Europe, was still the foundation of the Russian economy. Alexander I had initiated some minor reforms early in his reign, but the Napoleonic wars turned him into a reactionary. Some army officers, however, returned from the west with a taste for liberal reform. Upon Alexander's death in 1825, they revolted, demanding a constitution. The Decembrist Revolt was crushed, and Alexander's successor, Nicolas I, was determined to prevent further challenges to his authority. Nicolas cracked down hard on dissent using the usual measures—censorship, a secret police, and exile. He also deployed Russian troops to help put down the revolutions in Poland and Hungary. Still, many Russians realized that Russia would be left behind by other countries if it did not modernize to some extent. Russia's defeat in the Crimean War showed that they were right.

Nicolas I died during the war, and Alexander II assumed power. He freed the serfs in 1861, but he gave them land that he had paid landowners very well for, and then required the serfs to make payments on it. This left them in debt, and still dissatisfied. A more successful reform was the introduction of local elected assemblies called zemstvos. Alexander also eased press censorship. This unleashed a tide of dissent, and various groups began to demand more reform. There were liberals demanding a constitution and a republican government, agrarian socialists who tried unsuccessfully to get peasants to revolt, and urban Marxists. The most radical group, the **anarchists**, believed that the people would cooperate and help each other if the government was removed entirely, and they began assassinating government officials. After several attempts, Alexander II was killed in 1881.

As is common, such extremism caused a backlash, and achieved the opposite of what it had set out to do. Alexander III, not surprisingly, hated revolutionaries and reformers, and did everything he could to suppress them. He also set out to crush nationalism among ethnic minorities by trying to force them to adopt the Russian language and Orthodox religion. Jews

were hit hardest; often beaten and killed in violent raids called *pogroms*. Many left Russia for other countries, especially the United States. When Nicolas II came to the throne in 1894, discontent was growing faster than it could be repressed, due to poor harvests and the turmoil of Russia's growing industrial economy. In 1904, Russia went to war with Japan, a rising industrial and imperialist power, over control of Manchuria. The war was going badly, and becoming unpopular. In 1905, Nicolas ordered his soldiers to fire on a peaceful demonstration of workers. Around 1000 people died on what became known as Bloody Sunday. The dam burst, and riots, looting, and strikes broke out across the country. After Russia was defeated by Japan, the turmoil increased. Alexander agreed to establish an elected assembly, called the Duma. This helped end the uprising, but Alexander never ceded any real power to the Duma. He did appoint a chief minister, Peter Stolypin, who began to introduce reforms. But Stolypin was assassinated in 1911, and repression increased again. The great majority of Russians were very unhappy.

## **THE PEAK OF WESTERN IMPERIALISM**

### **NATION BUILDING IN FORMER COLONIES**

#### **THE USA: THE GROWTH OF A NEW WORLD POWER**

When the United States of America adopted its constitution and elected George Washington as its first president in the 1780's, the new country's borders extended from the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi River. At the time, however, these borders were strictly theoretical. They were drawn by agreement between white Americans and Europeans, and ignored the Native Americans who had been living in that area for millennia. Most Americans still lived east of the Appalachians, except for a few who had spilled over into Kentucky and Tennessee. But as pioneers continued to expand westward, it became clear that they were going to occupy all of US territory. When the third president, Thomas Jefferson, negotiated the Louisiana Purchase with France (helping Napoleon finance his wars), US territory was extended to the Rocky Mountains. As the population of the west grew, territories gradually became states.

In the east, meanwhile, the north would grow more urbanized and industrial, with an

economy based on wage labor, while the south would remain rural and agricultural, with an economy based ever more firmly on slave labor. As the new country continued to grow, both in area and in economic and military power, two related questions dominated American politics: Should the new states, and the country at large, continue the institution of slavery? How powerful should the federal government be relative to the states, and to their citizens?

The power of the federal government over states began to expand immediately. Under Chief Justice John Marshall, the Supreme Court established its power to decide whether newly passed laws were constitutional. It also expanded the power of the federal government, by ruling that federal laws overruled state laws in case of conflict, and that the federal government had the right to regulate interstate commerce. Over the years, the federal government would invoke its interstate commerce power to intervene more deeply in state politics. In the same period, citizen participation in government expanded, and most white males had the right to vote by the 1850's. The War of 1812, between Britain and the United States, had no clear winner, but it greatly increased national pride and unity among Americans. The United States also grew more confident in world affairs. After the Latin American revolutions to the south, President James Monroe issued the Monroe Doctrine, which declared that the United States would use its military to prevent interference by overseas countries in New World affairs.

The presidency of Andrew Jackson (1829-37) exemplified the changing character of the nation. A tough frontiersman who had won fame as a general in the War of 1812, and in battles with Native Americans, Jackson was the first president who was not from a wealthy eastern family. Jackson's presidency represented an increased participation in government by common people such as westerners and urban workers, with whom he was wildly popular. On the other hand, Jackson's presidency saw the passage of the Indian Removal Act, which forcibly transplanted most Native Americans in the southeast to reservations west of the Mississippi river. Thousands died along the way, on the route that became known as the Trail of Tears.

