

## AN AGE OF CALAMITY: FROM WORLD WAR I TO WORLD WAR II

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## THE FIRST WORLD WAR

### BALKAN POWDER AND EUROPEAN DYNAMITE

World War I did not have a single cause. It had several, which all combined into an extremely volatile mixture. Perhaps the most important factor was the rise of an aggressive nationalism among peoples across Europe. While nationalism had recently helped unify countries such as Germany and Italy, it was also a divisive force. The older, multi-ethnic empires, such as Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, were threatened with complete fragmentation by nationalist movements. National pride within a nation-state often translated into aggression toward other states. The growing tension between states was made worse by competition for imperial influence in Africa and Asia, which caused several states to build up their military power; increasing the ranks of the armed forces, expanding weapons production, and glorifying military life. The new German state was especially militaristic, and its push to build a strong navy led to a naval arms race between Germany and Britain. The coming war would be more intensely destructive than any before because of mass production of new and deadly weapons—especially machine guns, poison gas, and tanks. And the war would have more participants than any before, due to a dangerous system of alliances, often made in secret, which divided Europe into two rival blocks. In 1882, Bismarck had organized the *Triple Alliance*, between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, in order to form a defensive coalition against France, which was still furious about the Franco-Prussian war. France then allied with Russia in 1894, and Britain in 1904, forming an alliance called the *Triple Entente*.

If the situation in Europe at large was dangerous, the one in the Balkans was explosive. The area was (and is) a complex patchwork of very different nationalities, religions, and languages. The Ottoman Empire had been losing territory to nationalist movements for decades, and Austria-Hungary and Russia both wanted influence in the region. Since the early 1800's, a Slavic nationalist movement had worked to unite Croats, Serbs, Slovenes and other southern Slav groups in a single state. The Slavic states of Serbia and Montenegro had gained full independence from the Ottoman Empire, but many south Slavs still lived in Austria-Hungary. In 1908, Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina (a Slavic region). This infuriated Slavic nationalists, and

caused ill will between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, as well as Russia (who, because they were Slavic and wanted influence in the Balkans, supported south Slav nationalism). In 1912, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece joined forces to take most of the Balkans from the Ottomans. This resulted in territorial gains for all three, as well as the creation of Albania as an independent state. In 1913, Serbia and Bulgaria began to argue over their new lands, leading to a war in which several Balkan states joined to defeat Bulgaria, taking away most of the land it had gained. Serbia was growing more powerful, and was still resentful of Austria-Hungary. The situation in the Balkans was extremely touchy, and people began calling it the “powder keg of Europe”. But the Balkan powder keg was just a detonator, sitting in the room full of dynamite that was Europe.

## **SPARK AND DETONATION**

All that was needed was a spark, and that spark came in June, 1914. When Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, visited Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, he and his wife were shot dead by a nineteen year old Bosnian Serb. Austria-Hungary blamed the government of Serbia for the assassination, and declared war on July 28, 1914. Russia began to mobilize its armed forces in support of Serbia, causing Germany (allied to Austria-Hungary) to declare war on Russia, and then on their ally, France. Germany now had to fight a war on two fronts. They decided to devote most of their troops to defeating France quickly, and then moving them to the eastern front, to fight Russia. When Germany tried to bypass French defenses by attacking through neutral Belgium, Britain, an ally of Belgium, declared war on Germany.

German troops were rapidly moving toward Paris when they were halted by French and British troops at the Battle of the Marne. By late fall, neither side could advance on the other, so both dug trenches all along the western front. Troops who tried to attack across the “no man’s land” between the trenches were blocked by barbed wire, blown up by mines, and mowed down by machine guns. In spite of tremendous loss of life, neither side would make significant gains for the next three years.

The coalition of Germany and Austria-Hungary was joined by the Ottoman Empire in October, 1914, and Bulgaria in October, 1915. These countries became known as the *Central Powers*. France, Russia, and Britain, known as the Allied Powers, or *Allies*, would eventually be

joined by 20 other countries around the world, including Italy, Japan, and the United States. In Europe, the theater of war would include the western front, the much longer eastern front along the Russian border, much of the Balkans, and the border of Italy and Austria-Hungary. But that was just in Europe. Germany, and several of the Allied powers, had colonies, troops, and ships around the world, so fighting stretched around the world as well. Troops clashed in German colonies in Africa and the Pacific, while Japan gained control of Germany's sphere of influence in China. Fighting was also heavy in the Ottoman Empire, where Arab nationalists joined the Allies.

The Central Powers were most successful along the eastern front, and in the Balkans. Serbia was defeated in 1915, and Romania in 1916. Russia had mobilized huge armies very quickly, but they were ill-equipped and poorly led. A Russian attack on Germany was crushed in August 1914. The Russians did better against Austria-Hungary for a while, until Germany joined in to drive them back into Russian territory. An enormous Russian offensive drove back and captured Austro-Hungarian troops in June, 1916, with a cost of about a million casualties on each side.

By 1917, heavy casualties and food shortages had left Russia exhausted. In March, a revolution forced Nicolas II from the throne. A provisional government tried to maintain the war effort, but many Russian troops and citizens had had enough. Soon after the revolution, Germany helped V.I. Lenin, a Bolshevik revolutionary exiled in Switzerland, return to Russia. In November 1917 (October in the old Russian calendar), Lenin led a second revolution and took control of the Russian government. Lenin had promised to make peace with the Central Powers. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed in March, 1918, forced Russia to give up a wide band of territory along its western border, from Finland to the Ukraine. With Russia out of the war, the Central Powers turned their attention toward the west.

By this time, however, a British naval blockade of German ports was cutting off supplies, and the United States had entered the war on the side of the Allies. Both sides had tried to disrupt the flow of supplies into enemy ports since early in the war. Germany's surface navy was no match for Britain's, so they used submarines to sink merchant ships. This tactic was what finally brought the United States into the war. Public opinion in the United States was strongly isolationist, when the war broke out, and most Americans wanted to stay out of it. Germany had killed some Americans in submarine attacks on ships in the Atlantic, but it backed off to avoid

provoking the US into entering the war. Late in 1916, however, Germany resumed submarine warfare on any ship supplying its enemies, and soon began attacking US merchant ships. This, along with the discovery that Germany had tried to get Mexico to join them (by offering them the territory they had lost to the United States if the Central Powers won) pushed public opinion in favor of joining the Allies. The US declared war on Germany in April, 1917, and began intensive mobilization. In May, Britain began organizing merchant ships into convoys, protected by warships. This broke the power of the German submarines. By June, US troops and supplies began arriving in Europe, while the British navy continued to strangle Germany.

Realizing they were in trouble, the Germans decided to launch an all-out offensive in early 1918. Allied forces were driven back at first, but then held and counterattacked, pushing German troops back toward the Belgian border. By September, German morale was falling apart. Meanwhile, the Allies were also winning on other fronts. Bulgaria surrendered in September; the Ottoman Empire surrendered in October; and Austria-Hungary surrendered in November. William II, the emperor of Germany, abdicated on November 9, and a new German Republic was proclaimed. Germany surrendered two days later, and the first World War was over.

## **THE AFTERMATH**

But the devastation was terrible. Ten million soldiers had been killed, and 21 million had been wounded. Many civilians died in the war as well, and millions of soldiers and civilians were killed in an influenza epidemic that swept the world just as the war was ending. Much of the landscape was reduced to barren rubble across a great arc from the western to the eastern front. Belgium and northern France, especially, lay in ruins. Economies were thrown into turmoil. The cost of conducting the war had been enormous, as was the cost of destroyed property. A large percentage of the workforce in Europe was dead or disabled, and many of the warring nations had gone deeply into debt to pay for the war. In short, the nineteenth century world of European dominance, confidence, and contained conflict was shattered. Old dynasties—the German Hohenzollerns, the Austrian Habsburgs, the Russian Romanovs, and the Ottoman sultans—had fallen, and the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires fell apart completely. A great deal of military and economic power shifted from Europe to the United States, which had lost relatively

few men in the war, and had prospered by selling military goods and making loans to European allies. Though most US citizens still wanted to stay out of world affairs, the United States had become a major world power.

When Woodrow Wilson attended the peace conference at the Palace of Versailles, he became the first sitting US president to visit Europe. Before the end of the war, Wilson had presented a Fourteen Point plan for a peace settlement, including proposals for outlawing secret alliances, establishing state borders coinciding as closely as possible with national borders, and establishing a supra-national organization dedicated to maintaining peace. Wilson was an idealist representing a country that had gained much in compensation for relatively minor losses in the war. He was more concerned with establishing a stable peace than with punishing the defeated countries. The victorious European nations, who had suffered enormously in the war, were not so idealistic, or so forgiving.

Harsh peace treaties were signed with each of the defeated nations. Germany was made to take the blame for the war, and forced to pay enormous reparations. Many German territories were parceled out. Alsace-Lorraine was given to France, and lands recently taken from Russia were given to a resurrected Poland, and to the new states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. Under the newly created League of Nations, German colonies in Africa became *mandates*, which meant they were placed under the control of France and Britain. Colonies in Asia and the Pacific became mandates of Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Lands from the fallen Austro-Hungarian empire were divided up between the new nations of Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia (a unified south Slav state), as well as Poland and Romania. The Ottoman Empire was also divided up. Greece was given several Aegean islands. Palestine, Transjordan (now Jordan), and Iraq became mandates of Britain, while Lebanon and Syria became mandates of France. The Ottoman Empire retained Anatolia and Istanbul. After a Turkish nationalist uprising ended the empire in 1923, these lands became the Republic of Turkey.

The treaties following World War I did not succeed in giving Europe a lasting peace. The new national borders in eastern Europe proved fairly stable, but the task of exactly aligning national and state borders was impossible, and minorities felt stranded in new nation-states. The defeated countries were bitter, feeling that they had been treated too harshly. This was especially true in Germany, where reparations payments helped cripple the economy. The League of

Nations, proposed by the US president, was regarded with suspicion by an isolationist American public and congress, and the United States never joined. For this and other reasons, the League of Nations would prove ineffective at keeping the peace, which was very fragile indeed.

### **UNCERTAIN PROGRESS: WESTERN THOUGHT AND CULTURE IN THE EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the prevailing mood in western Europe had been a buoyant self-confidence, combined with great faith in the continuing march of progress. There seemed much to be confident about. The excesses of the early industrial revolution had been alleviated, productivity and wealth were expanding, and new technologies were celebrated as wonders. Liberal reforms were giving more and more people a voice in government, and making societies more equitable. Balance of power diplomacy had kept wars small and strategic. European countries ruled much of the world, and saw themselves as bringing the wonders of western progress to inferior peoples. The First World War shattered this confidence.

