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By: James H. Overfield, Editor

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World History Encyclopedia, Era 9: Promises and Paradoxes, 1945-Present

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ERA 9 Promises and Paradoxes, 1945-Present

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Janus (for whom the month of January is named) is an appropriate image for the current era. As the god of beginnings and endings, entrances and exits, his two faces allowed him to look backward as well as forward, seeing the past as well as the future. Historians of this era look backward, as historians must, but with the realization that they also are working at the advanced edge of human history, facing the future. Our task is to examine and bring some order to the history of the immediate past, about which it is nearly impossible to be completely objective. There is an important disjuncture between historical vision, however keen, and the interpretation of events as they approach the present. As Janus is at the very least middle aged, events closest to his gaze are least likely to be in clear focus. The people, places, events, and things that are today considered to be of great historical importance will in many cases be soon forgotten. Other events or persons, now little noticed, will come to be seen as of paramount importance.

Having acknowledged these limitations, we will immediately predict that future historians looking to the post-1945 period will pay particular attention to certain key events and trends. The Cold War, decolonization, the increasing sophistication and breadth of technology, and increasing globalization will assuredly find prominent places in future history textbooks. This era's starting date, 1945, marked the end of World War II and a political and cultural landscape sharply altered and ripe for further change worldwide. Colonized people saw in the increased humanitarian rhetoric of the postwar era and shifting fortunes of colonial powers a chance for autonomy and a dismantling of European imperialism. At the same time, national economies geared for war production shifted slowly to the production that allowed consumer societies to emerge in full force. The scientific and technological research that had marked the war's end with the atomic bomb attacks by the United States on Japan provided a name to describe the newness of the post-1945 era, expressing both its promises and anxieties, that is, the Atomic Age, which soon begat the Space Age and then the Information Age, all such names indicating the primacy of technology and its hold on the imagination.

The Cold War

Despite the wide devastation of World War II, which left more than 60 million dead, many people began the postwar era with great, but shortlived, optimism. The fearful military strength of the Axis powers had been crushed, only to be followed by a new and complex competition.

The two states that emerged as triumphant world powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, appeared unable to easily coexist. Each side promoted an economic system incompatible with the other and promoted its system in the fervent belief that in it was the last best hope of humanity. The US.-aligned states championed capitalism, with its ideology of individual freedom matched by free markets, while many also simultaneously expanded the welfare state along a moderate socialist trajectory. The communist world championed central command economies promoting social equality.

The political and military conflict was already evident when the leaders of the United States, the

Soviet Union, and Britain met in Yalta in 1945 to discuss the postwar political map. At Yalta, Josef Stalin signaled to Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill that the Soviet Union did not intend to withdraw its power or influence from Eastern Europe. By 1947, as elections in Poland were manipulated to support Soviet interests, as the Soviet Union and the United States clashed over the fate of West Berlin, and as a communist insurgency in Greece threatened Western interests, U.S. president Harry Truman issued the Truman Doctrine, insisting that the United States would aid "freedom-loving peoples" anywhere in the world seemingly threatened with communism. While the Soviet Union consolidated its power over Eastern Europe, the aid funds of the U.S. Marshall Plan bolstered West European economies to make communism a less attractive alternative and to increase U.S. overseas markets. By 1947 the Cold War had begun, along with a nuclear arms race and nuclear brinkmanship.

As both the United States and the Soviet Union built up their nuclear arsenals in the immediate postwar period, the world neared nuclear confrontations several times. One of the first followed the outbreak of the Korean War, when Soviet-and Chinese-supported North Korean forces swept past the 38th parallel in 1950. The U.S. military and the Truman administration seriously weighed the option of dropping atomic bombs on targets in the Soviet Union, North Korea, and China as a way to quickly end that confrontation but abandoned it in favor of supporting a plan whereby United Nations (UN) allied forces would protect South Korea and repel North Korean forces. Nuclear diplomacy also was unveiled behind the scenes during the Berlin Crisis of the late 1940s and in the later Berlin crises of the late 1950s and early 1960s when U.S. presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy could only vaguely hint at atomic retribution if the Soviets, with their far superior land armies, made good on their veiled promises to seize control of West Berlin, an isolated Western pocket within the territory of East Germany. The Cold War again almost became hot in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis when the United States learned of nuclear missile installations —capable of targeting U.S. cities—that the Soviets had placed on that island nation. For nearly a week, U.S. ships imposed a blockade on Soviet ships headed toward Cuba, and both sides, with their militaries on high alert, weighed nuclear options. Following the Cuban Missile Crisis, the first treaty talks between the United States and the Soviet Union began to limit nuclear missiles. Atomic diplomacy shifted from direct offensive threats to decisions to limit Cold War military confrontations to the

confines of proxy and confined regional wars, most notably the Vietnam and Afghanistan wars.

As the Cold War became the supreme issue in international politics, it also reshaped the cultural landscape. Both superpowers vied for supremacy not only in nuclear weapons but also in missions to outer space (whether unmanned satellites or spacecraft holding dogs, monkeys, or humans), consumer goods production, science education, and international chess matches. Each of the superpowers wished to lay claim to the mantle of modernity. At the same time, the ideological competition between the communist Soviet Union and the capitalist United States played out in hot spots around the globe, particularly as nationalist movements sought international support and sponsors. One prime example is Vietnam. Following World War II, Ho Chi Minh's decade-long nationalist struggle in Vietnam against French and Japanese imperialism slowly morphed into a Cold War set piece, with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Soviet Union aiding Ho Chi Minh in North Vietnam and the United States supporting the procapitalist and nominally democratic government of South Vietnam.

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Afghanistan was the last of the proxy battlefields of the Cold War, as Soviet troops and tanks entered Afghanistan in 1979 to support a communist government that lacked popular support, while the United States quietly funded insurgent troops inspired by an Islamist ideology. By the late 1980s, in part a result of enormous Cold War expenditures, the Soviet Union's economy was stretched to its brink, and the Soviet state's ensuing disintegration, official as of 1991, severely altered the political and economic landscape of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus.

Decolonization

During both world wars, European powers and Japan relied on their colonies for support. The defeat of Japan and the weakening of the European powers left previous colonies or dependent states in a precarious position. For more than a century, a sense of nationalism had been developing across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, encouraging anticolonial sentiments and, in Latin America, protests against neocolonialism. In India, with an already decades-old independence movement, South

Asians had fought on behalf of Britain with promises of autonomy following that war. Postwar independence was delayed as street conflicts approaching anarchy broke out between the country's Hindu majority and Muslim minority; after much rioting and upheaval, India, quickly divided into a largely Hindu India and a Muslim East and West Pakistan, ultimately gained independence in 1947. The founding of India and Pakistan as independent nations signaled the first major

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concession of European colonialism over an enormous population and landmass as well as the attendant perils of civil war during partition. Anticolonial struggles worldwide were emboldened, particularly as the newly formed UN and the two new superpowers formally repudiated colonialism (although their own practices were somewhat ambiguous). Between 1945 and 1985, more than 80 countries achieved independence. Some accomplished this with relative ease and little bloodshed; others suffered intense—sometimes genocidal—violence.

Technology and "Progress"

Many of the more dramatic technological advances of the late 20th century had Cold War origins. From the dropping of the first atomic bomb over Hiroshima, the world was gripped with a sense that a new age—the Atomic Age—had dawned. Atomic bombs were horrifying yet awesome and were celebrated in their own fashion with so-called atomic cocktails and fashion photographs of "Miss Atomic Bomb." The dreadful backdrop of nuclear holocaust also fit the fervent nihilism associated with art movements such as abstract expressionist painting, bebop music, and later jazz experimentation. The flip side of terror over possible nuclear destruction was Utopian dreams of human ingenuity and the eventual benefits of the friendly atom when harnessed to industrial and home energy needs. The consumer abundance spreading across the capitalist West underlined the possibility that technology—and capitalism—could provide comfort and new luxuries. In this sense, the Cold War competition extended from the sphere of the kitchen and on into outer space. Beginning with the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik in 1957, the superpowers funded costly space missions, vying for dominance in outer space often as a staged sideshow to advances in missile designs. Yet slowly through the decades, while the military repercussions of space exploration never subsided, space ventures turned from nationalistic spectacles to set pieces for global scientific cooperation.