During the 1840's, many Americans began talking about "manifest destiny", an imagined God-given right to expand American territory to the Pacific Ocean. By this time, many Americans had settled in Spanish and British territories in the west. In 1846, Britain agreed to turn over its territories below the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, thus establishing the western border between Canada and the United States. American settlers in Texas revolted against Mexico in 1835-36 to

form the Republic of Texas, which joined the United States in 1845. In the disputed Rio Grande area, an army under James Polk arrived and provoked a war with Mexico. Mexico was swiftly defeated, and in 1848, the United States annexed a vast area, from Texas to the California coast. That same year, the discovery of gold in California drew tens of thousands of prospectors, many of whom settled (usually after finding new lines of work).

All this new territory would one day be divided into states, so the dispute between pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions rose again. Many whites in the north (and some in the south) were deeply outraged by slavery, but there were also less lofty issues in the debate. The industrializing north wanted the protection of high import tariffs, but the south did not want to pay high prices on imports. Both sides wanted the new states to adopt their way of life, so that they would vote with them in congress. The conflict grew more polarized through the 1850's. In 1860, Abraham Lincoln, an opponent of extending slavery (but not, at the time, an abolitionist) was elected president. Southern states began to secede from the union, and banded together as the Confederate States of America. When southern troops attacked Fort Sumter, in South Carolina, the American Civil War began. Though the south had brilliant generals, the more populous, industrialized north prevailed. The union stayed together, and slavery was abolished. But the war had an enormous cost. More than half a million people were killed—the highest American casualties in any war. The south was left devastated and bitter, and many southerners, both black and white, were impoverished. Federal troops occupied the south for 12 years after the war, in an effort to reconstruct the southern economy and insure equal rights for blacks. The south gradually began to rebuild, with a more diversified, slowly industrializing economy. As soon as the troops left, however, laws were passed which subjected blacks to segregation and systematic discrimination. These laws would remain in place for nearly a hundred years.

After the civil war, the United States continued its explosive growth. This was true in several senses. First, the population continued to expand, due to natural increase as well as immigration. In the mid-1800's, immigrants streamed in from Ireland (to escape the potato famine), Germany, and then Scandinavia. Chinese people came to the west coast with the gold rush, and many stayed to work on railroads. From the 1880's to the 1920's, northwest European immigrants were joined by a huge wave of southern and eastern European immigrants. Many native born Americans (mostly white, Protestant northwest Europeans) were alarmed by the new

immigrants—especially Catholics, Jews, and Asians, and especially when the economy was shaky. Some groups were excluded from immigration in the 1880's, including Chinese. Still, over 20 million people arrived between the 1880's and the 1920's, when immigration was sharply restricted.

After the Homestead Act of 1862 offered free land, the great plains of the west began to fill with settlers, many of them Germans and Scandinavians. Travel in the west became faster with the spread of railroads, and the first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869. Fur trappers in the Rocky Mountains were followed by miners, and then settlers. Vast bison herds were practically exterminated, and replaced with cattle. These were driven to towns like Abilene and Dodge City, and put on trains to meat packing plants in Chicago. The cowboys who drove them, often Mexican or black, would be transformed into an American archetype, though few of them bore any resemblance to John Wayne. Some of the Native Americans of the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains fiercely resisted encroachment on their land, but they were overwhelmed and confined to reservations in the 1870's and 1880's. The massacre of over 200 men, women, and children at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1890 marked the end of native resistance. That same year, the United States government declared that the frontier was no more.

The US economy entered a period of turbulent, unregulated growth after the civil war. Improved farming methods on the Great Plains made the US one of the largest grain producers, exporting enough at times to depress prices around the world. Vast quantities of raw materials from across the country were converted into finished products as industrialization surged forward. Capitalism was almost entirely unregulated, and whole industries began to come under the control of single corporations, or less formal *trusts*. A few capitalists grew fabulously wealthy, and engaged in gaudy displays of conspicuous consumption. As in Europe, most workers faced grim conditions in the factories and in the exploding cities. The supply of labor was vast and wages were low, while booms and busts in the economy made employment unpredictable. Attempts to organize labor were slow, and often accompanied by violence between workers and police, or hired union-busters. The American Federation of Labor, or AFL, founded in 1881, was the first large and lasting labor organization in the US. The period from the 1870's to the 1890's was a time of ruthless industrial competition, political corruption, unregulated exploitation of people and nature, and widespread suffering among many disadvantaged groups; combined with rapid

economic growth and technical advance, flashy individualism, and optimism in the march of progress. The writer Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) aptly dubbed it the Gilded Age.

The excesses of the Gilded Age were contained somewhat between 1890 and 1920, which has become known as the Progressive Era. The passage of the Sherman Antitrust Act led to the breakup of many monopolies, especially under presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson. Cities were cleaned up, parks were built, and corrupt political machines were broken up. Investigative reporters investigated conditions in slums and factories, and their reports led to reforms, as when Upton Sinclair's book *The Jungle* resulted in better sanitation laws for the food industry. Free public education became widespread. Wyoming was the first state to allow women to vote, in 1869. Most states had followed suit by the time of World War I, and the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment made female suffrage a constitutional right in 1920.