After the savagery of the war the Enlightenment idea of basic human goodness and reason seemed naive. Technology and industrialism had shown their darker sides, in the form of machine guns, tanks, and mustard gas—all means of killing people ever more efficiently. Effective government dominance of wartime economies had called laissez faire capitalism into question. In short, the heritage of the Enlightenment—with its faith in the order of nature, the reason of the human mind, and the progress of society—seemed to have collapsed. This change in mood was reflected in western thought and culture, which was characterized by uncertainty, irrationality, discord, and anxiety. Of course, the Enlightenment-style liberalism of the late-nineteenth century had always been strongest among the middle classes, who had increasingly set the cultural tone in western countries. Other groups, especially dissatisfied workers, conservative aristocrats, and intellectual and artistic elites, had always questioned it (though for very different reasons). After the war, however, even the middle classes lost a great deal of faith in the old worldview. Voices of a new, less orderly worldview, which had been speaking since well before the war, now gained a much wider audience. Meanwhile, factual knowledge, technical proficiency, and (less steadily) material wealth continued to expand, but far fewer people than before saw this as unambiguous

evidence of human progress.

## SCIENCE

### NEW REVOLUTIONS IN PHYSICS

Ironically, science, which had sparked the Enlightenment, now helped underwrite the new worldview, as scientists realized that the universe was far stranger than they had at first thought. Darwin and his predecessors had already shown that the nature was more mutable, and less orderly, than the “Clockwork Universe” of the Enlightenment. Physicists were beginning to draw similar conclusions. The laws of thermodynamics showed that energy, though conserved, gets less useful every time it is used, and that entropy, or disorder, is always increasing. Nonetheless, in the late 1800's, some physicists believed that the basic physical nature of the universe was soon to be a solved problem. This optimism passed with the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as major gaps in theoretical understanding became apparent. Many physicists were skeptical about the existence of atoms, but studies with radioactivity by Henri Becquerel and Marie and Pierre Curie suggested that atoms not only existed, but were composed of smaller particles. Light was proving extremely mysterious. It seemed to move at the same speed relative to any observer, no matter how fast the observer was moving toward or away from it. Not only that, but the frequency distribution of light waves emitted from hot objects did not fit the standard theory of light as a continuous spectrum of electromagnetic waves.

Albert Einstein, a patent examiner in Switzerland, met these problem head-on in three papers published in 1905, each of which revolutionized physics. One, concerning Brownian motion, led to the acceptance of the existence of atoms. Another proposed that light travels in discrete “packets” (later called photons) which combine properties of particles and waves. This insight was a basic foundation of the field of quantum mechanics, according to which light and matter are both composed of “wavy particles”, which behave in fundamentally unpredictable, bizarre ways. In a third paper, Einstein explained the invariant speed of light with his Special

Theory of Relativity, which suggested that space and time are malleable, and matter and energy are inter-convertible.

Ten years later, Einstein's General Theory of Relativity explained gravity in terms of a curvature in a four-dimensional space-time continuum. General relativity was experimentally supported in 1919, in a dramatic expedition to observe starlight bending around the sun during a solar eclipse. Newspapers around the world proclaimed the triumph of Einstein, who had already become an icon of scientific genius. Astronomical observations by Edwin Hubble in the 1920's showed that the Milky Way is just one of many galaxies, all of which are racing apart as the universe expands—a phenomenon predicted by General Relativity (though not by Einstein himself). All these breakthroughs in physics, especially Einstein's, which captured the public imagination, profoundly affected people's perception of their place in a universe that seemed increasingly vast, and alien to normal human experience. Einstein, like Darwin, was widely misinterpreted. Many extended a distorted view of relativity into the realm of human affairs, concluding that everything is relative. They did not realize that the whole point of Einstein's theory was to show that some things, such as the speed of light, are quite invariant.

## BIOLOGY: THE MARRIAGE OF EVOLUTION AND GENETICS

Biologists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century didn't alter the foundations of their field so much as reinforce them. The great achievement of this time was establishing the basic laws of genetics, and combining them with Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin, and other biologists of his time, had only the vaguest notion of the principles of heredity. Darwin believed that hereditary information was carried in the blood, which was thought to be passed from parents to offspring; in whom it would mix to produce features midway between those of the parents. There were several problems with this idea, one being that after several generations, such mixing would produce a completely homogeneous population, devoid of the variation needed for natural selection.

The puzzle of heredity had begun to be solved by Gregor Mendel in the 1860's. Mendel's

work with pea plants suggested that basic inherited features are determined by discrete units of heredity (now called genes), which are re-shuffled, but not blended, with each generation. Mendel found that basic characteristics (wrinkled versus smooth peas, for example) are determined by two genes in each individual. He realized that each parent only passed one gene to its offspring, who got one from each parent. This is Mendel's *Law of Segregation*. Mendel also realized that each pair of genes for a certain trait is inherited independently of other pairs determining other characteristics. This is known as the *Law of Independent Assortment* (which we now know to have some exceptions).

Modern genetics truly got its start when Mendel's work was rediscovered in 1900 by three different botanists. By this time, chromosomes had been discovered. Most body cells were known to have two copies of each chromosome, while egg and sperm cells have only one copy of each. It didn't take long for people to realize that genes must be located on chromosomes, and that the segregation and independent assortment of genes was a reflection of the segregation and independent assortment of chromosomes. In other words, each parent passes out of every pair of chromosomes to its offspring, so the offspring has new pairs, and thus, a different set of genes than either parent. This idea was put on a firm foundation by Thomas Hunt Morgan and his students at Columbia University in New York City. It was Morgan who established that genes are the units of heredity, and realized that they are arranged in a linear sequence along chromosomes (he also pioneered the use of fruit flies for studying genetics). In 1931, Barbara Mcclintock showed that pairs of chromosomes can swap pieces before being passed on, thus increasing genetic variation further. By the late 1930's, several mathematically inclined geneticists were explaining evolution in terms of changes in the genetic makeup of populations over time. This combination of Mendelian genetics and Darwinian evolution by natural selection came to be called the Synthetic Theory of evolution.

## MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS

Medicine made enormous advances in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many new discoveries in

physics found medical uses. Wilhelm Roentgen's discovery of X rays in 1895 allowed physicians to see inside the human body, and the Curies' work with radium led to radiation therapy for treating cancer. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, several researchers tried to understand the nutritional deficiencies leading to diseases such as rickets, beriberi, and scurvy (which, it was well known, was prevented by eating certain fruits). By 1948, all of the thirteen vitamins known to be necessary for good health had been identified. Equally significant were improvements in the understanding of hormones, produced by the body's endocrine glands. The isolation of insulin in 1921, for example, allowed millions of people to manage diabetes.

The great German medical researcher Paul Ehrlich established the practice of *chemotherapy*—the use of chemicals toxic to disease-causing organisms or cancerous cells. Ehrlich's introduction of the drug Salvarsan in 1910 helped make syphilis treatable. Chemotherapy advanced in 1932 when it was discovered that a synthetic dye was lethal to some bacteria. This was the origin of the first sulfa drug. In 1928, Alexander Fleming noticed that a *Penicillium* mold growing on one of his bacterial cultures seemed to be inhibiting bacterial growth. A decade later, the first antibiotic drug—penicillin—had been isolated, and soon drastically reduced deaths from bacterial infections. Another antibiotic, streptomycin, helped bring tuberculosis under control. A range of new antibiotics would follow these first ones.

Chemotherapy is great for *treating* disease, but what's even better is *preventing* disease with vaccinations, as Edward Jenner first discovered in 1796 with his vaccination for smallpox. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, effective vaccines against bacterial diseases such as tetanus, diphtheria, and typhus prevented all kinds of suffering. Another advantage of vaccination is that can be useful against viral infections, while chemotherapy generally is not. Smallpox, for example, is a viral disease. Edward Jenner did not know this, however, because viruses were not discovered until the late 1800's. Knowledge of viruses improved in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and by the 1940's, influenza vaccines were becoming available, heralding a boom in antiviral vaccines after the second world war.

## DIVERGING PATHS IN PSYCHOLOGY

## *THE POWER OF BEHAVIORISM*

The field of psychology began to fragment into very different schools of thought in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The *Gestalt* school developed in Germany as a reaction to the reductionism of the structuralists. The Gestaltists took a holistic approach, studying the way the mind combines the parts of sensation into the wholes of perception and concept formation. This point of view greatly advanced the study of perception, but the Gestalt school eventually faded as a distinct school of thought. Another fruitful approach, which was taking shape around the turn of the century, was *associationism*. This was not a school of thought so much as a program of research, aimed at studying how organisms learn by making associations. The Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov studied classical conditioning; a simple, reflexive type of associative learning where one stimulus (a bell, say) comes to be associated with another (such as food) when it repeatedly occurs just before it or simultaneously with it. The two stimuli become associated, so that each elicits a similar response (e.g. hungry slobbering). Around the same time, Edward Thorndike, a US psychologist, was examining a different type of associative learning. He put hungry cats in boxes, with food just outside the box. When the cat happened to pull on a piece of rope, the box opened. Soon the cat had made the association between its action and the reward of freedom and food, and learned to pull the rope immediately. This sort of associative learning would come to be called operant conditioning.

The researchers studying associative learning were discovering some of the most fundamental processes of learning and memory. The principles they discovered are extremely powerful, and can be harnessed for behavior modification in animals and humans (for better and for worse). Moreover, this approach was extremely quantifiable and objective, and its results were repeatable. All these things made many psychologists embrace this research program, which came to be called *behaviorism*, as *the* way to make psychology a truly empirical science. The psychologist John Watson wrote an influential book in 1919 that claimed that observable responses to observable stimuli are the only proper subjects for psychology. Watson rejected all discussion of internal mental processes such as mental imagery as unimportant, and even non-

existent. For Watson, psychology was the science of *behavior*, not the science of the *mind*. Mind, for Watson, was just a complex hierarchy of conditioned responses. In the tradition of empiricists such as Locke, Watson believed human behavior is determined entirely by environment, and not at all by innate predispositions or differences between individuals. This point of view, which came to be called *radical behaviorism*, was taken up later by another US psychologist, B.F. Skinner. Under the influence of people like Watson and Skinner, psychology, especially in the United States, came to be dominated by radical behaviorism. In many psychology departments, discussions of internal mental processes became quite disreputable. This repressive intellectual climate would dominate experimental psychology for decades.

### *FREUD AND HIS IMPACT*

The practice of psychotherapy came to be dominated by a very different theoretical framework, whose influence would stretch far beyond psychological circles. This framework is *psychoanalysis*, developed by Sigmund Freud. Freud was a physician who spent most of his life in Vienna. Like most physicians of the late 1800's, Freud initially saw mental illness as the product of neurological dysfunction. His ideas began to change when he went to Paris to work with the French neurologist Jean Charcot. Charcot treated patients he called *hysterics*, who demonstrated symptoms such as blindness or paralysis even though they seemed to have no physical defects. Freud began to suspect that many mental illnesses are based on conflicts within a patient's mind, not on neurological problems. Returning to Vienna in 1886, Freud began working with "hysterics", many of them women with complexes relating to sex. At the time, sexuality, especially female sexuality, was tightly restricted, and basically a taboo topic in public settings. Consequently, psychological complexes relating to sexual repression were quite common. Soon Freud developed his famous method of treatment, where patients were allowed to *free associate*; talking freely about themselves, their feelings, and their childhoods. Freud would listen, and occasionally question the patient, trying to detect the mental conflicts that the free association revealed.