The space programs also paralleled and intertwined with advances in electronics. As integrated circuits etched on silicon chips replaced vacuum tubes as switching devices and as information processing was miniaturized, the now widely available progeny of the enormous ENIAC computer built for the U.S. military during World War II and its counterparts in Europe slowly fueled a revolution in electronic goods, computing, communications, media, lifestyles, and thought. Machine Age metaphors ("shifting gears," "accelerate"), rampant since the early 20th century, gave way to Information Age metaphors ("multitasking," "networking") in vernacular expressions.

Technology and science also changed the world's demographics. A far quieter revolution ensued with a base in medicine and public health, as regimented agriculture and the postwar spread of public health measures, including at its most basic level inoculation campaigns, mosquito abatement, and clean drinking water increased lifespans and the world's population. In this same period, new drug regimens and treatments had

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made some forms of cancer and other formerly deadly diseases manageable. The earth's human population of 2.6 billion in 1950 skyrocketed to 6.5 billion in 2005. Average life spans increased, and infant mortality rates decreased to a third of their 1950 levels over this same period.

The Cold War era with its technological advances renewed with new vigor debates over the Utopian or dystopian promise of new technologies. Nuclear power provided inexpensive energy but left behind deadly radioactive waste. The fertilizers and pesticides that aided the Green Revolution in agriculture and averted famines also entered groundwater, ecosystems, body tissues, and human breast milk. The demand for oil led to oil spills that devastated wildlife. The comforts and freedom of automotive travel caused unhealthy smog. Industrial production following market incentives led to the poisoning of land, water, and air. Critiques of the new postwar prosperity slowly emerged in academic and popular books and in movements of the 1950s and 1960s that questioned the assumptions and hidden sacrifices involved in "progress."

The environmental movement that emerged in the 1970s gave voice to these concerns. It offered a

critique of rampant technology and insisted on an economics of limits and on an ethic based not only on utilitarian concerns regarding human life but also on the needs of the larger living communities of the earth. One of the more profound symbols of this movement was the "Whole Earth" photograph supplied by NASA from the Apollo 17 mission of late December 1972 that revealed the earth as a fragile harbor for life, a blue marble pressed in the darkness of space, revealing an icy white Antarctica and a sandy brown Africa surmounted with white clouds and surrounded with blue oceans. By the early 21st century, concerns for the human impact on the "whole earth" rose, as the likelihood of human-induced climate change, with increasing atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases affecting polar ice levels, sea levels, and climactic patterns shifted from a highly speculative theory to a pillar of policy making.

Globalization and Antiglobalization

One of the characters in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises,* when asked how he went bankrupt, answered, "Two ways . . . gradually and then suddenly." Much the same can be said for the emergence of globalization as a denning characteristic of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Centuries in the making, globalization defies easy definition. It is based on an evolving technological infrastructure in shipping, transport, travel, communications, and finance that has created worldwide networks and allowed corporations, industries, and other institutions to decentralize and link with partners in formerly remote regions. From these myriad networks, resources, products, and ideas can be transported and changed. People too are a component of globalization, whether tourists or shifting populations of intellectual and physical laborers. International financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Group of 8 also

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have helped steer national economies toward greater interconnection and dependencies. Ways of life and thought have changed as the local intersects the global.

Globalization challenges older physical, political, and geographical boundaries. On the political front, globalization is marked with the increasing power of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including health and charitable organizations such as the International Red Cross, Oxfam, and Doctors without Borders (Medicins Sans Frontieres); political or environmental watchdog groups such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, or the World Wildlife Fund; and international economic groups such as the World Bank, supranational institutions such as the European Union, and the UN and its myriad organizations.

Such evolving institutions with their multinational bases indicate a challenge to older parochial boundaries between nations and peoples. For some, globalization represents the triumph of US.-styled consumerism, while for others it represents the triumph of the multinational corporation over the nation-state. Sociologists speak of global cities with corporate headquarters, consumer centers, and retail chains such as Starbucks and Wal-Mart offering similar products in Brasilia, Boston, Beijing, and Buenos Aires. Anthropologists insist that the global trend toward homogenization must nevertheless navigate the local, including customs and tastes, hence hamburgers with rice buns in Japan and teriyaki-flavored chicken sandwiches in the United States. Few would still argue that globalization is Americanization. The United States can no longer be regarded as the world's sole transmitter of consumerism. A modern automotive corporation, for example, might have originated in England; might now be based in Germany; might have factories in South America and Asia, banking affiliates in the Middle East, and phone support in South Asia; might engage in joint ventures with a U.S.-based automotive firm; and might rely on parts shipped from all over the world.

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Global migrations and new technologies also encourage global flows of ideas, ideologies, and religions. Since 1945, the efforts of missionaries and grassroots efforts have made Christianity a global faith embraced by one-third of the world's population, with the majority no longer based in Western countries. Despite predictions that African nations would turn away from Christianity following decolonization, Christianity in Africa has instead grown. In 2000 half the total population of Africa embraced some form of Christianity, and Africa remained fertile ground for conversions to Roman Catholicism and Protestant denominations, many of which included syncretic elements such as dance in church services. Since 1945, North American-inspired Pentecostal churches have made large inroads in traditionally Roman Catholic Latin America. Islam has also grown since 1945, following rising birthrates, and has had an increasing impact on politics with the rise of Islamist

thought and political agendas. While moderate Muslims advocate inclusion in

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secular societies, Islamists reject the movement toward secularism and instead encourage the creation of governments whose rule is based on the Quran and Sharia. Extremists among these proponents have formed terrorist groups to destabilize contested regions and Western governments.

As people have become more mobile, with larger flows of transnational migration, or as people link electronically on the Internet, personal and group identities too have become more fluid. Globalization arguably has its positive effects, exposing people to new ideas, comforts, and possibilities that may lead to more rewarding identities and lives. In addition to material comforts, cultural productions also have spread, creating common ground, with, for example, hip-hop music devotees in myriad countries. Yet there is a flip side to such spreading cosmopolitanism: a loss of tradition, of cultural norms, and even a loss of a sense of place. The threat of a homogenized landscape and the alienation it can evoke has underpinned leftist critiques and reactionary movements, including terrorism (from ecoterrorism to the significant rise of fringe Muslim terrorism) and older forms of xenophobia, such as anti-immigration movements. Likewise, the benefits of globalization flow toward elite nations (the industrial or postindustrial North) and the elites within nations. As in the unrestrained capitalism of the 19th century, the neoliberal era of global corporations exacerbated the exploitation of natural resources, including people. Mobility of production benefits multinationals while severely undermining the power of labor unions and exploits workers in less developed nations (or the South) coerced or enticed to labor in sweatshop conditions. By late 2008, there were signs of curbs on globalization, as rising oil prices increased transport expenses and made the outsourcing of production less attractive. The economic meltdown that spread globally beginning in 2008, leading to the collapse of banks and lending and increased joblessness, also illustrated the vulnerability of interlinked economies.