Labor unions, on the other hand, suffered a series of setbacks during the Progressive Era. The Sherman Antitrust act was frequently used against labor unions at first. Because many workers were immigrants, and a few workers were socialists and anarchists (one of whom assassinated president William McKinley) anti-labor feelings became tied to anti-immigrant feelings. As in Europe, racial prejudice was rampant. Even the progressive president Woodrow Wilson was influenced by white supremacist "theories". Discrimination against African Americans continued, and segregationist "Jim Crow" laws were upheld by the supreme court. In order to fight such practices, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded in 1910.

By the turn of the century, the United States had become an economic powerhouse. Up to that time, it had mostly tried to stay out of international affairs. But with the booming industrial economy, the US needed imported raw materials, as well as new markets for all the goods they were producing. Meanwhile, the military had been quietly building up, and the US navy was world class. Thus far, US imperialism had mostly been concentrated inside North America, as it expanded to the Pacific. Now the young country was ready for a piece of the global action. A revolution in Cuba against Spain brought the US (rather eagerly) into a war with Spain in 1898. Winning easily, it acquired Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and a great deal of influence over Cuba. Hawaii was annexed the same year. The United States asserted itself against other great powers by securing the open door policy in China, and by reminding them not

to intervene in Latin American affairs. That right, Theodore Roosevelt asserted, would be reserved for the United States.

## LATIN AMERICA

In Latin America, many of the new states that became independent in the early 1800's adopted constitutions based on that of the United States. Unfortunately, however, Latin America had far more rigid social stratification than the United States, and far less experience in representative government. Creoles still held most political power, and, along with the Catholic church, most of the land. Various factions that had cooperated in overthrowing colonial governments soon began to fight amongst themselves. In many new countries, military dictators called *caudillos* seized power. Many nations were hampered by their undifferentiated, raw materials economies, which subjected them to violent economic fluctuations depending on prices in Europe. At the same time, powerful European and US business interests made heavy investments and loans in Latin America. This resulted in economic control by the North, a situation known as *economic imperialism*. Oftentimes, corrupt dictators would give foreign powers generous economic concessions, or take out loans that they did not intend to repay. This would lead to frequent conflicts with the northern nations. Nevertheless, the economies of many Latin American nations, especially Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Costa Rica, did begin to grow and diversify, and their governments grew more stable during the 1800's. Millions of European immigrants streamed into Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, and many Chinese and Japanese came to northern South America.

Soon after independence, many Latin American countries began fragmenting into smaller countries and fighting border wars. The republic of Gran Colombia broke up into Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile emerged as separate countries in the south. A war between Argentina and Brazil over disputed territory along the Atlantic Coast resulted in the emergence of Uruguay as a separate country between the two. After joining briefly with Mexico in 1822-23, several Central American states formed the United Provinces of Central America, but this confederation broke up by the late 1830's. On the island of Hispaniola, where Latin American independence began, the Dominican Republic split off from

Haiti in 1844. The rest of the Caribbean Islands remained under European control, as did British, Dutch, and French Guiana in South America, and British Honduras in Central America.

At first, Latin Americans welcomed the Monroe Doctrine, because it helped keep Europe out of Latin American affairs (militarily, if not economically). After a while, though, they came to realize that the doctrine might mean that the US was reserving intervention for itself. After the United States annexed half of Mexico in the mid-1800's, Latin America began to regard them with real suspicion. But the US concentrated on internal matters for the next half century. This began to change with the Spanish-American war, which left the US with Puerto Rico as a territory and Cuba as a protectorate. In 1902-1903, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy blockaded Venezuela, in order to protect business interests there. President Roosevelt in the United States forced these countries to back off, and submit the conflict to arbitration. Then he announced the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, which declared that the United States would act as an “international police power” to prevent “chronic wrongdoing” on the part of Latin American governments. The United States has intervened in Latin American affairs ever since, and not always when there was clear wrongdoing. The first major intervention came in 1903, the year before the Roosevelt Corollary. The US wanted to build a canal through the Isthmus of Panama, then a part of Colombia. When Colombia held out for more lease money for than the US wanted to pay, the US encouraged the people of Panama to rebel. The new country promptly leased the land. The canal, completed in 1914, was a great boon to the United States, both strategically and economically. Many other countries, including Panama, benefitted from it as well, at least economically. To many Latin Americans, however, the canal was a symbol of growing US imperialism.

## CANADA

With the defeat of France in the Seven Years War (called the French and Indian War in North America) Britain acquired New France in 1763, and about 60,000 French colonists suddenly found themselves under British rule. In 1774, the Quebec Act was passed, upholding traditional French laws and allowing them to continue to practice Catholicism. The number of British colonists soon increased, especially after loyalists moved in from the newly independent

United States. In an attempt to take account of the very different traditions of the French and British, Canada was divided into separate colonies—Upper Canada (now Ontario), Lower Canada (now Quebec), and the Maritime provinces of the east coast (which now consist of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador). Lower Canada would remain predominantly French-speaking, while other regions would remain predominantly English speaking.