Freud began to develop his revolutionary theory of mind based on his clinical practice. He came to believe that most of his patients were influenced by conflicting drives which they were not fully aware of. Most of what goes on in the mind, he decided, must take place in the *unconscious*. Freud believed neuroses were the result of unresolved conflicts between basic human instincts of sex, aggression, and general self-gratification, on the one hand, and social conventions on the other. These conflicts take place in the interaction between three parts of the mind (all mostly unconscious): the *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego*. The *id* is the part of the mind that tries to gratify basic animal urges. The *superego* is basically a person's conscience; the area of the mind devoted to ethical, socially acceptable behavior. Obviously, the *id* and the *superego* clash, as the *superego* tries to repress the *id*'s shocking urges. This is where the *ego* comes in. The *ego* is the part of the mind that mediates between the *id* and the *superego*, by allowing the *id*'s desires to be expressed in socially acceptable ways. If the *ego* is not successful, and either the *id* or the *superego* get the upper hand, various neuroses will result.

Most of these neuroses have their roots in early childhood. Freud believed that small children's minds are mostly *id*; that children are basically self-gratification machines. Freud shocked his contemporaries by claiming that many of the urges the child seeks to gratify are sexual. But the focus of this sexuality changes over time. Initially, sexuality is orally focused, when the child is fixated on its mouth and mother's breast. Later, the focus becomes anal, as the child struggles with potty training. Finally, the focus of sexuality shifts to the genitals, where it remains. If all goes well, that is. Some people do not progress normally, and develop oral or anal fixations that produce abnormal behavior, sexual or otherwise. According to Freud, small children harbor some seriously antisocial desires in their unconscious minds. Little boys harbor deep sexual attraction toward their mothers, and aggression toward their fathers, who are competitors for their mother's attention. Among other things, this leads to *castration anxiety*, an unconscious fear that their fathers will cut off their genitals. Little girls, on the other hand, find that they have no male genitals, and suffer *penis envy*. All these unseemly urges are opposed by the development of the *superego*, as the child learns what is socially acceptable and what is not. But unconscious drives cannot be repressed entirely. They will always bubble out, despite the

superego's best efforts. For the child to develop into a mentally healthy adult, then, a strong ego has to develop, able to find ways to release the id's urges in socially acceptable ways, instead of neurotic or anti-social ways.

These theories were, needless to say, deeply shocking to prim turn-of-the-century Europeans, and Freud's theories were initially greeted with a wave of hostility and outrage. Shocking theories, however, especially those involving sexual aberrations, have a way of capturing the public's attention, and Freud's theories soon became a hot topic in more freewheeling circles. Besides, some of Freud's basic ideas undeniably rang true. Sexual repression was widespread in that era, especially for women (men were not so repressed, and many patronized a thriving underground industry of pornography and prostitution). Repression did seem to be at the root of much neurotic behavior. When people allowed themselves to examine parts of their psyche that they had studiously ignored before, they knew their inner motives did not always make for polite conversation. The bizarre world of dreams, which Freud saw as a relatively uncensored window on the unconscious, obviously dealt with some deep seated urges and fears. By 1910, Freud was internationally famous, and by 1920, his methods and theories had developed into an established school, which soon came to dominate the field of psychiatry. The horrors of World War I made it clear that the Enlightenment view of the mind as basically clear, good, and rational was terribly naive. The darker urges people had ignored had burst into the open, and become undeniable. And they didn't go away with the end of the war. When the Nazis invaded Austria, in 1938, Freud, a secular Jew, fled to England with his family. He died of mouth cancer in 1939, probably as a result of decades of smoking cigars.

By his death, Freud's ideas were among the defining themes of 20<sup>th</sup> century intellectual life. His vision of a chaotic, conflicted, mostly unconscious mind influenced the visual arts, literature, philosophy, and art and literary criticism. As Einstein had become the archetype of the Brilliant, Quirky Scientist; Freud became the archetype of the Psychiatrist, sitting with a notebook listening to reclining patients free-associate; helping them illuminate the dark shadows of their minds. Millions accepted Freudian theory uncritically, and in some urban, intellectual circles, undergoing psychoanalysis became a matter of course (whether one was truly psychologically

troubled or not). This was one problem with Freudian theory—it became an intellectual fashion, popular as much for its vividness as for its accuracy, which has been called into question in the last few decades. Like Marxist theory, Freudian theory was presented as science, when it really was not. Both could have been scientific, if their creators had allowed them to undergo empirical testing. In fact, neither man would tolerate intellectual criticism. When Freud's students, including Carl Jung and Alfred Adler, developed their own interpretations of psychoanalytic theory, he banished them from his intellectual circle. Today, most psychologists believe that, while Freud was deeply insightful, his theories were deeply flawed. Without understanding them, however, one could never understand the intellectual climate of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Sociology and anthropology continued to develop in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most influential sociologists was Max Weber of Germany. Weber is best known for his theory of the Protestant work ethic, published in 1904. He believed that Protestantism contributed to the expansion of capitalism, because Protestants, especially those who believed in predestination, believed that worldly success was a sign of being among the elect. Also, their aversion to extravagance meant they saved their money, which helped build up a stock of investment capital. Since the roots of capitalism predate the protestant reformation, however, there must have been other factors at work, and Weber acknowledged this.

Several important sociologists of the time lived in the United States. Talcott-Parsons continued the holistic, systems-type approach of Emile Durkheim, founding a school of thought called *structural-functionalism*. C. Wright Mills was more in the Marxist tradition, arguing that society was dominated by a “power elite” which derived its influence more from bureaucratic power than from property ownership. The pragmatic philosopher George Herbert Mead took a more individualistic approach, thinking in terms of how people's self-concepts are constructed through social interactions and the pervasive symbols of their society. This view came to be called *symbolic-interactionism*. As the century progressed, the structural-functionalist

perspective, the social conflict perspective, and the symbolic-interactionist perspective all evolved into distinct, but often complementary (whether they admitted it or not), schools of thought.

Anthropology turned decisively away from its pseudo-evolutionary roots around the turn of the century. Franz Boas, who established a pioneering department of anthropology at Columbia University in New York City, roundly criticized earlier anthropologists for their ethnocentrism, their lack of rigor in interpreting data, and their tendency to rely on secondhand reports of other cultures. Boas rejected the unilineal evolution model (that other societies represent stages in the march of progress) and asserted that each society must be understood on its own terms, based on its unique historical development. Boas believed in doing anthropological research firsthand, by living among the people one is studying. Many of his students, including Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Edward Sapir, were pioneers in fieldwork as well as anthropological theory. Reacting against western ethnocentrism and pseudo-biological racism, all these anthropologists emphasized human diversity and downplayed human unity.

While Boas was establishing his school, European anthropologists were taking different approaches. The *diffusionists* pointed out the importance of cultural diffusion between cultures. This was a crucial insight, though they took it a little too far—some even argued that all “civilized” societies were the products of cultural diffusion from ancient Egypt. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown promoted a *structural-functionalist* view of societies, arguing that institutions such as religion, kinship patterns, and marriage serve to bind societies together. Bronislaw Malinowski promoted a more individualistic, psychological functionalism, asserting that social institutions such as religion or magic serve to meet the psychological needs of individuals.

## TECHNOLOGY MARCHES ON

Technological innovation continued to accelerate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as did technology’s ability to transform society. Some of the most important technologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had their roots in the previous century. The modern-style internal combustion engine was developed in the 1880’s by Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler. This innovation had a cascade of

monumental effects. The petroleum burning engine all but replaced the steam engine, and petroleum, which had been basically worthless, suddenly became one of the world's most vital natural resources; vital enough to be a major influence on global politics. Transportation was revolutionized. The basic form of the four-wheeled, gas powered automobile had taken shape around the turn of the century. Automobile manufacturers, particularly Henry Ford, pioneered many of the techniques of mass production. Cars were a fixture in the US and Europe by the first World War, and would soon help change settlement patterns. The first workable airplane, which also used a gasoline engine, was flown in 1903 by Orville and Wilbur Wright. By the 1930's, passenger flights were carrying people all over the world. Airplanes would also transform warfare by turning civilians into targets.

Many inventions of the late 1800's came into wide use in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including phonographs and motion pictures (both invented by Thomas Edison) as well as radios and telephones. The invention of the vacuum tube in 1904 helped launch the electronics industry. Vacuum tubes greatly expanded the ease of radio transmission, and commercial radio broadcasts began in the 1920's. Most electronic devices were based on vacuum tubes until after 1947, when the transistor was invented. Synthetic materials are another technology that has had an enormous impact on the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first synthetic plastic, Bakelite, was produced in 1909. Synthetic fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides expanded agricultural production, as did gas and diesel powered farm machines. Industrial pollution, often in the form of chemicals with unknown ecological properties, expanded as well.

## PHILOSOPHY: ANALYSIS AND EXISTENCE

Philosophical thought continued to diverge in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, into a bewildering number of schools. However, many of these schools of thought can be categorized into one of two traditions: an Anglo-American tradition and a Continental European tradition. The Anglo-American tradition attempts to clarify philosophical thinking through rigorous logical analysis of traditional philosophical concepts and language. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, people like G.E.

Moore, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein suggested that many of the traditional problems in philosophy result from problems with language, pointing out that language is not necessarily logical or not well-suited to discussing certain ideas. They tried to frame philosophy in terms of rigorously logical systems which did not have the potential for illogic and multiple interpretations that ordinary language has. Russell tried to put mathematics as well as philosophy on a firm, logical basis. With Alfred North Whitehead, he wrote the massive *Principia Mathematica*, which tried express all of mathematics in terms of logic, by reconstructing it based on a few axioms. Wittgenstein's classic *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* tried to solve the confusions of philosophy by examining the nature of language and logic. This work promoted the "picture theory" of language, which claimed that language mirrors facts in the world. Wittgenstein tried to show that philosophy could only concern itself with things that language could sensibly talk about. The *Tractatus* ended with the admonition that, "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent".

Many took this to mean that whatever we cannot talk about sensibly must be nonsense. This was the view of the *logical positivists*, who declared that the only philosophical claims with any meaning are those which are *verifiable*; either by empirical investigation, or by deductive logical truths, as in mathematics. They declared that most of traditional philosophy, including metaphysics and even ethics, is unverifiable, and therefore, meaningless. Logical positivism had a big impact on science for a while, especially in its influence on radical behaviorism in psychology. But the logical positivists went to an extreme that most people would not accept. For example, one can imagine that some things are true, even if they cannot be verified by logic or science. This is actually what Wittgenstein meant. He was not suggesting that what cannot be spoken about sensibly is necessarily nonsensical, but that there actually are some things which are beyond logic. For all his logical rigor, Wittgenstein (at this stage at least) was a mystic. Also, while some were willing to abandon metaphysics as unverifiable nonsense, few were ready to do the same with ethics, as the logical positivists seemed to advocate.

Soon people grew less optimistic about putting all of philosophy on a firm logical basis. In mathematics, the goal was actually proved to be impossible. Kurt Gödel shocked

mathematicians and logicians in 1931, when he proved that mathematical systems may contain true statements which cannot be proven true by that system. This did not make works like Russell and Whitehead's *Principia* irrelevant, but it did show that they would always be incomplete. Based on this sort of insight, philosophers of the Anglo-American tradition would lower their sights a bit, turning to the analysis of ordinary human language, which would dominate philosophy in those regions after the second World War.