The Cold War, decolonization, new technologies, and globalization have been primary shaping forces of world history since 1945. Their effects can be clearly observed when examined on a regional level.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Nationalism, colonialism, and Cold War ideological battles were a volatile mix in post-World War II Africa. As historians Erik Gilbert and Jonathan Reynolds observed *in Africa in World History* (2007), the history of Africa seems to provide the best examples of the "triumphs and tragedies" of the postwar years. At the end of the war, all of Africa was at least nominally under the control of European states except for South Africa (dominated by white settlers), Liberia, and Ethiopia. At the same time, the war had left the imperial powers Britain, France, Belgium, and Italy with devastated infrastructures and wrecked economies. They were not anxious to divest themselves of the colonies that might provide the labor and materials to rebuild. Yet none was anxious to alienate either of the two remaining superpowers, both of which were ideologically

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opposed to colonialism (although both employed hegemonic practices that were sometimes tantamount to informal colonialism, or neocolonialism). The United States—officially dedicated to the concepts of free trade and self-determination—promoted the view that Africans who had helped defeat the Axis powers had earned independence. The Soviet Union also supported African independence, holding to the Marxist-Leninist precept that colonies were the highest stage of capitalism. Both superpowers, however, routinely intervened in any instance where they perceived their own national interests at jeopardy.

After the war, Belgium and Portugal tried to operate on a business as usual basis in Africa, but Britain and France attempted to strike a course that would pacify African nationalism and avoid ideological confrontations with the United States and the Soviet Union. European political innovations, primarily consisting of a cosmetic increase in African participation in government (without actually reducing European control), generally fell flat. There was a strong residue of mistrust and hatred lingering from previous exploitation. In the Congo, for instance, the brutality of Belgian rule had been shocking even to the other colonial powers; no superficial changes could erase the remaining acrimony. Resentments lingered toward the less brutal colonial powers as well. Some of their economic innovations resulted in disaster, particularly those that attempted to

transport the techniques developed for the heavy soils of Europe to the fragile topsoils of Africa. As an example, a devastating loss of topsoil resulted from the British attempt to use tanks as tractors in the British East African Groundnut Scheme to establish huge peanut farms in Tanzania. As a result of this failed effort, hundreds of thousands of acres of African land lost productive capacity. As would be expected, these disasters intensified the nationalist movements already in progress.
The years following World War II were a period of dramatic political instability and of recurrent violence in Africa. Many Africans had unrealistic optimism about the 51 new states created between the late 1950s and the 1980s. Most of these new countries were based on European colonial boundaries, with little basis in geography or ethnicity. There was no reasonable hope that centuries of competition between groups now united into fragile states would resolve quickly or painlessly. Some governments tried to embrace all of their population, but too often ethnic favoritism left a large number of people angry and dissatisfied. With only rudimentary economic structures and little or no experience in self-government, these new governments were very unstable and were particularly vulnerable to the meddling of erstwhile colonial powers. During the decade of the 1960s alone, there were more than 40 successful insurrections. The United States and the Soviet Union would often play out their Cold War animosities by funding or otherwise supporting opposing sides in these civil wars.
By the beginning of the 21st century, most African states had found ways for their populations to live in peace, but the exceptions are dramatic and bloody. There is little hope that Africa will be entirely free of violence within the near future. Yet there have been many heroic acts

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of peacemaking, enabling populations in places such as South Africa and Rwanda to live in relative peace after going through bloody—and sometimes genocidal—periods. There is also a growing international commitment to helping address Africa's problems. Private organizations supported by celebrities or philanthropic groups such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are investing many millions of dollars to provide health care assistance, stimulate economies, and reclaim lost agricultural lands. There is also wide international interest in helping to reduce or eliminate civil violence and to call into account those who have initiated or exacerbated civil violence. In one example, on July 14, 2008, the International Criminal Court indicted Sudanese president Omar Hassan al-Bashir for genocide.

North Africa and the Middle East

The area stretching across North Africa through the Arabian Peninsula into Pakistan has been the site of conflicting cultural, social, and economic goals since the end of World War II. North Africa had been a war zone from 1940 through 1943 as the Allies attempted to secure a place to launch their offensive thrust into Europe. After the war, there was a powerful resurgence of Arab nationalism. The French attempted to preserve their empire after World War II, but the pull of nationalism and independence proved too strong. After French withdrawal from Vietnam in 1954, Algerians began a bloody eight-year rebellion. Morocco and Tunisia became independent in 1956, and two years later the French government offered independence to colonies agreeing to join an assembly, the French Community. Algeria rejected the option; the prolonged violence eventually led to the collapse of the French Fourth Republic in 1958 and the establishment of the Fifth Republic under Charles de Gaulle.

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The establishment of the State of Israel has been the most volatile issue in the postwar Muslim world. Arabs considered the establishment of Israel to be another version of European colonialism. Zionism, the Jewish nationalist movement, had originated in late-nineteenth-century Europe, but only small numbers of Jewish people migrated to Palestine before the mid-1950s. After the devastation of World War II, Jewish immigrants from all over the world went to British-held Palestine, including large waves of displaced persons from Eastern Europe. Yet Palestinian Arabs had been in the area for well over a millennium and, based on promises of self-determination, had expected to form a Muslim state. Regardless of the efforts of the UN to implement a two-state solution to the Palestine issue after the British withdrawal in 1948, Arabs attacked. Israeli troops, many of whom had honed their skills in the European armies of World War II, not only held their ground but also expanded

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their borders. Despite international efforts at peace, the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict currently focused on the contested Occupied Territories of the West Bank still inflames hostility against Israel in much of the Middle East.

Meanwhile, despite U.S. support of Israel, some Muslim states allied themselves with the United States while others allied themselves with the Soviet Union. Cold War confrontations and manipulations kept the area roiling. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1979–1989) unleashed a plethora of Muslim guerrilla warriors, known as mujahideen (such as a young Osama bin Laden) from elsewhere in the Muslim world to fight against the communist aggressor. Members of the ruling elite made fortunes participating in the global economic arena, exacerbating the disparity in the distribution of wealth. Ill-advised attempts at modernization were perceived as attacks on religious values. The combination inspired a backlash that drove many believers to more conservative religious positions. U.S. interventions in the Middle East during the post-Cold War period—particularly its continued support for Israel—created resentment in the region against what was perceived as U.S. imperialism, resulting in increased support for violent extremist groups, such as the Taliban and al-Qaeda (both of which were ironically remnants of U.S.-supported groups in the Soviet-Afghan wars). Acts of terror in major Western cities triggered major military responses by the West, notably the second Gulf War and the ongoing (as of 2009) war in Afghanistan that began on October 7, 2001. Worldwide apprehensions about the region were intensified by the 2009 disclosures of the development of enriched plutonium in Iran. Iran's leaders continue to decry accusations that their goal is to produce weapons of mass destruction, claiming that they are developing such technology for peaceful uses.

South Asia

As with Africa, self-determination failed to bring peace to South Asia (the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka). British withdrawal from South Asia and the partition between Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan in 1947 resulted in an overwhelming 10 million refugees. Deaths resulting from the forced relocations have never been completely documented but are estimated to have numbered between 500,000 and 1 million. Five wars subsequently were fought between Pakistan and India, with Pakistan generally aligned with the United States and the officially nonaligned India sharing warm relations with the Soviet Union until its dissolution. The Soviet Union, for example, supported India with large loans during its border clashes with China. The ongoing hostilities also hampered social and economic development in both lands, although the economies of both Pakistan and India, the latter the world's largest democratic state, have been growing since the last decade of the 20th century. India, in particular, since the 1990s has emerged as one of the economic powerhouses of the modern world. The current economic base ranges from subsistence farming through modern agribusiness, industrial production (with much foreign investment), and a strong service

industry. Software development and technology services are a growth industry now.

Off the eastern tip of India, the island nation of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) also won independence from Britain shortly after the war but has not enjoyed the same economic growth as India and Pakistan. The transition from a plantation economy was hampered by an intermittent civil war that was waged for 26 years, beginning in 1983, with Hindu separatists of South Indian heritage called the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) engaged in a struggle against the Buddhist Sinhalese majority. The insurrection was finally crushed in May 2009. All in all, the states of South Asia are only gradually overcoming the disruptions and division that resulted from their colonial past.