Many Canadians were discontent with British rule, uprisings broke out in the 1830's. In response, Upper and Lower Canada were united in 1840 and given control of domestic affairs in 1849. Over the next decades, a growing railroad system, as well as fear of invasion by the United States, lead to a increasing sense of national unity. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were added in 1867, creating the Dominion of Canada, with a parliamentary government modeled on Britain's. Soon Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, Prince Edward Island, and the Pacific province of British Columbia joined the union. The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1885. By this time millions of immigrants were streaming into Canada, many of them settling in the fertile prairies of the west. The provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were formed in 1905. The Yukon Territory was separated from the Northwest Territories in 1898, during the Klondike gold rush. Native peoples and *métis* (of mixed European and native ancestry) resisted expansion, but they were soon overrun. Some British control continued until 1931, when Canada, as well as several other former colonies, were made equal members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The easternmost province of Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada in 1949. With its enormous natural resources and stable government, Canada emerged as one of the world's most prosperous and peaceful countries, though relations between French and English speakers have remained a potentially divisive issue.

## AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

The first Europeans to see Australia were Dutch explorers in the early 1600's, but their reports of a harsh, dry land did not inspire anyone to lay claim to it. In 1770, James Cook and his crew explored the more hospitable east coast and claimed it for England. Around 750,000 Aborigines were already there, making a living by hunting, gathering, and fishing, but they were

not consulted. In the late 1700's, crime had become rampant in British cities. Convicts had been transported to the American colonies, but the American revolution ended this practice, so the British authorities decided to send convicts to Australia. In 1788, several hundred convicts, a couple hundred soldiers to guard them, and a handful of officials landed and founded a colony on the site that would become Sydney. They were expected to farm the land to support themselves, but since most of the convicts were urbanites with no knowledge of farming, they nearly starved. More penal colonies were soon established. Free settlers also began to arrive by the 1790's.

In the 1820's, people discovered that parts of Australia were ideal for raising sheep. This spurred the economy and made Australia valuable to the British as more than a penal colony. Many sheep farmers began to illegally occupy government land. Known as squatters, some of them would eventually gain ownership of huge tracts of land. Explorers began to venture into the Australian interior in the 1840's, where several died in the vast deserts. Gold was discovered in the southeastern colonies of New South Wales and Victoria in the 1850's, and hopeful prospectors streamed into Australia, bringing the population from 400,000 to 1,100,000 in just 10 years. European encounters with the Aborigines were tragic. In some places, such as Tasmania, they were systematically slaughtered. Today the Aborigine population is only a third of what it was in 1788.

The importation of convicts was gradually ended between 1844 and 1868. By this time, free settlers had demanded self-government of their colonies, which was granted for most colonies in the 1850's. By the late 1800's, Australians had come to think of themselves as a distinct people. In 1901, the six colonies were joined to form the Commonwealth of Australia. The new government was a combination of American and British models—a decentralized federation of states, with a parliament and a prime minister. As in Canada, the British monarch is the nominal head of state, but has no real power. In 1901, Australia introduced its “white Australia policy”, which restricted immigration of Asians. These policies were not fully ended until the 1970's. Aborigines have also suffered systematic discrimination, and were not given the vote until 1991. On the other hand, Australia was a pioneer in democratic voting. The secret ballot was first used there, and women were given the vote in 1902. Only New Zealand allowed female suffrage sooner, in 1893.

New Zealand's early history mirrored Australia's in many ways, but New Zealand was a

very different place before European colonization. New Zealand is cooler, wetter, and more mountainous than Australia. It supported a sizable population of Maoris, especially on the warmer North Island. The Maoris were a Polynesian people with a more complex social structure than the Australian Aborigines. They also had a long tradition of inter-tribal warfare, and put up a much fiercer fight against European intruders. European settlement began when a mix of escaped convicts from Australia, whalers and sealers, traders, and missionaries began to visit New Zealand in the late 1700's, and a few began to stay. As the European population grew, conditions grew more chaotic, as various groups of settlers and Maori fought amongst themselves. The British declared New Zealand a separate colony in 1839, and domestic self-government was granted in the 1850's.

The new governor general, William Hobson, soon negotiated The Treaty of Waitangi with a newly formed association of Maori chiefs. The treaty signed over some Maori self-government and land to the British, in return for a promise of protection. How much control they had ceded, and how much protection they would get in return, was interpreted very differently by each group. As in Australia, sheep farming for wool export was soon introduced, and the discovery of gold led to an influx of prospectors, most of whom became settlers. Shady land purchases from the Maori led to fierce battles between Maori and Europeans in the 1860's. The Maori eventually lost, and were pushed into marginal lands. By the late 1800's, the introduction of refrigerated ships allowed New Zealand to expand its economy by exporting meat and dairy products. A tradition of progressive social reform, including early female suffrage, began in the 1890's. New Zealanders were beginning to develop a sense of nationhood, and declined to join the Australian Commonwealth in 1901. The country became a fully independent member of the British Commonwealth in 1947.