In continental Europe, philosophy took a very different path, which became known as Continental Philosophy. There, especially after the first World War, philosophers followed the tradition of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, addressing the problems of human existence in a world that seemed fundamentally tragic and absurd. Curiously, this movement was based in large part on a thinker who was originally allied closely with the analytic approach of the Anglo-American tradition. Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, was originally a mathematician. Husserl wanted to scrutinize the contents of human consciousness in rather the same way that other philosophers were scrutinizing language, logic, and mathematics. Husserl tried to set aside the presuppositions which color our experience of the world, to directly examine the immediate experiences that compose consciousness.

Husserl's intellectual successors adapted his focus on the nature of consciousness by using it to focus on the drama of human experience. Husserl's student, Martin Heidegger, was preoccupied with *being*; with the fact that there is something rather than nothing. He was especially concerned with the nature of human existence—of the experience of “being there” in the world. Like Kierkegaard, Heidegger focused on the negative and dramatic aspects of experience; on things like dread and anxiety. Like Nietzsche, he was concerned with the problem of living life fully, or as he put it, “authentically”. Heidegger's emphasis on existence itself as a philosophical problem, with the basic senselessness of existence, and on the appropriate human response to finding oneself in a senseless, absurd universe, place him in the tradition of *existentialism*.

Perhaps the most famous existentialist was the French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre. Like many other existentialists, Sartre believed that existence is basically meaningless, and that people must discover their own meaning in life. Sartre believed that people find themselves in a rather

terrifying situation—we have free will, and the meaning of our lives is determined by the choices we make. We are “condemned to be free”. Sartre also continued the tradition of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche in that he was a literary figure as well as a philosopher, and he wrote several classic novels and plays. The same was true of Simone de Beauvoir, who combined feminism and existentialism. Indeed, existentialism was not so just a philosophical movement, but a literary movement as well. Sartre’s *Nausea*, Albert Camus’ *The Stranger*, and Franz Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* are all classic explorations of existential anxiety.

## MODERNISM IN THE ARTS

Thinking of the history of the arts in terms of a progression of labeled periods, such as classicism, romanticism, and realism, is useful as an organizing principle and memory aid, but one has to keep in mind that it is an oversimplification. First, such labels lump together styles that can actually be quite diverse. Second, these labels usually describe particularly memorable or coherent artistic movements, but there are usually several other styles going on at the same time. This is especially important to remember when looking at twentieth century art, which was so diverse that one always has to pick which styles to discuss, especially in a birds-eye view like this book. Like most things in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the arts exploded—in the sense of increasing volume, increasing pace of change, and increasing diversity. Still, a great deal of western art in the first part of the century can be grouped (loosely) under the heading of **modernism**. Modernist art is characterized by experimentation and a quest for newness, by a move from representation to abstraction (often accompanied by decreased accessibility to the general public) and frequently, by a pervasive sense of individual alienation and inner turmoil.

In painting, this trend began in the late 1800's as the intense emotion of the post-impressionists paved the way for expressionism, which tried to evoke emotion, not achieve visual realism. Many were disturbingly successful, as is illustrated by the famous painting *The Scream*, by Edvard Munch. Though painted in 1893, this work was a frightful premonition of moods that would soon become widespread. Other expressionists included Henri Matisse, Paula

Mendahlson-Becker, and Vasily Kandinsky. The first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of the famous style called *cubism*, pioneered by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. Russian artists, under the influence of Kandinsky, were the first to paint purely abstract works that did not represent anything at all. After World War I, artists responded with increasingly chaotic, disturbing works. The *Dada* movement, which encompassed theater, poetry, sculpture, and painting, deliberately embraced meaninglessness. Marcel Duchamp, for example, exhibited a urinal, turned on its side and signed R. Mutt. The *Surrealists* tried to portray the chaotic, irrational world of the Freudian unconscious, as in Salvador Dali's famous works. A work widely regarded as the great masterpiece of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is Picasso's painting *Guernica*. In 1937, during the Spanish civil war, the town of Guernica was the sight of the first aerial bombardment of civilians by airplanes, killing over 1,600 people in one night. Picasso's painting combines several styles of early 20<sup>th</sup> century art, using distorted, anguished figures to protest the horror of modern war.

In architecture, radically new modernist styles were developed as a result of technological innovations. The first buildings tall enough to be dubbed "skyscrapers" depended on steel infrastructures and elevators. The first skyscrapers were built in the United States in the late 1800's. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, architecture increasingly relied on steel, concrete, and glass. The famous U.S. architect Frank Lloyd Wright used these materials early on to create houses and buildings with open interiors and an angular, modern design that nevertheless fit in well with the surrounding scenery. Under the influence of architects like Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius (founder of the Bauhaus school of architecture and design), Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Phillip Johnson, architecture grew increasingly austere, angular, and unadorned. This International Style, characterized by geometric concrete and glass buildings, lasted until around 1950.

Western literature moved in several directions in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Modernist tendencies were present here as well, in the experimental "stream of consciousness" style of writing used by authors such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. T.S. Eliot's complex, difficult poem *The Waste Land* lamented what Eliot saw as the cultural desolation of the years after the

Great War. Music grew increasingly experimental as well. Igor Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* (1913) caused a riot when it premiered. Audiences were shocked by its exuberant depictions of fertility rites, and by its often discordant music. Arnold Schoenberg abandoned traditional tone and harmony altogether, producing *atonal* music that sounded chaotic to most listeners.

## SOCIAL CHANGES

### *THE EXPANSION OF MASS CULTURE*

As the fine arts were increasingly being aimed at intellectual elites, other arts and entertainments were finding enormous audiences. Expanding economic and political power in the middle and working classes had created large markets for popular entertainment, and technological advances provided ways of broadcasting it far and wide. Affordable phonographs, recordings, and radios allowed people to enjoy music in their homes without buying concert tickets, and brought traditional styles of music, which had previously been confined to small groups, to large audiences. In the United States, for example, jazz and blues—which originated among African Americans—gained new listeners, as did the country and bluegrass of rural whites. By the 1930's, most families in North America and Western Europe had radios, and they listened to them devotedly—to music, news, sports, and radio dramas such as “The Lone Ranger”. The first daytime soap operas (so named because they were sponsored by soap companies) were radio programs. The first motion pictures appeared around the same time as phonographs, and also appealed to wide audiences. Nickelodeon theaters appeared soon after the turn of the century. Silent movies, often accompanied by live orchestras, gave way to “talkies” in the late 1920's. Newsreels appended to the features made news stories more vivid and visual. The other great entertainment that exploded during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was spectator sports. Baseball was the first major spectator sport in the United States, followed by basketball and football. In most of the world, however, football meant soccer, the game that would become the world's most popular

spectator sport. One outcome of all this mass communication and entertainment was the rise of the modern celebrity. Movie stars like Errol Flynn and Mary Pickford, radio personalities like Bob Hope and George and Gracie Burns, and sports heroes like Babe Ruth now commanded the recognition (and often the riches) of kings and queens.

Many regarded the rise of popular culture with horror, calling it cheap and unrefined, and feared it would lead to a decline in “high” culture. It’s true that popular culture has had its pro’s and con’s. Much of it is cheap, formulaic, and commercial. It has overshadowed some traditional “high” arts, such as classical music, opera, poetry, and painting. But these pursuits haven’t died out—they have simply been made to share the stage with an ever increasing variety of new styles. While a lot of popular culture is basically disposable, a lot of efforts in “high” culture were as well, and were forgotten long ago. And movies, popular music, and other forms of “pop culture” have produced a great many works of genius in the last century, which will surely be remembered for years to come.

Popular culture is just one aspect of a continuing trend—the increased participation of people of all classes in the life of a society—not just in arts and entertainment, but in making economic and political decisions. This trend has had all manner of positive results, making many nations more equitable, wealthier, and more culturally vibrant. But mass culture has its dark side, as well. For one thing, mass politics spurred the development of mass propaganda. Movies and radio soon became some of the most powerful means for influencing public opinion the world had ever seen. They would be used this way throughout the century, and not just in undemocratic societies. Another dark side of mass culture is the potential for mass hysteria—for witch hunts, war fever, stampedes, wild stock market speculations and sudden panics. One of the problems of a democracy is harnessing the power of the people without letting it spiral out of control. Things like constitutions, toleration of dissent, and separation of powers help accomplish this, by providing negative feedback. When these checks are removed, when times are hard, and when charismatic leaders use propaganda to harness the restless power of the population, mass politics can be truly horrifying, as coming years would show.

*NEW ROLES FOR WOMEN***WESTERN POLITICS BETWEEN THE WARS****LIBERALISM ADAPTING: CHANGING STYLES OF DEMOCRACY AND CAPITALISM**

## THE UNITED STATES AND ITS INFLUENCE

*THE ROARING TWENTIES*

The United States emerged from the first World War as the strongest nation in the world; not just in terms of its military and economic power, but also the growing influence of its popular culture. The war had claimed the lives of 116,000 soldiers, but this was less than 1/10 of the casualties suffered by Germany and Russia. No battles had been fought on U.S. soil, and the economy had boomed providing war supplies to the allies. The United States had also helped finance the allied war effort through its loans to European allies. Now it was the major financial center in the world, and economic fluctuations in the US would be felt worldwide. But the young, powerful nation was not entirely comfortable with its new global status. While American money, policies, and even movies and music were an ever greater influence on the world, the American mood after the war was isolationist, as shown by the failure to join the League of Nations.

Other opposed tendencies were seen in American social attitudes. The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution prohibited the sale of alcohol in 1920, but millions of Americans ignored it. The Roaring Twenties were for many a time of exuberant hedonism. People raced around in fast cars, drank bootleg liquor, wore short skirts, and danced to jazz. Others denounced the new ways of life, and religious revivals drew enormous audiences. The demand for illegal products encouraged the growth of gangsterism. Mob violence became common, and American movies turned the

mobster into an American icon. Corruption was rampant, and occasionally reached the highest levels of government. Government involvement in the economy was rolled back under the pro-business presidents Coolidge, Harding, and Hoover. It was a particularly materialistic time in American history, and many were living well beyond their means.

The United States was a prime mover in the expansion of popular culture. The African American community was particularly creative during this time. Jazz, which had originated among African American musicians in New Orleans around the turn of the century, had become the most popular music style of the 1920's, which is sometimes called the Jazz age. African American culture in general became more visible in the 1920's. Many blacks had moved from the south to the north during World War I to work in factories (and many had served in the military). African American neighborhoods sprang up in many northern cities. Their residents, most of whom had come from the rural south, often lacked the education and skills to find good jobs. This, and rampant discrimination during the 20's, kept many African American neighborhoods poor. Still, many northern whites were exposed for the first time to African American culture, which was experiencing a burst of creativity. The Harlem neighborhood in New York City was a major center. Nightclubs in Harlem were a showcase for Jazz and Blues. This Harlem Renaissance produced notable African American writers such as Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, as well as painters, sculptors, journalists, and intellectuals.