East Asia

East Asia—China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan—has been through astonishing changes since the end of World War II. After World War II, the economy of East Asia was in tatters, with famine and mass starvation occurring across vast regions. By the turn of the century, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and China controlled almost 30 percent more of the world's trade than North America (the combined economies of Canada, the United States, and Mexico).

The history of China between 1900 and 2000 has been a rollercoaster ride, swinging between extremes. During that relatively brief period, China went from empire to civil war, from a nearly subjugated people to an international powerhouse, from nationalist right-wing rule to communism, and then to a thriving market-oriented economy. Although both were nominally Marxist, China's relationship with the Soviet Union became tense as disputes over borderlines and doctrine multiplied. China's relationship with India also deteriorated when India denounced China's assertion of authority over Tibet in 1959, setting the stage for a subsequent series of border skirmishes.

Despite China's problems in international relations, it survived the tragic mistakes of early communist rule and has prospered economically. As of the summer of 2004, entrepreneurs from the private sector have been eligible to join the Communist Party; many observers now argue that communism now exists in China in name only.

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At the end of World War II, Japan's once-powerful empire had been dismantled, along with its industrial productive capacity. War-related death tolls were high: over 2 million civilian and military deaths and at least 810,000 persons whose fate was never learned. Most of the urban areas were bombed and devastated; about 9 million people were homeless. Food shortages were dire; death by starvation was common (over 1,000 died of malnutrition during the first 90 days of U.S. occupation in Tokyo alone). Although the U.S. occupation was aimed at reconstruction

and rehabilitation, only the economic boom created by the Korean War in 1950 prevented a severe depression. By the end of the Korean War, the economic stimulus brought higher wages that allowed food consumption to rise to truly subsistence levels. Although general economic ups and downs have occurred, Japan's economy remains dynamic.

Korea was one of the first battlegrounds of the Cold War. On August 8, 1945, two days after an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria. Seeking an Asian presence, the United States rushed troops to Korea on August 15. The United States and the Soviet Union agreed to divide Korea on the 38th parallel, with the Soviets administering the surrender of Japanese forces north of the parallel and the United States responsible for the south. Millions of Koreans who had lived in Japan or Manchuria during the war flooded back to the peninsula. Separate governments were established, one led by Kim II Sung in the north and the other by Syngman Rhee in the south. By 1949, both were conducting raids across the border. All out war broke out on June 25, 1950, when Kim launched an invasion of South Korea with seven divisions. By the end of formal hostilities in 1953, death tolls included at least 1 million North Koreans, 1 million South Koreans, 1 million Chinese, and nearly 37,000 American soldiers. After the Korean War, the area enjoyed a precarious peace, with South Korea developing into an economic powerhouse, while North Korea stagnated. Koreans still speak of reunification, but most observers seriously doubt that the impoverished, rigidly controlled North Korea could successfully integrate with the dynamic market economy of South Korea.

Regions are not only geographical but conceptual, and their defining characteristics fluctuate historically. Scholars debate about placing modern Vietnam into the geographic-cultural category of Southeast Asia because of its historic ties with the Indian Ocean and its societies in East Asia. Conrad Schirokauer and Donald N. Clark, in *Modern East Asia, a Brief History* (2004), include it with East Asia for several reasons, primarily because in the 20th century Vietnam's history has been intertwined with that of Japan and Korea as well as China. The French colonized the land in the mid-19th century, and the Japanese took over after France fell to Germany during World War II. At the war's end, Vietnam was divided between a communist north and a capitalist south. In the 1950s, Vietnam became a hot site in the Cold War, as the United States began its slow involvement that led to military conflict with nationalist communist forces. Following the U.S. withdrawal in 1975, the country united as a communist state. In 1986, the socialist transformation of the economy was declared a failure, and the party established a policy to support an entrepreneurial spirit and encourage people to farm and create businesses for profit. Over the next few years, Vietnam gradually moved toward a capitalist economy with little fanfare and few grand announcements. The economy has been gradually improving since the transition. Ironically, the U.S. goals for Vietnam—a form of democratic government and a capitalist market-based economy—were achieved only after the United States removed its troops.

Southeast Asia

The lands comprising the area that we now call Southeast Asia were, until World War II, considered a rim of isolated, minimally significant countries that evinced traces of Indian culture. Many scholars now include in this geographical area Myanmar (formerly Burma), Thailand, Malaysia,

Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, East Timor, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. During and after World War II, the strategic location of these Southeast Asian states caused international observers to change their perception of the area from a periphery to one of great global importance. As was true throughout Asia, prewar imperialism aroused intense nationalism in local populations. After finding that the post-World War I doctrine of self-determination was being applied to European states only, many Southeast Asian nationalists became disillusioned and looked toward the Soviet Union and later China for support. The area became explosive after World War II. Despite the nationalist sentiments that spread throughout the region, only Myanmar, Indonesia, and Cambodia achieved a significant degree of independence; even they remained vulnerable, to each other as well as to outside imperialism. In fact, Vietnam overtook Cambodia in late 1978 and occupied the country for a decade. Uprisings, coups, wars, and purges have plagued Southeast Asia since the end of World War II but have abated somewhat since the 1990s.

Indonesia, with the world's largest Muslim population, is made up of over 17,500 islands. It was occupied by the Japanese during World War II and declared itself a republic in 1945 but faced violent frictions on many fronts. Some groups denounced "Japanese collaborators," while the Islamic party (the Masjumi) denounced the Marxist and socialist groups. Communists attempted at least two coups. Despite promises made during the war by the Dutch government-in-exile, after the war Dutch forces launched an attack on Indonesian territories. The Independence Preparatory Committee was already in place, and the Japanesetrained Indonesian Army performed well against the Dutch during the hostilities of 1945–1949. Finally, the Netherlands government succumbed to international pressure and acknowledged the sovereignty of the Indonesian government. Achmed Sukarno led the country for its first 15 years, and his presidency was followed by General T. N. J. Suharto (1968–1998). The Sukarno period ended with a violent government response against communists, and the Suharto period was also marred by increasing human rights abuses. Coups, attempted coups, and violence have plagued the state during most of its existence.

Meanwhile, the Japanese had driven the British empire out of the land known as Burma or Myanmar during World War II. The Japanese slogan "Asia for Asians" inspired and excited the Burmese nationalists, but their harsh treatment under the Japanese soon disillusioned them. An underground resistance led by a small band of communists was joined by other groups, soon combined as the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL). The Burmese drive for independence coincided in time with that of India, and the British decided to withdraw from South

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and Southeast Asia and announced elections to the Constituent Assembly in January 1947. From 1948 until 1962, the country existed as an independent republic under the name of the Union of Burma until a military coup overthrew the civilian government. Some pundits argue that Myanmar/Burma's decision not to be a part of the British Commonwealth left it without the protection that might have prevented the military coup.

Russia, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, Northeast Asia

The former Soviet Union and its wider sphere of influence includes present-day Russia, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, the Baltic region, and Central Asia. Certainly, one of the biggest stories of the second half of the 20th century is the rapid ascendency to superpower status, the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, and Russia's steady effort in the past decade to reassert hegemony in the newly independent republics. During World War II, the governments of Hungary, Finland, and Romania joined Adolf Hitler in his declaration of war against the Soviet Union. Bulgaria also was an Axis member. After the war—in which 20 million to 30 million Russians died—Stalin, general secretary of the Communist Party and de facto head of government, insisted that domestic security required that friendly powers govern all countries bordering the Soviet Union. His position was understandable: although few in the West realized the extent of Soviet losses, nearly an entire generation of men had died. The war had destroyed farms along with livestock, farm machinery, factories, and homes. Before the end of World War II, Soviet armies were within reach of Berlin, having gained control of everything between that area and the USSR. The Soviets retained control of the lands they had occupied during their push through German-held areas, but it was not a simple matter of possession. The Soviets eradicated noncommunist political parties in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, yet there had already been a communist faction firmly in place in most East European states. The support of the Red Army ensured the initial success of local communists, and the Soviets kept a watchful eye thereafter. In the region, only Yugoslavia under Marshal Josip Broz Tito was able to retain autonomy during the Cold War.