## **WESTERN POWER IN ASIA**

### **BRITISH INDIA**

After the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, the British government took control of India, establishing a regime that came to be called the British *Raj* (rule). A viceroy, appointed by the

British monarch, was put in charge. The British ruled about 2/3 of India directly, while the remaining regions were nominally headed by local princes, who ruled under the watchful eyes of British administrators called *residents*. The British generally saw themselves as bestowing the benefits of an advanced culture on an inferior people (or a mosaic of peoples, in this case), and, far more than the East India Company, they set about remodeling India to their liking. Some native Indians, mostly from the upper classes, were given a western-style, English-language education. This established a Indian professional class, which, though Anglicized, were still subject to systematic discrimination.

New railways, roads, canals, and telegraph lines, as well as the use of English as a lingua franca, helped improve transportation and communications within India. The Suez Canal in Egypt, opened in 1879, strengthened trade between Britain and India. However, the Indian economy did not entirely benefit from British rule. As a colony, India was regarded as a source of raw materials and a market for goods manufactured in Britain. Consequently, little was done to foster industrialization. The British did build hospitals and trained medical professionals, which lowered death rates and contributed to a rising population. However, they forced many farmers to switch from growing food crops to export crops, especially cotton. The population expanded faster than the food supply, leading to occasional famines, which claimed millions of Indian lives.

British rule, in short, did benefit India in some ways, but it was mostly geared toward British—not Indian—interests, despite paternalistic claims to the contrary. Indian resentment toward British rule continued, and members of the British-educated professional classes began to take the liberal ideas they had learned in school to heart. If the British had rights to things like equality before the law and national self-determination, they wondered, why shouldn't they? In 1885, a group of these professionals formed the Indian National Congress to campaign for liberal reform and greater equality between Indians and the British. By the turn of the century, the Congress had become more nationalistic, and was campaigning for independence from British rule.

## CHINA

During the 1700's, there was very little that the Chinese wanted from European merchants

in exchange for their silk, tea, and porcelain, which were eagerly sought after in Europe. In the early 1800's, however, the British discovered something many Chinese did want—opium, which could be grown in British India. Soon opium use began to disrupt the Chinese population, while the flow of silver out of China disrupted the economy. In 1839, the Chinese government cracked down on the opium trade, and destroyed a large shipment at Guangzhou. The Chinese were deeply shocked when the British responded with military force that they could not meet, in a conflict known as the Opium War. In the Treaty of Nanking, the British forced China to accept diplomats, open ports and expand trade, let British subjects in China be tried according to British laws, and to let Britain dictate Chinese tariffs. They also forced China to allow the opium trade, and annexed Hong Kong. This treaty was the first of several “unequal treaties” that China had to sign; not just with Britain, but with several western powers. The Chinese government, so confident just years before, was humiliated and weakened.

Manchu rule began to decline in the face of overwhelming western power, as well as revolts among the Chinese people, who had decided that their rulers (who were foreigners, after all) had lost the Mandate of Heaven. The most serious uprising was the Taiping Rebellion, which began in 1850. The rebels were peasants who had combined elements of Christianity and ancient Chinese thought into a populist ideology demanding the redistribution of land and decreased taxes. The Taiping rebels took control of central China and almost succeeded in toppling the Manchu government, but they were finally defeated after 14 years. By the end of the rebellion, the Manchu dynasty had weakened further, and had been forced to grant further concessions to imperialist powers.

The imperialist powers were not all westerners, however. In the late 1800's, Japan began to increase its influence in Korea, a Chinese tributary. In the resulting war between China and Japan, China was badly beaten, and forced to give Japan the island of Taiwan. Crippled, China had to allow Russia, Japan, France, Germany, and Britain to carve it up into *spheres of influence*; regions where an imperial power had special rights to trade and investment. The United States, fearing that it would lose trade with China, persuaded the other imperial powers to agree to an Open Door Policy, which allowed all nations free trade with China.

Chinese power had fallen very far in a very short time, and the Chinese people were appalled. Some called for modernization and reforms, but corrupt Manchu officials kept this

effort from going very far. Many wanted to eject all foreigners, who they saw as the source of all of China's problems. In 1900, a secret society called Fists of Righteous Harmony, or "Boxers" by Europeans, attacked and killed many foreigners and Chinese Christians. They were moving on foreign diplomats in Peking when an international force defeated them, and forced further concessions on China. In 1911, a revolutionary movement headed by Sun Yat-sen, a western-educated physician, gained control of most of southern and central China. In the north, a general named Yuan Shikai persuaded the royal family that their dynasty was over. The last emperor of China, an 6 year old boy named Pu Yi, stepped down.