American music was soon being played in nightclubs and on radios in Europe, and in cities throughout the world. Other American artists were also influential. American literature was vibrant, although many American writers during the 20's, such as Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot, were living in Europe. At home, William Faulkner wrote about the South and its troubles, while Sinclair Lewis satirized the blandness of middle class culture. Faulkner is considered by many to be the greatest American writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but it was Fitzgerald, with his almost cinematic portraits of flashy, shallow materialism, who best captured the spirit of the 20's. American films, often produced by increasingly powerful studios in Hollywood, dominated the worldwide film industry.

## *THE GREAT DEPRESSION*

In spite of the apparent prosperity and high spiritedness of the 20's, all was not well with the American economy. Farmers were hurt by falling prices after European farms began producing again. Business profits were growing, but workers' salaries were not keeping pace. At the same time, people of all incomes were putting their money in the stock market, often buying stocks "on margin"—that is, with borrowed money. This made stock prices artificially high. In October, 1929, the stock market collapsed. Many individuals, banks, and investors were suddenly ruined. Confidence in the economy collapsed along with the stock market. Businesses began to close, and unemployment skyrocketed. People descended on banks to withdraw their savings, but the banks had not kept enough money to pay them. Many closed, and many people lost their life savings. The Great Depression, the worst economic slump in history, had begun. Soon it had spread beyond the United States, bringing hardship to practically every country in the world.

In the United States, many unemployed people became vagrants, wandering around the country in search of employment, or just food. To make matters worse, a combination of poor soil conservation practices and a long drought caused the soil in the southern great plains to literally dry up and blow away. Both the area and the drought became known as the Dust Bowl. Thousands of people migrated to California in search of agricultural jobs, but there weren't enough jobs to go around. Shantytowns of tar paper and tin sprang up around the country. President Herbert Hoover, a firm believer in free markets, was widely blamed for the hardship. Shantytowns were called "Hoovervilles". In some areas, people ate armadillos and called them "Hoover hogs".

Franklin Roosevelt, a Democrat, was elected in a landslide in 1932. Roosevelt immediately set to work on his "New Deal" program, a massive government effort to alleviate the hardships of the Depression. Bank deposits were insured to prevent people from losing their savings again. The Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps employed millions in building public works such as schools, parks, bridges, and dams. The Social Security Act provided Americans with things many Europeans had won decades earlier, such as

retirement pensions and unemployment insurance. Labor laws were reformed to give unions more power. Such expanded government programs were introduced in many other countries, as well.

Fiscal policy was influenced by the theories of John Maynard Keynes, who is often considered the most important economist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Keynes argued against some traditional laissez faire ideas, claiming that governments can and should regulate economies through tax policies and spending. He believed that depressions were the result of a failure of demand for goods, and that governments could increase demand with heavy government spending, which would increase investment and employment, and thus stimulate the economy. To this day, people debate the pros and cons of Keynesian theory, as well as New Deal policies. The New Deal did alleviate much suffering, but it is not clear that it helped end the Depression. What it did do was greatly increase the size and role of the government in American life, which has remained large ever since (also a subject of much debate). The Depression did end, but the treatment that proved effective—World War II—was worse than the disease.

## BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Britain found its economy in a sad state after the war. German submarines had sunk many of its merchant ships and the United States and Japan had taken over many former markets. Reparations from Germany were supposed to help pay British debts to the United States, but Germany was having trouble paying. These troubles led to depression, unemployment, and labor unrest. The Labour Party, which was socialist but democratic, came to power for the first time in 1924. The Liberal Party declined, and ever since the government has alternated between Labour and Conservative control. The Great Depression quickly spread from the United States to Britain after 1929. As in the United States, government involvement in the economy expanded, under a coalition government composed of the Labour and Conservative parties.

After World War I, the Irish question resurfaced. A home rule bill had been passed in 1914, but the war had prevented it from going into effect. Irish nationalists, called *republicans* because they wanted an independent Irish republic, staged the Easter Rebellion in 1916. The

rebellion failed, and many republican leaders were executed, which only increased Irish resentment of British rule. In 1918, the republicans gained most of the Irish seats in Parliament, and then met in Dublin and declared Ireland a republic in 1919. Fighting soon broke out between the Irish Republican Army and British forces. In 1921, Ireland was divided into two parts—the predominantly Catholic south became the Irish Free State, a self-governing member of the British Commonwealth; while the predominantly Protestant north became Northern Ireland, and remained part of the United Kingdom. Over the next decades, the Irish Free State moved away from British rule. It cut all ties in 1948, and changed its name to the Republic of Ireland. In northern Ireland, Catholic nationalists continued to fight for a united, independent Ireland, and conflicts continued.

## FRANCE

France also struggled after the war. The French countryside had been devastated, and France owed large debts. When Germany stopped paying reparations, French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr valley of Germany until they agreed to resume payments, though on a reduced scale. The French government (the Third Republic) was deeply divided politically, with factions ranging from socialism, to monarchism, to fascism. This division worsened during the Great Depression, and most coalitions unraveled soon after they formed. As in Britain, social programs and government intervention in the economy expanded, especially under the Popular Front, a leftist coalition government in the late 1930's. But economic difficulties, labor unrest, and government scandals kept France chaotic and weak, as Germany grew stronger and more aggressive.

## **LIBERALISM FAILING: THE RISE OF TOTALITARIAN STATES**

intro- define totalitarianism, and discuss liberalism being pulled right and left where it was not established well

## ON THE LEFT: THE U.S.S.R. FROM LENIN TO STALIN

After the first revolution of 1917 overthrew Nicholas II, the last Russian czar, the Provisional Government began working on liberal reforms: writing a constitution, asserting the equality of all people before the law, and allowing freedom of speech and religion. The Russian people were exhausted and restless, however. Many wanted Russia out of the war, and peasants were demanding sweeping land redistribution. Radicals set up councils called *soviets*, which competed for power with the provisional government. One of these radicals was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, who had taken the alias Lenin.

Lenin was the chief architect of the theory of **communism** as a distinct type of revolutionary socialism. In the 1800's, the words communism and socialism had been used more or less interchangeably, as in Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. Socialism was, and is, a general term for any system in which ownership of the means of production is collective. In the late 1800's, there were many variants of socialism. Some socialists, like Marx, believed in revolution, while others believed in a peaceful, democratic style of socialism. Lenin was a revolutionary follower of Marx. However, he modified Marxism in two important ways. First, while Marx had believed that a socialist revolution would occur in a highly industrialized country, Lenin believed that it could take place in an agricultural country like Russia. Second, Lenin believed that the revolution should be led by a small group of highly organized, professional revolutionaries. After the revolution, there would not be a "dictatorship of the proletariat", as Marx had asserted, but an actual dictatorship by an elite party, who, Lenin claimed, would represent the interests of the people. Communism, then, is a revolutionary form of socialism based specifically on the ideas of Marx, as modified by Lenin, who established the role of an elite Communist Party.

Actually, Lenin and his followers did not refer to themselves as communists at first. In 1903, the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party had split into two factions. Lenin's faction was more radical, and wanted to limit membership to professional revolutionaries. The other party was more democratic and inclusive. Lenin named his group Bolsheviks (meaning majority) and the other group Mensheviks (minority), even though the Mensheviks actually outnumbered the

Bolsheviks. After Lenin returned to Russia in 1917, he led the Bolsheviks in gaining control of the soviets of Moscow and Petrograd (St. Petersburg, then the Russian capital). Led by Lenin and his associate, Leon Trotsky, the Bolsheviks seized control from the Provisional Government in November, 1917. Since this was October in the old Russian calendar, this came to be called the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks had timed their revolution so that it occurred just as a congress of soviets from across Russia were assembled. The delegates proclaimed Lenin the head of the new government.

Not everyone in Russia wanted Lenin as their leader, however, and a civil war soon erupted between the Bolshevik “Reds” and anti-Bolshevik “Whites”. The Whites, supported by the European Allies, won some early victories. But they were not a united group. Soon the Red Army grew powerful, and the Bolsheviks gained support of many peasants by promising land reform. At the same time, claiming that “war communism” was necessary to win the war, they seized grain and other goods, causing famine and peasant revolts. War communism used other oppressive measures familiar to Russians—censorship, terror, and a murderous secret police. Many “enemies of the state”, including the imprisoned royal family, were executed.

The Bolsheviks prevailed by 1921, but war, famine, and chaos had left Russia in ruins. Lenin set about rebuilding the country as the world’s first communist state. Under his New Economic Policy, (NEP), grain was no longer seized, and peasants were allowed to sell their surplus in free markets. This increased incentives, and production. Other free markets were allowed on a small scale, but the government took control of heavy industry. Government oppression was also moderated. In 1922, the old Russian empire was reorganized into a set of semi-autonomous regions, collectively known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. By the late 1920's, the Russian economy had been revitalized. Sweeping social changes were instituted. Class divisions and titles of nobility were abolished, and the Eastern Orthodox Church was stripped of its official power. The status of women was advanced by laws guaranteeing equality of the sexes, and many women went into professional careers. The communist revolution seemed to be going as planned, and the leaders of the communist party expected that the rest of the world would soon follow Russia’s example. Indeed, a great many workers and intellectuals around the

world were very impressed by Communism, especially in the optimistic early years.

Lenin died in 1924. His two potential successors were Trotsky and Joseph Dzhughashvili, who had taken the name Stalin, meaning “man of steel”. A master of self-promotion and political maneuvering, Stalin had risen through the ranks to become the Secretary-General of the Communist Party. After Lenin’s death, Stalin succeeded in turning the party against Trotsky, who was exiled to Siberia (he moved to Mexico later, where he was murdered, probably on Stalin’s order). By 1927, when Trotsky was exiled, Stalin was the unquestioned leader of the Communist Party, and therefore, leader of the vast U.S.S.R. His ambition, and his ruthlessness, were apparently limitless.

In 1928, Stalin announced the first of his Five Year Plans to expand industrial and agricultural production. Workers were shipped in droves to newly built factories, and motivated with propaganda, quotas, and fear. Production of steel, oil, electricity, and other heavy industries surged forward at astonishing rates. But because heavy industry was financed mainly with large hidden sales taxes, and given priority above things like food and shelter, standards of living did not increase with industrial production. Agriculture also took a back seat to heavy industry. Stalin wanted to make agriculture as efficient as possible, in order free up workers for industrial production. He also wanted to gain control of the peasantry, who were new land owners, and thus, a potentially dangerous faction. Trying to meet both goals, he forced peasants to give up their land and move onto collective, government run farms. Most peasants, especially the wealthier ones, resisted, with some destroying their crops and livestock in defiance. Stalin responded with a murderous campaign of execution, forced labor, and exile. Famine and brutality resulted in as many as 14 million deaths. By the late 1930's, most peasants had been moved to collective farms, or into factories. Even during famines, Soviet grain was sold to the west to pay for industrial expansion. Many peasants survived by tending small personal gardens in their off hours.

Stalin was not just ruthless, he was also paranoid, and he set out to eliminate anybody who showed the slightest sign of disloyalty; real or imagined. When an official named Alexander Kirov was assassinated in 1934, probably on Stalin’s order, he used it as an excuse to begin the Great

Purge. Millions of people were arrested, exiled, or executed. Oftentimes they would be subjected to mock trials, and forced to admit to outrageous charges. Millions of Russians lived in terror, wondering when the secret police would come for them. But terror was just a part of Stalin's pioneering efforts in totalitarianism. Any form of communication that did not glorify Stalin and the state was silenced, and the media became a giant propaganda machine.