Conflict between the so-called satellite states and Soviet Russia accelerated after Stalin's death. A revolt in Hungary was crushed in 1956, tightening Moscow's oversight. Soviet intervention also

squashed attempts in Czechoslovakia to establish political diversity.
Conflict between the so-called satellite states and Soviet Russia accelerated after Stalin's death. A revolt in Hungary was crushed in 1956, tightening Moscow's oversight. Soviet intervention also squashed attempts in Czechoslovakia to establish political diversity. The failure of economic reform, however, pushed the region into a long period of economic crisis, leading to a collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. Many volumes have been written—and will undoubtedly continue to be written —about the underlying economic

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weaknesses and mistakes under socialist rule. Soviet hegemony collapsed in 1989, and the Soviet Union itself ceased to exist on December 31, 1991. Not enough, perhaps, has been written about the remarkable restraint with which communist leaders relinquished their supremacy. The area that comprised the former Soviet Union has avoided the sort of large-scale bloodbath that could have ensued. In 1993, Czechoslovakia split peacefully in what has been called a "Velvet divorce" into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Other areas were not so fortunate. In the former Yugoslavia, rival ethnic groups divided into Macedonians, Slovenians, Croatians, Serbs, and Bosnians, who launched an ethnic cleansing onslaught against Muslim-held Bosnian territories. The UN, the United States, and other European states intervened in 1995 and brought a halt to overt warfare, but resources are thin, and ethnic resentments have been escalating since 2000. Relying on its gas and oil reserves as a source of political power, Russia has reasserted its influence across Eurasia and come into direct conflict with many of the new republics formed after the USSR's dissolution, most notably the Ukraine and Georgia, a region in which Russia intervened militarily in 2009.
The portion of the Soviet Union that lay in the large area of the traditionally Islamic lands to the north of Afghanistan and Iran (which might be described as western Central Asia) were also reorganized as a result of the collapse. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan (which was involved in a devastating civil war between 1992 and 1997) became independent in 1991 followed by Kazakhstan, the world's largest landlocked state, which declared independence on the last day of December 1991. Due to its large oil wealth and large populations of ethnic Russians (known as the "near abroad"), this region remains of geopolitical importance to post-Soviet Russia.

Southern and Western Europe

Two elements characterize the fortunes of Southern and Western Europe after the end of the war in 1945: a sharp contraction in international power followed by amazing reconstruction and economic recovery. The end of World War II marked the end of European world imperialism. As historian W M. Spellman noted in *A Concise History of the World since 1945* (2006), for about 400 years the European states had projected "Western power, Western culture, Western religion, and Western ideas around the globe." In so doing, the West had denned the parameters of the modern world. The European colonial edifice cracked in the early 20th century and crashed to the ground in the aftermath of World War II. In 1945, approximately one-third of the world's population lived in states dominated by imperial powers; that number dropped to less than 0.1 percent by the end of the century. European powers were not pleased to lose their colonies, but most lacked the resources to continue when faced with the triple threat of flagging domestic enthusiasm, opposition from the new superpowers, and increasing nationalism in the colonies.

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The largest challenge in Southern and Western Europe was to rebuild their war-torn lands. U.S. secretary of state George Marshall (1880–1959) proposed the European Recovery Program to assist in rebuilding, with the United States providing grants and loans for rebuilding and thus preventing the potential of communist victories in elections. All told, 16 nations participated. The plan was an outstanding political and economic success, resulting in jobs and economic recovery among the participating states. Its trade provisions also boosted the U.S. economy: almost two-thirds of European imports came from the United States. The Soviet Union instituted a counter program called the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance to coordinate rebuilding within the Soviet sphere of influence. Since all the participants had experienced the same devastation in war, there were not enough funds in the so-called Eastern Bloc to compete with the Marshall Plan. The high degree of success under the Marshall Plan served to exacerbate ideological conflicts. Communist parties were very active in the states in Southern Europe for a few years after 1945. There were communist coalition governments in France and Italy, and only British intervention prevented a successful

communist takeover in Greece in early 1945. However, as economic prosperity returned, interest in communism waned.

Europeans were conscious of both advantages and disadvantages of the accelerating global economy. In March 1957, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany signed an agreement to form the European Economic Community (ten years later, renamed the European Community). They enacted provisions for free movement between the member states, eliminated tariffs and other curbs on free trade, and formed political institutions such as the European Parliament dedicated to increasing European economic and political cohesion. The European Union presently consists of 27 members, with 13 members having adopted a common currency, the euro. Whether or not these measures will lead to political integration cannot be easily predicted, but the European Union exerts more influence than any of the member states could have done alone.

Latin America and the Caribbean

As the 20th century progressed, the tensions of the Cold War and other global struggles troubled Latin American states, such as Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, intensifying preexisting struggles and bringing new ones. Most of Latin America had little direct involvement in World War II (with the exception of Mexico and Brazil) but continued to suffer from the impact of the Great Depression. From the end of the war well until the present, most of the region experienced intense urbanization as rural agriculturalists migrated to cities, such as Mexico City, Brasilia, and Buenos Aires, that were ill-prepared for the influx. Industrialization lagged, and state involvement in social services was inadequate for the task. Many of the states of Latin America relied primarily on agricultural commodities and the sale of natural resources, such as petroleum exports,

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that were subject to wide variations in price. Postwar population escalation outstripped economic expansion, resulting in a dangerously growing unemployed or underemployed population. A wide and dangerous economic and social gap grew between the bulk of the population and the holders of the large rural estates or the wealthy urban elite.

Political developments in Latin America during this period varied widely among the states. Some became more intensely conservative in their support of the economic elite. Some regimes are occasionally described as crypto-fascist, as in the Getulio Dornelles Vargas dictatorship of Brazil and the coalition that created the Concordancia government of Argentina, which survived into the mid-20th century. The more regressive states, such as Paraguay, often banned or suppressed labor unions or organizations of laborers or peasants. The more industrialized states, such as Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, attempted to pacify the urban workforce by acceding to at least some demands.

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Representative governments were rare in Latin America, and even those with a claim to republicanism more often represented the interests of the elite. Cuba, as the sole communist dictatorship under the leadership of the charismatic Fidel Castro since the late 1950s, was an exception. By the mid-1960s, some activists and politicians in Latin America believed that Marxism would be the best road to reform, although few if any supported a Leninist or Maoist interpretation. Although appealing to peasants and laborers, the prevailing social, political, religious, and military establishments hotly opposed any local interpretations of Marxism. At the same time, the United States often wound up supporting, in the name of anticommunism, repressive regimes throughout Latin America (such as Argentina, Chile, Nicaragua, and Mexico). By the last decade of the 20th century, military dictatorships had largely been replaced by democratic and constitutional governments throughout Latin America, although there have been occasional threats of attempted coups.

In the Caribbean region, 12 former British territories were decolonized following World War II, and political problems have continued to linger in impoverished countries such as Haiti; the Latin American debt crisis also extended to the Caribbean, where high unemployment has remained an issue. There is a continuing trend in Latin America for states to join in cooperative ventures such as the creation of free-trade zones such as NAFTA, CAFTA, Caricom (Caribbean Community), and Mercosur and continuing pressure on the United States to abandon its isolation of communist Cuba. There also remain problems in some states of Latin America, such as Colombia and Mexico, from powerful criminal enterprises, particularly those involving the international drug trade.