Though Sun Yat-sen had been elected president of the new Chinese Republic, he stepped aside and allowed Yuan Shikai to assume power. Yuan soon began ruling as a dictator, however, and Sun Yat-Sen and other revolutionaries organized the Kuomintang, or Nationalist, Party, and revolted. They were unsuccessful, and had to flee to Japan. When Yuan died in 1916, China entered one of its periods of chaos. Yuan's successors were still in office in Beijing, but they held little power. Sun Yat-sen set up a rival government in the south. Most of the country however, was engulfed in a civil war between competing warlords.

## JAPAN'S QUICK STUDY

As the Tokugawa regime grew corrupt on the reclusive island of Japan, an opposition movement arose which claimed that the shoguns had stolen power from the rightful ruler of Japan—the emperor. This led to a resurgence of Shintoism, with a new emphasis on imperial divinity. Japanese isolation abruptly ended in the 1850's, when the American commodore Matthew Perry arrived with warships and demanded that Japan open its ports. Seeing that they could not win a war with the US, the Japanese agreed. In the next few years, the Shoguns were compelled to sign "unequal treaties" that greatly favored the United States and other foreign powers. This inflamed the opposition. In 1867, they forced the resignation of the last Tokugawa shogun. The 15 year-old emperor was restored as the head of state, and proclaimed a new Meiji (Enlightened Rule) era. The name of the era stuck, but in fact, the real power resided with the group who had installed the emperor. The revolutionaries realized that they could not beat the western powers, at least not without first joining them.

During the Meiji Era, Japan embraced the technology and industrialism, the more flexible social structures, and even the growing imperialism of the west, and they did so with great success. Feudalism and official social classes were abolished, land was redistributed, and many samurai took jobs in the armed forces or in business. Europeans were brought in as advisors, and Japanese were sent abroad to study western ways. The government poured money into industrial development, and millions of Japanese moved to cities to work in factories. Before long, they decided to privatize industry to some extent, and sold entire industries to private interests; often wealthy families. The resulting conglomerates, called *zaibatsu*, combined profit-seeking efficiency and close cooperation with the government, resulting in enormous increases in productivity. After a review of European constitutions, a constitution based heavily on that of the German empire was introduced in 1889. A two house *Diet* (parliament) was established, as well as a system of courts. The constitution left most power in the hands of the emperor, however, which in practice meant power remained in the hands of his advisors, the architects of the Meiji transformation.

The Japanese knew that in order to compete with the western powers, they needed not just industrial productivity, but military might as well. Universal military service for males was introduced in 1872, and the armed forces were modernized with the aid of western advisors. A large portion of industry was devoted to building ships, munitions, and other tools of war. This was simply an expansion of a long Japanese tradition of militarism. As an island, Japan also had a long tradition of nationalist pride, combined with a deficit of natural resources. It was only a matter of time before Japan jumped into the imperialist game. As we have seen, they defeated China, acquiring Taiwan and trading privileges on the mainland. By the turn of the century, they were dealing with western powers on equal terms, and the concessions and unequal treaties were a thing of the past. Japanese power was proven in 1905, when they defeated Russia in a war over Manchuria. Gaining territory on the mainland, they soon took control of Korea and parts of Manchuria. At a time when most of the world was being taken over by western powers, Japan had not just retained its independence, but had become a power in its own right. Other eastern peoples looked toward Japan with a mix of admiration and concern.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

The term “Southeast Asia” is nothing more than a convenient grouping of very different areas. The region is one of the most diverse in the world, and has never been a coherent cultural or political entity. Throughout history, other civilizations have influenced, and even ruled, parts of Southeast Asia, but none has ever ruled the entire region at once. Indian influence initially dominated on the mainland, which is mostly Theravada Buddhist, except in Vietnam, which has been more influenced by Chinese culture, including Confucianism, Taoism, and Mahayana Buddhism (which came from India by way of China). Many in the islands to the south became Muslim during the 1400's, except in remote regions like New Guinea and central Borneo.

European influence began in the 1500's, and peaked, as in many other regions, in the late 1800's. Europeans set up spice trading posts early on, but did not take over whole regions (except for the Phillipines, which were conquered by Spain in the 1570's, and became predominantly Catholic). The Dutch East India company controlled much of what is now Indonesia by the late 1700's, but it went bankrupt in 1798, whereupon the Dutch government took control of what became known as the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch forced local farmers to grow export crops such as sugar, coffee, and indigo, and consequently had to put down periodic rebellions. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a potent Indonesian national independence movement had formed. To the north, parts of what is now Malaysia had been dominated by the Islamic Melaka trading state in the 1400's, by the Portuguese from the early 1500's to the mid-1600's, and then by the Dutch until the early 1800's. By the late 1800's, the British controlled what is now Malaysia, as well as the island of Singapore. Singapore and peninsular Malaysia were called the Straits Colonies, and directly governed by Britain. In northern Borneo, the present day Malaysian state of Sarawak came under the control of a British adventurer named James Brooke, whose descendants—the “white rajahs”—would rule Sarawak until the 1940's. Present day Sabah, also in northern Borneo, was controlled by the British North Borneo Company. In 1884, Germany and Britain split the part of New Guinea that is now the independent nation of Papua New Guinea. The western half of New Guinea remained Dutch, and is now part of Indonesia.