What is amazing to modern, comfortable westerners is that, in spite of the hardship and terror, millions of people supported Stalin and his government. The Soviet population was accustomed to hardship, and some things actually got better under the Soviet system. Unemployment was practically non-existent, public education was free, and women, in particular, gained opportunities. Many citizens felt they were united in a great cause, the forging of the world's first communist state. But most of all, the support for Stalin, arguably the most murderous human being in history, testifies to the power of technology, propaganda, and terror in capturing the minds of whole populations. Power is what Stalin wanted, and power is what he got, for himself and for his state. By the 1940's, the USSR had become a military-industrial power that no country could afford to ignore.

## ON THE RIGHT

### *FASCISM IN ITALY*

During the first World War, Italy had eventually joined the Allies in the hopes of gaining Italian-speaking lands held by Austria-Hungary. They did gain territory, but not as much as they wanted. Italy was racked with economic hardship and social unrest after the war. Veterans were discontented, feeling that they had sacrificed too much for too little. The lower classes were angry as well. Workers were striking in the cities, and peasants were trying to seize lands from the wealthy. The socialist party did well in the elections of 1919, and a communist party formed soon after. Many in the middle and upper classes feared that Italy would follow Russia in a communist revolution.

Into this turmoil came Benito Mussolini. A former socialist, Mussolini had broken ranks with many socialists in supporting the war. After serving in the war, he emerged as an aggressive ultra-nationalist. In 1919, he organized a group of veterans into a political organization. They known as Fascists, because Mussolini adopted as their symbol the *fasces*—a bundle of sticks lashed together, which had been a symbol of unity and strength in ancient Rome. Mussolini’s fascism would become a model for other fascist movements, of which Nazism was the most virulent form. In all its forms, fascism is nationalistic, anti-democratic, anti-socialist, and aggressive. It subordinates the individual to the glory and expansion of the state, and mobilizes the masses with propaganda and fear. Fascist governments are headed by a single party with a charismatic leader. Like communism under Stalin, fascism aims at consolidating a totalitarian state. However, fascism supports private property, albeit under tight regulation. While communism is based (at least in theory) on the struggle for equality, fascism is based on the struggle for power. In practice, Stalinist communism and fascism used similar methods to turn the masses into an aggressive state super-organism (though Mussolini was not as successful in achieving true totalitarianism as Stalin or Hitler).

Mussolini’s fascism appealed to many Italians, for many reasons. Many liked its nationalism and militarism. Many were tired of chaos and aimlessness, and wanted order and direction. Liberalism had never been firmly established in Italy, and many conservatives wanted a strong leader like the old monarchs. Many were simply afraid of socialism and communism. And many, especially the young, just wanted direction and excitement, and were impressed by Mussolini’s flamboyant public appearances. For all these reasons, the ranks of Mussolini’s fascists grew rapidly in the early 20's. Gangs of fascist “Black Shirts” terrorized communists, socialists, and even union members. In October, 1922, Mussolini organized thousands of fascist to descend on Rome, claiming to be preventing a communist revolution. King Victor Immanuel III made Mussolini prime minister, with “emergency powers” for one year.

Mussolini immediately began consolidated his control as the dictator of Italy. He filled the government with members of the Fascist party, and expelled members of other parties. He cracked down on dissent, censoring the newspapers and imprisoning those who criticized the

government. The media was used a means of indoctrination, as were the schools and fascist youth organizations. Labor unions were abolished. The means of production remained in private hands, though they were tightly controlled by a coalition of business and government leaders loyal to *Il Duce*- “the Leader”.

Mussolini retained his power because in many ways, his regime was successful. At the cost of individual freedom and human rights, the fascist government succeeding in ending the chaos and aimlessness Italy had experienced after the war. For a while, the economy grew stronger, but this ended when the Great Depression hit. Mussolini responded by trying to rally the people in a renewed quest for empire. In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia, which had fought off Italy in 1896. The League of Nations imposed sanctions on Italy for a while, but did nothing else to prevent the invasion of Ethiopia. The last thing other European nations wanted was another great war, and they were unwilling to take a stand against the growing aggression of fascist states.

### *THE RISE OF NAZI GERMANY*

After Kaiser William II abdicated, the new government was called the Weimar Republic. It was in trouble from the start. Millions of Germans had died in the war, the economy was shattered, and the burden of reparations payments was tremendous. When the government tried to cover its debts by printing more money, the resulting inflation was so extreme that people were using German marks to start their fires. Desperate, the government called a temporary halt to payments, resulting in the French occupation of the Ruhr. A plan brokered by the US allowed for reduced payments, and provided US loans. This eased the economic crisis for a while, but it tied the German economy more tightly to the US economy, and the Great Depression hit very hard. Defeat and hardship had left the German people humiliated and bitter. The Weimar government was seen as weak, and its moderate agenda was challenged by communists on the left and fascists on the right. Extreme nationalists could not accept that Germany had been legitimately defeated in the war, and were sure that leftists or Jews had sabotaged the nation.

One of these people was Adolph Hitler. Hitler had been a rather aimless young man, who

had moved to Vienna to try to become an artist. Vienna in those days was a hotbed of extreme nationalism, belief in “Aryan” supremacy, and anti-Semitism. Hitler served in World War I, and Germany’s defeat convinced him of the hateful theories he had learned in Vienna. He moved to Munich after the war, where he joined an ultra-nationalist group called the German Workers Party. Hitler was a clever politician, and a brilliant, mesmerizing speaker, and he came to dominate the group by 1920. He renamed it the National Socialist Workers Party, or, in German abbreviation, the Nazi Party. The Nazis soon adopted the swastika emblem, started a newspaper, and recruited a growing paramilitary corps of storm troopers; marauding toughs similar to Mussolini’s Black Shirts.

There were 50,000 members of the Nazi party, when Hitler led a failed revolt against the Weimar government. He spent a year in prison, during which time he wrote *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*). The book was an extended autobiographical rant declaring his hatred of Jews, Slavs, Communists, and Liberals, and his belief in the superiority of the German people, who he thought should be the rulers of the world. The book became a best seller. After his release, Hitler worked successfully to expand his party. During the depression, many unemployed and embittered Germans signed on, and soon the Nazis were the largest political party in Germany. In 1933, the German president made Hitler the chancellor of Germany. In a matter of months, he had tightened his grip on power, eliminating freedom of speech and assembly as well as other political parties. When the German president died, Hitler proclaimed himself *Führer* or “leader” of the Third Reich.

Hitler was a master of mass politics and propaganda, and he borrowed from Mussolini and Stalin in turning Germany into a fascist, totalitarian machine. Like Stalin, he consolidated his control within the Nazi party by having rivals murdered. A secret police called the Gestapo terrorized anyone showing any sign of dissent. Schools, newspapers, radio, architecture, youth groups, and even churches were turned into means of indoctrination. Book burning was a favorite pastime. Persecution of Jews grew harsher by the year. They were expelled from many professions in 1933 and deprived of citizenship in 1935. Many Jews fled to other countries. Because a large number of them were intellectuals and professionals, this was a great benefit for

the intellectual life of countries like the United States. In 1938, Jews were beaten and killed in Nazi-organized riots, and thousands began to be sent to concentration camps.

Hitler was able to mobilize the German population extremely effectively. Massive government employment projects reduced unemployment, and the German economy began a rapid recovery. One of the biggest employers was the arms industry. Dismissing the Versailles Treaty, Hitler began building up a massive, well-equipped army. His plans for using it were clear from his fiery speeches about the destiny of the “Aryan race” to rule over other peoples, and his claims that the Germans needed “living space”. As with Mussolini, Hitler’s growing aggression met with protests from other nations, but not, at first, with intervention.

*OTHER DICTATORSHIPS (EASTERN EUROPE, SPAIN)*

## **NATIONALISM VERSUS IMPERIALISM**

### **THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

The Middle East and North Africa began to take their modern form after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. By the outbreak of World War I, the empire had lost North Africa, which had been divided up among European powers. They had been almost entirely expelled from the Balkans, except for the area around Istanbul. They still held on to their heartland in Anatolia, and less firmly, to Mesopotamia, the eastern Mediterranean, and parts of western and eastern Arabia. After the war, they had only Anatolia and Istanbul. And these were threatened by Europeans, most immediately by the Greeks, who were occupying parts of the Anatolian coast. Mustafa Kemal and other Turkish nationalists defied both the Sultan and the Allied powers by forming an army and driving the Greeks out. They dethroned the Sultan in 1922, and Kemal became president of a new Turkish republic. Turkey had maintained its independence as European countries were tightening their grip on most of the Middle East.

Kemal was seen as Turkey’s savior, which gave him enormous influence as president. He

embarked on a series of revolutionary reforms aimed at transforming Turkey into a modern, secular nation. One measure was the introduction of surnames, and Kemal took the surname Atatürk, meaning “Father of the Turks”. Kemal Atatürk introduced a constitution and parliament, though he kept most power himself. Intent on separating church and state, he closed down religious schools, replaced Sharia law with a secular legal code, and even banned the traditional Ottoman hat, the fez. The alphabet of the Turkish language was changed from Arabic letters to the Latin alphabet of Europe. Women gained more access to education, and were given the vote in 1935. Atatürk died in 1938, having succeeded in making Turkey an independent nation with a secular government.

During World War I, the British encouraged Sharif Hussein of Mecca to lead an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, giving the impression that they would support an independent Arab state after the war. Hussein’s son Faisal led the revolt, which helped the Allies defeat the Ottoman Empire. When the empire fell, Faisal was proclaimed king of Syria. Soon afterward, however, the Allied powers decided that the region would be put under temporary League of Nations mandates. The French took control of Syria, deposed Faisal, and divided the region into Syria and Lebanon. The British gained control of the area from Palestine to Iraq. They made Faisal king of Iraq, and his brother Abdullah king of the area between Iraq and Palestine, called Transjordan (now Jordan). Neither Britain nor France was eager to relinquish control of the oil-rich region. Iraq became independent in 1932, and Transjordan in 1946, although the British continued to influence both governments. France withdrew from Syria and Lebanon in 1943.

Palestine presented a touchy situation. The region, and especially the city Jerusalem, is sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. For hundreds of years, however, the region had been predominantly Arab-Muslim, with pockets of Jews and Christians. The Zionist movement, which began in the late 1800's, resulted in a growing stream of Jewish immigrants to Palestine. In 1917, the British government had issued the Balfour Declaration, which stated that it would “favour” the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, but in a way that would not “prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities”. At the time, these “non-Jewish communities” of Palestinian Arabs composed about 90% of the Palestinian population. After the

war, Jews interpreted the Balfour Declaration as a promise for a Jewish state. The Palestinians wanted an independent Arab state, which many believed Britain had also promised. Jewish immigration increased after the war, and exploded after the rise of the Nazis in Germany. This led to conflicts between Jews and Palestinians, and to Palestinian revolts against British rule. In 1937 the British suggested the division of Palestine into separate Jewish and Palestinian states, but both sides rejected the proposal.