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North America

On January 1, 1947, Canada became the first of the Commonwealth nations to declare its population citizens of their own state, Canada, rather than British citizens. As in the United States, in Canada there were advances in the political rights of women and ethnic minorities during the postwar years, including the enactment of a largely symbolic Canadian Bill of Rights in I960 declaring equality of race, religion, and beliefs. In 1969, Canada enacted the Official Languages Act that brought official bilingualism to Canada, making French a coequal language with English. Language was also an issue in the United States, where there were several unsuccessful attempts to enact official English monolingual acts. Both nations continued to move toward official protections for multicultur alism.

Canada supported the United States during the Cold War but not uncritically. Relations between the two became strained during the Vietnam War period. Canadian prime minister Lester Pearson and U.S. president Lyndon Johnson had a personal dust-up over critical remarks made by Pearson at Temple University in Philadelphia in 1965. All in all, about 500 Canadian firms supplied war materials to the United States, and more than 10,000 Canadians volunteered for combat in Vietnam. On the other hand, Canada gave refuge to more than 32,000 American draft resisters and later to nearly 60,000 Vietnamese War refugees. When 52 Americans were taken hostage in Tehran, the Canadian embassy staff hid American fugitives in their homes and also gave official sanctuary to 6 who had eluded capture at the American embassy. About 4,500 Canadians served in the 1991 Gulf War, but Canada declined to participate in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. However, Canada has sent troops to Afghanistan as part of a greater NATO contingent. The giants of North America acknowledge common interests but are not always a united front.

Oceania—Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Polynesia, and the South Pacific

A somewhat problematic geographical unit, Oceania covers an enormous area of the South Pacific that includes Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and the islands of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The population for the region hovers at around 30 million, with 95 percent concentrated in Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. Decolonization, Cold War politics, labor migration, globalization, and environmental issues have shaped the region since 1945. With the Korean War as a spur, the United States offered military protection to much of this region. In 1951, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand formed a mutual defense pact (the ANZUS Pact), which marked the end of British military power in the region. On the periphery of Oceania, the United States also forged a similar pact with the Philippines, allowing naval and air bases, and the United States maintains major military

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bases as well in Guam. In trade, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) included Australia and New Zealand with the states of Southeast Asia as well as the United States and Britain. In recent years, Australia has developed a closer relationship with China as a result of their growing economic interdependence.

In the postwar period, New Zealand and Australia gradually liberalized immigration policies and by the 1970s had jettisoned rules that limited immigration based on racist standards. Immigrants from the Pacific Islands and Asia became more common, with about 9 percent of New Zealand's population being Asian in the early 2000s.

New Guinea, the world's second-largest island, is divided, with its western half part of Indonesia and the other half in Papua New Guinea, with its population of six million, that gained independence from Australia in 1975. Its governance has been unstable, with one island, Bougainville, granted limited autonomous status in 2000 after a violent secessionist movement. The central government has developed economic and military ties with China. The smaller island nations of Oceania gained independence from European and Western colonial powers in much of this region by the 1970s, with French Polynesia and the U.S. territory of Guam notable exceptions.

Some of the region's continuing conflicts can be regarded as the outgrowth of poverty and the legacy of colonialism. For example, native Fijians and peoples of South Asian ancestry transported to Fiji to work as indentured laborers under British rule have clashed in recent decades over political control of the island; this conflict led to a violent coup in 1987 Along with poverty and racial rifts, environmental issues continue to shape the region: the U.S. hydrogen bomb tests on the Marshall

Islands during the Cold War have left a legacy of fallout and contamination. As of 2009, evacuated residents of the Bikini Atoll had still not returned to the island, although tourism has returned. There are still ongoing efforts at cleanup of the soil, which is contaminated with cesium. Many of the islands of Polynesia, notably Tuvalu, have been experiencing increasing salinization of groundwater and cropland because of rising sea levels that may soon make that island nation uninhabitable. Many others are also threatened.

Conclusion

While the year 1945 is an important historical marker, many of the major historical trends that followed 1945 represent continuities with earlier eras. The Cold War and its underlying nuclear terror keynoted the new in science and technology. Yet basic advances in sanitation and medical care also had significant impact on world populations. Reactions to wartime atrocities as well as to Western rhetoric for freedom, including U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt's 1941 address highlighting the "Four Freedoms" (freedom of speech and worship, freedom from want and fear), marked a social shift postwar that registered worldwide. The UN "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (1948) further encapsulated such concerns. Yet the drive for autonomy in the developing

(and post-Soviet) worlds intensified nationalism and sometimes tragically has led to ethnic cleansing campaigns.

With both the United States and the Soviet Union vying for supremacy in output of missiles and refrigerators during the Cold War, it was not until the advent of the environmental movement in the 1970s that the values underlying Western consumer society faced a serious challenge. One can celebrate the expansion of capitalist ideology as well as consumerism following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Yet there have been strong reactions against unrestrained capitalism and what many perceive as the Westernization of the world. Globalization's boosters view the appearance of a McDonald's or Starbucks in every world capital as a sign of a progressive economy, yet such outlets are a source of irritation for antiglobalization advocates of all stripes.

During the Cold War, it often seemed that the world was on the brink of self-destruction, yet after the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center and subsequent terrorist attacks in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, many observers looked back on the era with a degree of nostalgia. Despite the enormous power that the current knowledge base and latest technologies provide, population growth, the threat of famine in the less industrialized nations, environmental degradation (including the threat of disruptions in climate caused by global warming), financial instability, and competition for geopolitical resources offer formidable challenges to existing states and institutions.

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By: James H. Overfield, Editor

ERA 7 The Age of Revolutions, 1750–1914

James H. Overfield

An Age of Transformation

Change has occurred in every era, indeed in every year, month, and moment of human history. But true turning points, eras in which change is transformational and revolutionary, are rare. Throughout history there have been only three. The first occurred 200,000 to 250,000 years ago, when after millions of years of evolution the first human beings, *homo sapiens*, emerged in Africa. The second began around the ninth or tenth millennium BCE when agriculture appeared in the Middle East. As agriculture spread to other regions over the next several thousand years, it turned most human beings into farmers and herders and set the stage for the emergence of cities and states, the development of social hierarchies, and inventions ranging from writing and the alphabet to metallurgy. Although humans after 1000 BCE created intellectual traditions and religions of lasting importance and continued to make technological advances, these advances were not transformational. A great majority of human beings devoted their lives to food production, and agriculture remained the basis for society and government.

A third great transformation began around 1750, when human beings learned to build complex machines powered by new sources of energy that increased productivity to unimagined levels, created new wealth, and revolutionized travel and communications. These innovations were accompanied by urbanization, scientific progress, mass education, and many new political and social movements: liberalism, democracy, socialism, feminism, and nationalism as well as fascism and totalitarianism. Taken together, these developments gave rise to new modern societies far different from the agrarian societies in which humans had lived for thousands of years.

Europe was the first region to experience these changes, and Europeans were the driving force behind their spread to other parts of the world. By 1900 a handful of European states, along with the United States, controlled vast empires that stretched around the globe. They had the world's largest and most lethal armies and navies. They produced most of the world's manufactured goods, dominated world trade, and controlled world capital markets. They had the world's highest levels of per capita wealth, the best health care, and the most impressive schools and universities. Never before had global economic and political relations been so decidedly tipped in favor of just one small part of the globe. Europe had been transformed, and Europe had transformed the world. These transformations are the outstanding themes of world history from 1750 to 1914.

Europe's Moment

Although historians have many opinions about the underlying causes of Europe's transformation, they all agree on when it began and what events set it in motion. It began in the late eighteenth century, when England experienced the first stages of the Industrial Revolution and when Great Britain's North American colonies and France experienced political upheavals that changed what people thought about justice, human rights, freedom, and the relationship between rulers and subjects.