Europeans were also tightening their grip on the mainland. Britain had added Burma (Myanmar) to its Indian empire during the 1800's. By the late 1800's, France had taken control of what is now Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, forming a colony called French Indochina.. In between British Burma and French Indochina was Siam (now Thailand). Siam was able to

maintain its independence by modernizing and by playing the French and English against each other, though they were forced to grant extraterritoriality to Western powers.

## **THE FRAGMENTING OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

Throughout the 1800's, the Ottoman Empire continued to crumble. Provincial governors were growing ever more independent, while European countries were growing stronger. Egypt rebelled and became basically independent under Muhammad Ali in the early 1800's, before Britain gained control in 1882. Algeria was invaded by the French in 1830, as was Tunisia in 1881. In Europe, Greece gained independence in 1829, and Serbia became autonomous in 1830. Russia continued conquering Ottoman territory, but was prevented from toppling the empire by other European countries, who wanted to preserve the balance of power. Still, Russia aided revolts by other Slavic peoples in the Balkans, and took Bulgaria in 1877. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Bulgaria was given back to the Ottomans (with parts retaining self-government). However, the same conference resulted in the full independence of Montenegro, Serbia, and Romania; and British control of Cyprus. Europeans were referring to the Ottoman Empire as “the sick man of Europe”, and wondering who would get what when the sick man finally died.

Of course, the Ottomans were trying their best to keep this from happening. Sultan Mahmud II embarked on a series of reforms in the early 1800's. He disbanded the Janissary Corps, and replaced it with a European style army. He also opened European style schools, conducted in French, for training professionals such as doctors, bureaucrats, and army officers. These “French knowers” became a powerful force in Ottoman politics, and many strove to update Ottoman traditions with European style modernization and reform. In 1876 they deposed the sultan and introduced a constitution. The new government was to be a constitutional monarchy, with an elected assembly and provisions for freedom of speech and equal rights. But the new sultan, Abdul-Hamid II, soon took control as an autocrat. Abdul-Hamid continued some reforms, especially those that strengthened the military or central government, but he also cracked down on dissent, relying on surveillance, fear, and, in the case of the Armenians, attempted genocide—killing hundreds of thousands. In 1908-1909, a reformist group called the Young Turks deposed Abdul-Hamid and installed his brother as the nominal head of a constitutional monarchy.

Under the Young Turks, efforts continued to stop the decay of the empire. But European countries were hungry for Ottoman territory. The Italians took the last of their North African territories in 1912, naming it Libya. Nationalist movements also continued to grow. This was especially true in the Balkans, and by the outbreak of World War I, Ottoman territory in Europe had been reduced to a small area around Istanbul.

## **TURMOIL IN AFRICA**

### **INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS**

The 1800's were a tumultuous time in Africa. The leaders of most of the Sahel states were not traditionally very observant Muslims, and most of the population was not Muslim at all. But a series of jihads ("holy" wars) swept eastward from the western Sahel in the late 1700's and early 1800's. In 1804, the Muslim Fulani people overthrew the leaders of the Hausa states, and began to build a large empire, the Sokoto Caliphate. To the south, great changes came as the Atlantic slave trade gradually wound down. Some regions were relieved from constant slave raids, while the states which had prospered from the trade were thrown into disarray. New exports, such as palm oil, cotton, and gum arabic, came to replace slaves. Many former slaves settled in Sierra Leone and Liberia, both established as havens for freed blacks, many from the United States. After Britain outlawed the slave trade, the British navy began to intercept slave ships. This drove up the price of slaves from West Africa, which intensified slavery in East Africa (which had long exported slaves to Muslim states). The trade in slaves, as well as gold and ivory, enriched the Omani Arabs of Zanzibar, as well as the rulers of many newly-formed inland states.

In southern Africa, a period called the Mfecane (scattering) of herding peoples was beginning. Competition for trade and series of droughts had sparked power struggles among competing rulers, who tried to consolidate their power by seizing cattle from, and waging war on, other peoples. The most successful was Shaka, of the Zulu people. Shaka created a formidable army by introducing short stabbing spears and large shields, promotion based on merit, and intense drilling. Seizing land and cattle, the Zulu army began creating an empire in what is now northeastern South Africa. This expansion sent refugees streaming in all directions, many of

whom created smaller kingdoms such as Basotho and Swaziland.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

In the early 1800's, disease and strong African kingdoms kept most Europeans confined to the coasts. The British, French, and Spanish held small claims along west African coasts, and the Portuguese controlled strips of coastline in present day Angola and Mozambique. The first large group of people of European descent to venture far into the interior were the Boers, in what is now South Africa. The Dutch Cape Colony had been acquired by Britain in 1814, and British settlers began arriving soon afterward. English was made the official language, and slavery was abolished in 1833. These measures outraged the Boers, many of whom considered it their birthright to keep slaves. To get away from British rule, several thousand Boers headed north in covered wagons, in a migration called the Great Trek. This brought them in contact, and conflict, with the fearsome Zulu armies. The two peoples fought off and on for decades, until the Zulu were finally defeated in the late 1800's, with the help of the British (against whom the Zulu won major battles).