Much of Arabia remained independent after World War I, mainly because none of the Allies wanted what a vast desert with few apparent natural resources. The region was not united, but controlled by various shayks. One of these was Sharif Hussein in Mecca. Another was Ibn Saud in Riyadh. The Saud family had been at the center of the Wahhabi movement, a puritanical Islamic group that had gained control of western Arabia for a time in the early 1800's. The Ottoman Empire had defeated the Saud family, who had eventually settled in Kuwait. But Ibn Saud had taken Riyadh in 1902, revived the Wahhabi movement, and begun extending his control over the surrounding area. By 1932, he had gained control of the entire region, and proclaimed himself king of Saudi Arabia. The new nation remained extremely religiously conservative, and quite poor. Oil was discovered in 1938, however, and the country's economic prospects began to look up.

France, Italy, and Britain retained their presence in North Africa after World War I, but voices for independence were growing stronger. In Egypt, rebellions in 1919 lead Britain to declare the country's independence in 1922. This was mostly a charade, however, and Britain kept its hand in Egypt's affairs, especially the Suez Canal. Libya, meanwhile, remained under the control of Italy. Algeria was controlled by the French, and Morocco was divided between the French and the Spanish. Unlike the British, the French and Italians had encouraged their citizens to settle in the North African colonies.

To the east, Iran had been ruled by the Qajar Dynasty since 1794. During the 1800's, Iran had engaged in land disputes with Russia and with Britain, which controlled Afghanistan. This led to the loss of land, but also to exposure to western ideas. In the late 1800's, many educated Iranians began to demand liberal reforms, and a constitution and parliament were established in

1906. Around the same time, the British had obtained a concession to develop oil fields in the south. Iran remained officially neutral in the war, but the presence of oil turned it into a battlefield. In the resulting chaos, and growing hatred of foreign interference, a cavalry officer named Reza Khan overthrew the Qajar dynasty in 1921, and became the first Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925. Like Kemal Atatürk, Reza Shaw used a firm grip on power to impose liberal, secular reforms, though with rather less success. At the same time, he tried to rid his country of European political influence, but the presence of oil was working against him.

## **INDIA**

Like other colonies, India entered the war on the British side, and many Indian troops fought bravely. Many Indians felt they should gain more independence in return. The British did expand Indian self-rule somewhat, but not nearly enough to satisfy Indian nationalists. Protests and riots broke out around the country in 1919. The British government responded by passing the repressive Rowlatt Acts, which stripped away many civil rights. This only added fuel to the fires of protest. In April, 1919, several thousand protestors gathered in an enclosed square in the city of Amritsar. General Reginald Dyer ordered his troops to close off the exits and empty their guns into the crowd. When the firing stopped, 379 people were dead and 1,137 were injured. The Amritsar Massacre galvanized Indian nationalists, who now called for complete independence from British rule.

The tone of Indian nationalism would also be transformed by the emergence of one of the greatest spiritual leaders the world has ever seen—Mohandas Gandhi. Gandhi had been trained as a lawyer in England. After getting his degree, he set up a law practice in South Africa, where many Indians had migrated, working at first as indentured servants. As non-whites, Indians were subject to typically severe discrimination in South Africa. Shortly after arriving, Gandhi was told to leave a whites-only train car. He refused, and was thrown off the train. This experience helped shape Gandhi's views on non-violent civil disobedience as a means of fighting oppression. He became the leader of a movement resisting discrimination in South Africa, and succeeded in

winning many rights for Indians and other oppressed groups there.

Gandhi returned to India after the outbreak of World War I, and was welcomed as a hero by the people, who called him *Mahatma*, or “Great Soul”. By 1920, Gandhi had become a leader in the Indian National Congress. Under Gandhi’s influence, the Congress expanded beyond its base of educated, well-off Indians, and enlisted the masses in the struggle for independence. Gandhi channeled the protests against the Rowlatt Acts and the Amritsar Massacre by calling for a campaign of non-violent resistance to British rule—boycotting British goods, schools, and jobs, and refusing to pay taxes. Against Gandhi’s wishes violent riots broke out in 1922, and he was jailed for two years. When he was released, he founded a spiritual community, or *ashram*, and campaigned for better treatment of women, the elimination of “untouchable” status, self-reliance, and abstinence from drinking (and in his case, sex). Gandhi led a new campaign of non-violent resistance in 1930, leading thousands of people on a 240 mile march to the sea, where they violated British law by extracting salt from seawater instead of buying it from the British. Gandhi was arrested, and many of his fellow marchers endured severe beatings without striking back.

Such demonstrations of courage left the British with few options. They had to do something, but shows of authority only made them look more oppressive. They could have justified putting down violent revolts, but in the face of non-violence, all they could do was negotiate. During the 1930's, Indians won more representation in the government, though the British retained their control. At the same time, however, conflict was brewing among Indian nationalists. Gandhi had always argued for inclusiveness, and reached out to Muslims. Some Hindus, however, argued for Hindu supremacy and violent revolution. While most Muslims supported the Indian National Congress, others argued that the Congress would always favor Hindu interests. Under Muhammad Jinnah, the Muslim League grew more powerful, and by the late 1930's, it was advocating the division of India into separate Hindu and Muslim states.

## **SOUTHEAST ASIA**

In Southeast Asia, the weakening of colonial powers in World War I strengthened

nationalist demands for independence. But no Southeast Asian nation gained its independence in the period between the wars. Colonial governments responded in very different ways to independence movements. The Dutch and the French responded quite harshly. The Dutch cracked down on the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) in the 1930's, banning all nationalist movements. French Indochina (modern Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) was exploited and kept backward by the French. This gave revolutionary ideologies a deep appeal for the natives, and many in the region adopted communism during this period.

In Burma, independence movements, often lead by Buddhist organizations, helped win increased native participation in government. The British separated Burma and India in 1937, and a Burmese prime minister and parliament were established, though they still had to answer to a British governor. In Malaysia, another British colony, divisions between native Malays and Chinese and Indian immigrants kept nationalist movements from growing strong. The Philippines had been under US control since 1901. The Philippine economy, focused on raw materials, grew dependent on the US economy, but Filipinos were increasingly allowed to govern themselves. In 1935, the Philippines became a partially independent commonwealth, with an elected legislature, a constitution, and a president. Siam, the only Southeast Asian nation to retain its independence, had entered World War I on the side of the Allies. In return, these countries gave up many of concessions that they had previously held there. In 1932, a revolt turned Siam into a constitutional monarchy. The king remained on the throne, but with much-reduced powers. The new civilian government became more dominated by the military during the 1930's. In 1939, the name of the country was changed to Thailand.

## **CHINA**

The Chinese Republic established in 1911 had failed, and the country had descended into chaos. Republic officials remained in Beijing, but warlords ruled most of the country, while Sun Yat-Sen and his Kuomintang (Nationalist) Party held parts of the south. During World War I, a group of Western educated youths in Beijing began to call for the abandonment of Confucianism

in favor of western ways. They generally favored nationalism, western science, and modernization, though while some favored liberalism and capitalism, others favored socialism or communism. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1919, protests exploded in Beijing after the Treaty of Versailles gave Chinese territory, formerly held by Germany, to Japan. The protests served to broadcast the ideas of the Beijing movement, which became known as the May Fourth Movement. One result was that the Communism of Lenin, who had denounced imperialism, gained adherents. Sun Yat-Sen's nationalist Kuomintang party also gained many more followers, who hoped to unite China and free it from foreign influence. Sun was not a Communist, but he allied his party with Communist groups in order to gain a wider base of support. In the early 1920's, the Kuomintang raised an army to try to defeat the warlords and take Beijing.

Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, and control of the Kuomintang passed to the army leader Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang began military campaigns in 1926, gradually taking control of lands to the north. He did not trust the Communists in his army, however, and in 1927 he turned on them in a bloody purge. The survivors fled to a province in the south, and began to regroup. By 1928, Chiang had taken control of Beijing. The new government claimed to have reunified China, but their control was actually quite tenuous. Many warlords were still powerful, the communists in the south were gaining strength, and the Japanese were expanding in their control in the north. In 1931, the Japanese annexed Manchuria, setting it up as a puppet state called Manchukuo. Chiang wanted to defeat the Communists before making a stand against the Japanese, so he gave in to growing Japanese demands, which hurt his popularity severely. In 1934, his armies succeeded in driving the Communists from the south. In order to escape, the Communists embarked on the Long March, a winding, 6000-mile journey to northwestern China. Around 100,000 people began the march, but only a few thousand survived to the end. These survivors were a tough, tightly knit group. Under the leadership of Mao Zedong, they began to reorganize once again. Meanwhile, the Japanese were growing more aggressive.

## **JAPAN**

The Japanese had begun their imperial expansion in 1895, when they took Taiwan. After the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, Korea and parts of Manchuria came under their control. Japan entered World War I on the side of the allies, and thereby gained German-held territory in China. The Japanese economy boomed during the war, as Japan expanded into east Asian markets that European nations had been forced to neglect. Liberal reforms made some progress after the war. Men 25 and older were given the vote, and the prime minister began to be elected by the majority party in the Diet, instead of appointed by the emperor's advisors. As the 1920's progressed, however, the Japanese economy began to suffer. A terrible earthquake killed over 100,000 people in the Tokyo area in 1923. European nations began to compete again in Asian markets. Because Japan had few natural resources, making it dependent on foreign trade, the Great Depression hit very hard. Businesses closed, unemployment skyrocketed, and Japanese peasants often went hungry. As in Italy and Germany, people grew impatient with the slowness of parliamentary government, and were attracted to more extreme measures. Anti-liberal, militaristic, and ultra-nationalist elements in government grew more powerful.

Chiang Kai-shek's government seemed to be growing stronger, and many feared that Japan would lose its gains on the mainland. Ignoring the orders of the government, the army attacked Manchuria in 1931. China protested at the League of Nations, which condemned the invasion while doing nothing to stop it. Japan withdrew from the League in 1933. Within Japan, ultra-nationalists and military leaders began terrorizing moderates, and assassinated the prime minister in 1932. By 1936, a small group of military leaders had a firm hold on the country. They imposed censorship, arrested dissenters, used a secret police, and flooded the country with ultra-nationalist propaganda. The media and the schools urged absolute obedience to the military, and to the emperor. Japan had gone the way of Italy and Germany, and soon began allying itself with those countries. The Japanese tried to portray themselves to nationalists in other East Asian countries as leaders in the struggle against Western imperialism, but most of those people could see that the Japanese were simply trying to establish their own empire. Their suspicions were confirmed when the Japanese army invaded China in 1937, raping and killing the people of the city of Nanjing.

## THE SECOND WORLD WAR

### THE BUILDUP

In March, 1936, German troops marched into the Rhineland, which had been held by France since the First World War. At the time, the German army could have easily been defeated by France and Britain, but nothing was done. The memory of the great war was still strong, and most people in those countries were justifiably terrified at the thought of another. In July, 1936, the Spanish Civil War broke out. Mussolini and Hitler sent troops to help the fascists. This gave their armies practice, and gave them further assurance that they would not be opposed. In October, Hitler and Mussolini made a military alliance known as the Rome-Berlin Axis. Hitler's next violation of the Versailles Treaty was the Anschluss, the union of Germany with Austria in 1938. Then Hitler promised German speaking peoples in the Sudetenland, in western Czechoslovakia, that he would help them gain independence. The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, echoed the thoughts of many Britons in favoring a policy of appeasement. He arranged a meeting in Munich between himself, the French premier, Hitler, and Mussolini. Without inviting Czechoslovakia, they agreed to allow Hitler to occupy the Sudetenland, with the promise that he would leave the rest of the country alone. Czechoslovakia had been sold out. Chamberlain's policy of appeasement might have worked, had Hitler's word been good, or his ambitions limited. Neither was the case.