England's Industrial Revolution began in the late 1700s with the introduction of a number of new devices and techniques in the textile and iron industries and the development of the first efficient coal- burning steam engines. It continued in the early 1800s, when steam engines found countless

new applications and when the artisan's workshop was giving way to mills and factories where hundreds or even thousands of laborers worked in surroundings that allowed for specialization, organization, and discipline. During the 1800s industrialization spread to continental Europe, the United States, and Japan and on a limited basis to other parts of the world. Decade by decade, one technological innovation followed another in an outburst of inventiveness never before seen in history. Whole new industries were created. Commercially viable railroads and electric telegraph systems were introduced in the 1830s, the generation and utilization of electricity became widespread in the 1880s, and gasoline-powered engines were introduced in the 1890s. New methods were developed for making steel, paper, and industrial chemicals. Refinements of gear shapers, lathes, drill presses, and other machine tools enabled manufacturers to make and maintain sophisticated and specialized machines for the production of everything from farm implements to bicycles to guns. Productivity soared.

Largely because of industrialization, during the nineteenth century Europe became the hub of a global system of trade and finance in which it was the dominant exporter of manufactured goods and a voracious importer of coffee, rubber, tin, palm oil, wheat, cotton, metals, and other primary products. Europe also exported vast amounts of capital throughout the world, where English pounds, French francs, German marks, and Dutch guilders were used to build railroads, telegraph systems, and canals and to fund banks and government loans.

By increasing Europe's standard of living and making available new sources of food, industrialization contributed to a threefold increase in Europe's population between 1750 and 1900, from 150 million to 450 million.

Industrialization changed European society in many ways. By increasing Europe's standard of living and making available new sources of food, industrialization contributed to a threefold increase in Europe's population between 1750 and 1900, from 150 million to 450 million. Furthermore, as a result of the emigration of between 50 million and 60 million Europeans in the 1800s, the number of people of European descent living abroad grew from approximately 9 million in 1750 to 150 million in 1914. Within Europe the makeup of the population also changed. As factories

spread, the numbers of craftsmen, rural laborers, and small farmers declined. In contrast, the middle class, including everyone from petty clerks to prosperous businessmen, grew in numbers and wealth, and a large class of unskilled industrial workers emerged. By the late 1800s girls were being educated alongside boys in public schools, and more women were attending universities and entering the paid workforce as teachers, nurses, office workers, and retail clerks. Feminist movements demanding legal and political equality for women were gathering strength. Most importantly, industrialization made Europe increasingly urban. Around 1800 only 12 percent of the population lived in towns with populations over 5,000. By 1900 that percentage had increased to 34 percent and was just short of 40 percent if largely rural Russia is excluded. In 1900 Europe had 226 cities with populations over 100,000 and 12 with populations over 1 million.

Inevitably, economic and social changes of such magnitude affected politics. In the 1700s Europe was made up of hundreds of states, many of them small principalities, city-states, and ecclesiastical territories in present-day Germany and Italy. Most of these states were monarchies in which kings ruled by divine right and without representative institutions or constitutional checks. Everywhere society was based on the principles of hierarchy and privilege. High offices in government and the military were monopolized by aristocrats who enjoyed exemptions from certain taxes and a host of other legal and honorific privileges. Tax burdens fell disproportionately on politically disenfranchised peasants and in large states such as France varied from province to province and city to city.

The institution of absolute monarchy and the principles of hierarchy came under increasing scrutiny in the eighteenth century, especially in France. Writers such as Montesquieu and Voltaire praised England's limited monarchy, in which landowners and merchants had forced their monarchs to recognize the powers of Parliament and accept other constitutional restraints as a result of two seventeenth-century revolutions. The Swiss-born writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau proposed that political legitimacy was based on popular sovereignty, not divine right. In the 1780s Europeans were intrigued by what had occurred in North America, where after the American Revolution the former 13 colonies had come together to found the United States of America, a republic with a written constitution that guaranteed basic human rights.

The great turning point in Europe's political history was the French Revolution of the 1790s. Although not the first political upheaval in Europe's history to be called a revolution, no previous revolution matched the extent, ambitions, and impact of the revolution in France. This was the first revolution to involve an entire population. Peasants, artisans, unskilled workers, women, members

of the middle class, clergy, and even nobles played key roles. This was also the first revolution to go beyond removing a particular monarch or seeking narrow changes in politics or religion. French revolutionaries sought a complete break from the past and the creation of a radically new type of society based on reason and equality.

The French Revolution also introduced nationalism as a potent political force. Previously, Europeans had shown little emotional

attachment to governments in which they had no voice and that they perceived as representing the interests of a privileged minority. This changed when the French overthrew their monarchy, ended the privileges of the nobility, and created a government based on democracy, liberty, and equality. When a coalition of states declared war on France in 1792 to restore the old political order, the French fought with patriotic fervor to preserve their revolution and extend its principles. First under revolutionary regimes and then under Napoleon, the French by 1810 had established an empire and alliance system that stretched from the Iberian Peninsula to Russia. In response, nationalism began to stir in other parts of Europe.

In the short term the French Revolution failed to realize many of its goals. The idealism of the 1790s gave way to the heavy-handed rule of Napoleon after 1799 and the restoration of the old regime in France and much of Europe after 1815. Efforts to turn back the clock proved futile, however. By 1914 monarchs still reigned, and aristocrats still played important roles in government, but they did so in states with written constitutions, representative assemblies, political parties, and regular elections. Democratization was accompanied by the emergence of socialist parties dedicated to the principle of social and economic equality. By 1914 nationalism had redrawn the map of Europe. Italy and Germany had become unified nations, and Belgium had gained its independence from the Netherlands, Norway had gained its independence from Sweden, and Greece, Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria had gained their independence from the Ottoman empire. In 1905 even Russia, the archsymbol of autocracy and repression, experienced a revolution that resulted in a state parliament, the recognition of political parties, and a written constitution.

Europe and the World

While Europe itself was undergoing sweeping changes, it was also transforming the world as a result of its economic reach, its empire building, and the emigration of millions of its people. Imperialism was nothing new for Europeans. In the 1500s and 1600s Europe's maritime states laid claim to the Americas, the West Indies, and the Philippines, while Russia extended its borders across northern Asia to the Pacific Ocean. Between the 1780s and the 1820s most of Europe's American colonies won their independence, but in Africa and Asia new European empires were emerging. The British gained control of parts of India, the Russians added territories in the Caucasus region, the Dutch extended their power in the East Indies, and France invaded Algeria. Then, between the early 1870s and 1900 Great Britain added 4.5 million square miles (11.7 million square kilometers) and 66 million people to its empire, France added 3.5 million square miles (9.1 million square kilometers) and 26 million people, Russia added half a million square miles (1.3 million square kilometers) and 6.5 million people, and Germany added 1 million square miles (2.6 million square kilometers) and 13 million people. Acquisitions by Belgium, Italy, and the United States

added to these totals. By 1900 one-third of all the earth's people lived in European or American colonies.

What accounts for this explosion of European empire building? One part of the explanation was the ever-widening technological and military gap between Europe and the rest of the world. With steamship navies, magazine-fed repeating rifles, and machine guns, Europeans and the native troops they paid to fight for them had distinct advantages when facing African or Asian resistance. The electric telegraph, oceangoing steamships, and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 also played important roles. In 1800 a letter from London took five to eight months to reach India, depending on the season; by 1870 a telegraph message from London to India took just five hours. The Suez Canal shortened the voyage from London to Bombay (present-day Mumbai) by half and to Singapore by almost a third. The introduction of faster and more efficient steamships reduced the time further. All these advances enabled Europeans to administer colonies and manage distant

business enterprises with a speed and efficiency unimagined in the past.
What accounts for this explosion of European empire building? One part of the explanation was the ever-widening technological and military gap between Europe and the rest of the world.
Not all Europeans (or Americans) favored imperialism. Antiimperialist sentiment goes back to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and continued in the nineteenth century in the writings of Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and others. During imperialism's heyday, left-wing political parties generally opposed colonization, and in 1899 the treaty by which the United States annexed the Philippines inspired heated debate in the U.S. Senate and barely received the two-thirds approval necessary for passage. Clearly, however, during the late nineteenth century proimperialist arguments won the day among statesmen and most members of the general public.
Many were convinced that colonies made economic sense in an age of industrial expansion and growing competition. At a time when trade was stagnating as a result of an economic downturn and growing protectionism, colonies could serve as safe markets for manufactured goods; as sources of many industrial raw materials and consumer goods such as coffee, tea, and sugar; and as areas for investments in mining, road building, railroad construction, and other enterprises. In an atmosphere of growing nationalism, an empire came to be viewed as a badge of national greatness. As rivalries intensified, it was difficult to stand by when a rival grabbed a bit of territory in Africa or Asia. These points of view emerged in an intellectual atmosphere that justified European dominance because of the supposed superiority of European values and institutions, a superiority thought to be linked to inherent racial qualities. Imperialists furthermore were convinced that colonial rule would foster the work of missionaries, advance education, expand health care, end slavery, improve the lot of women, and teach the values of hard work and discipline. Colonialism, they maintained, was more than a matter of pursuing national self-interest. It was also a civilizing mission to advance human progress.