Soon after their arrival in the north, the Boers established two states: the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The British recognized the independence of the Boer states in the 1850's, but the discovery of diamonds (1867) and gold (in 1886, where Johannesburg now stands) increased British interest in Boer lands. The Boers defeated the British in the first Boer War (1880-81), but the British defeated the Boers in the Second Boer War (1899-1902), and annexed the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In 1910, these regions became part of the new Union of South Africa, a self-governing country that became a fully independent member of the British Commonwealth in 1931. The new constitution gave whites power over blacks and "coloureds" (people of mixed ancestry) and prejudice, discrimination, and segregation increasingly became matters of national policy.

## CARVING UP A CONTINENT

In the early 1800's, the interior of Africa was almost unknown to Europeans. Most

would-be explorers, conquerors, and missionaries succumbed to tropical diseases or attacks by African natives. By the late 1800's, however, medical advances, such as the use of quinine to treat malaria, and military advances, such as accurate rifles and early machine guns, opened Africa to European domination. At the Berlin Conference of 1884 and 1885, fifteen European countries gathered to establish ground rules for dividing the continent of Africa between themselves. It goes without saying that the Africans did not participate in the conference. By 1914, all of Africa, except Liberia and Ethiopia, had been carved up into European colonies.

North Africa, which had long been familiar to Europeans, was the first area to fall under the new wave of imperialism. In the early 1800's, Morocco was an independent country. Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli, and Cyrenaica were nominally part of the Ottoman Empire, but were independent for most practical purposes. These “Barbary States” (from the word “berber”) had long prospered through piracy in the eastern Mediterranean, and by extracting protection fees from countries that wanted to avoid being attacked by the “Barbary Corsairs”. One of the first shows of US power was a naval campaign to end piracy by Algeria and Tripoli. The French invaded Algeria in 1830, and struggled against fierce resistance for 4 decades. Many Algerians were killed in the fighting, and French settlers arrived to take their place.

In Egypt, Muhammad Ali, a former Ottoman commander who had helped the British drive Napoleon’s forces out, had seized control of Egypt in 1805. Though Egypt technically remained a province of the Ottoman Empire, Muhammad Ali was in charge, and he put Egypt on a fast-track modernization course resembling the one going on in the Ottoman Empire. Many of his programs were quite successful, but Ali and his successors had borrowed heavily from Europeans to pay for them, and were forced to grant concessions in return. The Suez Canal, connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, was built by a French company between 1859 and 1869. The canal vastly simplified trade between Europe and Asia, and therefore greatly increased Europe’s interest in Egyptian affairs. To help pay debts, the Egyptian ruler Ismail began selling stock in the canal to Britain. In 1882, Britain invaded Egypt in order to “protect its investments”, and made the country a British protectorate.

British expansion in Egypt spurred the French to take Tunis in 1881. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, France controlled northwest Africa, while Britain was setting up colonies all over the continent. The newly-unified Italy wanted in on the action, and invaded Ethiopia in 1896. The

brilliant Ethiopian emperor Menelik II had developed a powerful army, and defeated the Italians, but they did occupy the nearby areas of Eritrea and Somaliland. They also established the North African colony of Libya in 1912.

The new wave of imperialism in sub-Saharan Africa began in the 1870's. With the help of the explorer Henry Stanley, King Leopold of Belgium gained personal control of a region of central Africa that became known as the Belgian Free State. Natives in the region were brutally pressed into service, extracting ivory, rubber, copper, and other raw materials. Treatment was so harsh that the region lost half its population between 1885 and 1908; when the Belgian government took over administration of the region, moderated the exploitation, and renamed it the Belgian Congo. Meanwhile, the rest of southern Africa had been divided up between France, Germany, Portugal, and Britain.

As in the other parts of the world that they had conquered, Europeans rationalized their actions with the idea that they were bringing the benefits of an advanced civilization to a primitive people. They talked less the fact that many of them were getting rich by exploiting African natural resources and labor. Those who did care about the well-being of Africans, such as some Christian missionaries, generally believed that they could best help them by getting them to abandon their old lifestyles and adopt European culture. So, colonial rule in Africa had varied effects, from cataclysmic to beneficial. On the cataclysmic side, traditional cultures were thrown into turmoil, as Africans tried to adjust to the imposition of a new culture. Village economies were disrupted by an imposed switch from subsistence agriculture to cash crops or wage labor in mines or factories. Colonial powers divided Africa based mainly on what they could take, not on the existing cultural landscape of Africa. Colonial borders cut across existing ethnic lines, which would lead to violent rearrangements in the future. On the other hand, local warfare (which had intensified during the slave trade) was curtailed during colonial rule. This lowered death rates in many places, as did new hospitals and western medicines. Schools were also set up, and literacy rates began to rise. A western-educated, professional class of Africans started to form. As in other colonial areas, this class would supply many of the leaders of well-organized independence movements that were just beginning to emerge as the 20<sup>th</sup> century dawned.