In March, 1939, Germany invaded the whole of Czechoslovakia. A week later, Hitler began demanding parts of Poland. The British and French finally saw that appeasement wasn't going to work. They began to strengthen their militaries, and declared they would fight if Poland were attacked. They also explored making an alliance with the Soviet Union, to the east of Poland. It was well known that Hitler hated communism, as well the Russian people in general, so the Soviets had good reason to fear the Germans. The leaders of Europe were shocked when Hitler and Stalin signed a non-aggression pact (and secretly agreed to divide Poland between themselves). Stalin thought he would have to fight the Germans sooner or later, but the non-

aggression pact gave him time to prepare. Hitler knew he could invade Poland without Soviet intervention, so he did, on September 1, 1939. To his surprise, Britain and France declared war on September 3.

## THE NAZI ONSLAUGHT

The German army attacked Poland in a rapid onslaught of planes, tanks, and heavy artillery called a *Blitzkrieg* (lightning war). The Soviets attacked from the east, and Poland was overwhelmed in less than a month. To build a buffer against German attack, the Soviets then annexed Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, and after a fierce “Winter War”, parts of Finland. In April, 1940, Germany launched a whole series of attacks. Denmark and Norway were swiftly overrun, followed by the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Once again, the Germans bypassed French defenses by attacking through Belgium, driving a French and British army back to Dunkirk, on the English Channel. About 300,000 troops were rescued by boat, but equipment had to be left behind. In June, Mussolini declared war on France and Britain, and invaded France from the south. Paris fell, and France surrendered on June 22, 1940. Northern France was governed directly by Germany, while a puppet government was set up in the south, with its capital at Vichy. Next Hitler tried to soften up Britain in preparation for an invasion, with a massive aerial bombardment campaign. The British air force, aided greatly by newly-invented radar, successfully engaged the German planes. Instead of being demoralized by the bombing raids, the British people dug in, rallying behind their new and charismatic Prime Minister, Winston Churchill.

Hitler decided to save Britain for later, and turned his attention elsewhere. German and Italian troops invaded the Balkans, conquering Albania, Greece, and Yugoslavia. Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary joined the Axis. From their base in Italian-held Libya, Axis armies attacked the British in Egypt, but neither side could gain the upper hand. In June, 1941, Hitler finally broke his pact with Stalin, and invaded the Soviet Union. At first, the Germans rolled over the Soviets. But Hitler, like Napoleon before him, had underestimated the difficulty of

conquering Russia. His other mistake was overruling the strategy of his generals. Instead of focusing on Moscow, his troops attacked along a wide front. The German advance was halted along a line from Leningrad (St. Petersburg), to Moscow, to Stalingrad (Volgograd). The Germans weren't prepared for the intense cold of an early Russian winter. Soldiers were freezing to death, and equipment began to fail. Supplies from Germany were unreliable, and the Russian resistance was formidable. Since Allied forces had not yet invaded in the west, Hitler concentrated his forces in Russia. Before 1944, there were 14 times as many German soldiers in the east as in the west. The Russian front became a vast, stationary killing zone. Russian soldiers and civilians suffered enormous losses. The siege of Leningrad, for example, lasted over two years, and claimed the lives of over a million Russian civilians.

## **JAPANESE EXPANSION AND U.S. INVOLVEMENT**

On the other side of Asia, the Chinese people were suffering a similar onslaught. The Japanese had invaded China in 1937, and the fighting had been ferocious ever since. In 1940, Japan had joined with Germany and Italy, creating the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. Japan began to expand into Southeast Asia and the Pacific, taking control of French Indochina in 1940, and then moving on the Dutch East Indies. In the United States, the growing worldwide power of the Axis was seen with increasing alarm. Isolationism was still strong at the outbreak of the war, though, and the US had stayed neutral, at least technically. In practice, they had supported the Allies with loans and armaments. They had also become increasingly assertive in opposing Japan's expansionism. They protested the invasions of China and Indochina, ceased exports of oil and scrap metal, and moved their Pacific fleet closer to Japan—to Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. The Japanese continued their expansion, especially after General Hideki Tojo became prime minister in October 1941. Tojo made a show of continuing diplomatic talks with the US as he planned his attack. On December 7, 1941, Japanese planes attacked the fleet at Pearl Harbor, killing 2,500 people and destroying several ships. At the request of president Roosevelt, the US congress declared war on Japan the next day. Three days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the

United States.

## **THE HEIGHT OF AXIS POWER**

By early 1942, 26 countries had joined the Allies, but the situation was still grim. The Japanese lost no momentum after Pearl Harbor. They drove American forces, under Douglas MacArthur, out of the Philippines, as well as Guam and Wake Island. The British were driven from Hong Kong, Malaya, and Burma, and the Dutch from the East Indies. All the while, the Japanese claimed that they were liberating the other Asian nations from Western imperialists, creating a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”. Some people bought this line at first, until forced labor, systematic mistreatment, and famine showed them that ultra-nationalist Japan was even more cruel than the western powers had been.

Meanwhile, much of Europe was held by the Nazis, who had set about building their “New Order”. Germanic peoples were treated relatively well, as a consequence of Hitler’s racial notions. The French were tolerated, and taxed heavily. The Slavs were treated as sub-humans, or “*untermenschen*”. Hitler wanted the Slavic lands as “living space” for the German people, and he began enslaving or killing captured Russians, Poles, and Ukrainians. The worst horrors fell to Jews, Gypsies, communists, political dissidents, homosexuals, and the physically and mentally disabled. All these people had been stripped of their rights and their property. Beginning in early 1942, Hitler adopted the “Final Solution” policy, which set out to murder all Jews and other “undesirables”. The concentration camps were converted into horribly efficient death factories. Men, women, and children were stripped and herded into gas chambers, where they suffocated over a period of 15 to 20 minutes. Afterward, gold teeth were removed, the bodies cremated, and the ashes used to make fertilizer. By the end of the war in 1945, about 11 million people, 6 million of them Jews (about 2/3 of the Jewish population in Europe), had been efficiently, systematically murdered. This monumental crime came to be called the *Holocaust*, a word meaning “complete destruction by fire”.

## **THE ALLIED ADVANCE**

Like World War I, World War II was a total war, in that it demanded the full resources of entire populations. The economies of whole nations were converted to the war effort on both sides. Since most men had left to fight, women worked in factories and administrative positions. Necessary commodities such as rubber and gasoline were tightly rationed. In the Soviet Union, entire factories were dismantled and reassembled beyond the Urals, out of reach of the Nazis. The huge industrial machine of the United States increased its production of arms after Pearl Harbor. By late 1942, the tide was beginning to turn toward the Allies. The Battle of the Coral Sea stopped the Japanese advance in the Pacific. After the Battle of Midway, the United States went on the offensive, gradually capturing one island after another in fierce fighting. In North Africa, an assault by Erwin Rommel's forces on the British was turned back at El Alamein. Meanwhile, a British-American force under General Dwight Eisenhower had landed in Morocco and Algeria. Rommel's army was finally trapped between the two Allied armies, and forced to surrender in May, 1943. But the major turning point of the war was the battle for Stalingrad. The Germans launched an all-out attack on the city in the fall of 1942. After a ferocious two-month battle, 80,000 Germans were captured, and another 200,000 killed. After Stalingrad, the Russians gradually began driving the Germans back.

Understandably, Stalin beseeched the other Allies to invade western Europe and force Hitler to move some of his troops there. In July, 1943, British and American forces landed in Sicily and soon defeated the Italian troops. Mussolini was forced out of power and arrested, but then rescued by the Germans. The Allied forces worked their way up the peninsula and captured Rome in June, 1944. Two days later—D-Day—a massive Allied force crossed the English Channel and invaded along the French coast, in Normandy. After heavy fighting, Allied forces liberated Paris in late August. Now Allied armies were moving on Germany from the west as well as the east. Germany had already been punished by Allied bombers throughout 1944. In the city of Dresden, a pitiless Allied bombing raid killed over 100,000 civilians. The Germans made one last offensive in Belgium, at the Battle of the Bulge, but were soon driven back again. As Allied

armies descended on Berlin, the European Axis began to crumble. Mussolini was captured and executed by Italian resistance fighters. Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945, and Germany surrendered a week later.

Japan, the one remaining Axis power, was on the defensive, but far from defeated. MacArthur's forces had retaken the Philippines in early 1945. Facing enormous resistance, including Kamikaze suicide bombings, the Americans took Iwo Jima and then Okinawa. Meanwhile, British, Indian, and Chinese troops were slowly advancing in Southeast Asia. Allied bombers increasingly devastated the major Japanese cities. But the Japanese were astonishingly tenacious, and they gave no indication of giving in. President Roosevelt had died in April, and the new president, Harry Truman, had a terrible choice to make. Truman's advisors estimated that an invasion of Japan would cost the lives of around a million soldiers. In July, after an intensive research effort called the Manhattan Project, the first atomic bomb had been tested in the desert of New Mexico. Truman and the other Allied leaders warned the Japanese that they would suffer "complete and utter destruction" if they did not surrender. The Japanese, of course, thought they were bluffing. On August 6, 1945, a bomber dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima. From 70 to 100 thousand people were killed instantly, and thousands more died later from injuries and radiation. But Japan did not surrender. Three days later another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, killing about 40,000 people. The Soviet Union had declared war on Japan the day before, and was moving through Manchuria toward Korea. The Japanese surrendered on August 14, 1945.

## **SURVEYING THE DESTRUCTION**

World War II was everything that so many people in the 20's and 30's had feared, and more. Because of aerial bombing, the destruction in Europe spread far beyond the places where ground troops had clashed. Many more lives—both military and civilian—were destroyed by the second World War than the first. The Soviet Union was especially hard hit, because the Nazis had concentrated their forces there, and treated Russians as sub-humans. About 7.5 million

Soviet soldiers died in the war, and twice that many were wounded. At least 15 million civilians were killed. China also suffered terribly in its battle against Japan—2.2 million soldiers, and as many as 10 million civilians, died there. Germany and Japan both suffered enormous losses as well. As many as 3.5 million German soldiers were killed, and perhaps 5 million civilians. Japan lost as many as 1.5 million soldiers. About 300,000 Japanese civilians died, mostly from the bombing at the end of the war. Of course, the people who suffered the most in World War II were the European Jews, the majority of whom did not survive the war. Though terrible rumors had reached the Allies, the ghastly truth of Nazi genocide was not revealed until the Allies discovered the death camps in Poland and Germany. Many German people had only a vague idea of the Nazi death machine, until Allied troops forced them to view the death camps, and the wagons and pits still piled with the last victims of the Holocaust.