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Europe Extended: The Americas and "Neo-Europes"
European ascendancy from 1750 to 1914 can be measured not only in terms of Europe's empires but also by the extent to which Europeans exported their institutions, values, languages, and religions to the Americas, southern Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. All of these regions had at some point been part of European empires, and all achieved political independence before 1914. All experienced substantial European migration and settlement, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when they attracted approximately 60 million European immigrants.
In all these regions European conquest and settlement transformed the makeup of the population. Inhabitants of the Pacific Islands and Indigenous Australians were ravaged by European diseases and along with the Khoikhoi, Xhosa, Zulu, Herero, Ndbele and countless other Africans were driven from their lands. In parts of Latin America and Canada, native peoples intermarried with whites to produce populations of mestizos, métis, or "coloreds." Populations were further diversified in the Americas by the continued importation of African slaves well into the nineteenth century. The Americas and to a much lesser degree southern Africa also attracted smaller numbers of Asian immigrants. In all these regions, however, Europeans dominated economic and political life, Christianity gained new followers, and the use of European languages spread.
In Latin America liberals battled conservatives, federalists battled centralists, and Catholics battled secularists; periods of constitutional government alternated with rule by military strongmen.
European political control ended first in the Americas, where the Thirteen Colonies won their independence from Britain between 1776 and 1783 and where Latin America threw off Spanish and Portuguese rule in the 1810s and 1820s. In North America the former colonies came together to form a single nation, the United States of America, while in Latin America independence resulted in the founding of just short of 20 new states, from Mexico in the north to Chile and Argentina in the south. Each of these new states became a republic except Brazil, which was a monarchy until 1889. None of them escaped political conflict. In Latin America liberals battled conservatives, federalists battled centralists, and Catholics battled secular-ists; periods of constitutional government alternated with rule by military strong-men. Regionalism was also a source of conflict, especially in Brazil, Argentina, and the United States, the latter of which fought a bloody civil war between 1861 and 1865. Property restrictions and systems of indirect elections disenfranchised the mass of the peasantry in much of Latin America, where republican and dictatorial governments alike represented the interests of large landowners and businessmen. Democracy in the United States was also less than perfect. By 1914 women could vote in presidential elections in only two states, and after emancipation most blacks were prevented from voting by intimidation and systematic exclusion from the voting rolls.

In contrast to the experience of the rest of the Americas, Canada's path to political independence was largely peaceful. Originally settled by small numbers of French fur trappers and farmers, Canada became part of the British Empire following the British victory over France in the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). In the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century its English-speaking population grew as a result of immigration of British Loyalists during the American Revolution and migration from Britain. Despite tensions between French-speaking Lower Canada and English-speaking Upper Canada, people in both regions chafed under British rule, and in the 1840s, rather than risk another war for independence, the British withdrew their troops, agreed to the unification of Upper and Lower Canada, and granted this new entity the machinery of self-government. In 1867 the British Parliament passed the British North America Act, which approved the formation of the Dominion of Canada, consisting of "old Canada," the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, and the maritime provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Canada, now a self-governing state within the British Empire (with foreign affairs controlled by Great Britain until 1931), soon embarked on a period of westward expansion that resulted in difficult interactions with native peoples and métis but ultimately resulted in the incorporation of Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta into Canada between 1870 and 1905.

Canada's experience was a model for other British colonies with significant white English-speaking populations. Australia accepted dominion status in 1901, followed by New Zealand in 1907. The road to independence in South Africa was rockier. Settled by Dutch farmers in 1652 and annexed by Great Britain in 1806 during the Napoleonic Wars, in the 1800s the region saw a three-way struggle among the Zulu and other African tribes; the Boers, mainly Afrikaans-speaking descendants of the Dutch settlers; and more recently arrived English businessmen, settlers, and officials. Following the South African (or Boer) War from 1899 to 1902, the two Boer republics, Transvaal and the Orange Free State, became part of the British Empire but with the promise of limited self-government. In 1910 they united with two British colonies, Natal and the Cape Colony, to form the Union of South Africa. Blacks were barred from sitting in the new state's parliament, which in 1913 restricted black land ownership to regions that made up just 7 percent of the new state's territory.

By the early 1900s the Americas and the new dominions in the British Empire were important players in the world economy. After the Suez Canal opened in 1869 and refrigerated steamships were introduced in the 1870s, New Zealand became an exporter of mutton and dairy products, while Australia exported great quantities of wool. South Africa was a major source of gold and diamonds. Canada exported fish, meat, dairy products, lumber, and wheat. Latin America prospered in the late 1800s from its exports of beef, sugar, hides, guano, and metals. Banks, railroads, and shipping, however, were controlled mainly by British investors, and the region's manufactured goods were overwhelmingly British imports. So great was Latin America's dependence on European investments, markets, and manufactures that the late nineteenth

century is referred to as an era of neoimperialism, reminiscent of the region's status during the colonial era.

The United States was also an exporter of primary products, with the South a main source of cotton for England's textile mills and the Great Plains a major supplier of Europe's wheat. But the United States also became a major industrial power. Blessed with coal, petroleum, and iron ore along with a skilled and energetic workforce, an expanding domestic market, a boom in railway construction, ample capital, and probusiness governments, American manufacturers after the Civil War pumped out a huge stockpile of industrial and consumer goods. By 1914 the United States was a dominant force in the world economy and was about to assume an equally important role in politics.

Africa and Asia in the Age of Imperialism

Although European imperialists claimed that their imperialist conquests were spreading the benefits of civilization, few Asians or Africans were eager to be "civilized" by becoming subjects of a European power. Although some collaborated with Europeans out of self-interest, a more common response was resistance, first seen in the British conquest of India in the 1700s. The British gained a foothold in Bengal in 1757 after defeating the Bengal Army at the Battle of Plassey and confirmed their authority in 1764 at the Battle of Buxar, in which an army of European and sepoy (native) soldiers defeated the combined forces of Bengal, Oudh (Awadh), and the Mughal emperor. Over the

next several decades the British extended their authority in India, but only after fighting wars against Mysore (1766–1799), the Maratha Confederacy (1775–1818), and the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab (1845–1846 and 1848–1849).

In Southeast Asia, British hegemony in parts of Burma (Myanmar) was established in 1826 after the First Anglo-Burmese War and extended to all of Burma in 1886 after the Third Anglo-Burmese War. The Vietnamese fought the French in two wars, and the Filipinos, having just won their independence from Spain, fought the United States between 1899 and 1902 to prevent annexation. Wars against Dutch rule in the East Indies were fought by the Javanese between 1825 and 1830 and by the Sumatran sultanate of Aceh between 1873 and 1904. In Africa, resistance to European aggression was offered by the Zulu and Ndebele in southern Africa, the Ethiopians and Sudanese in the northeast, the Asante in the west, and the Algerians in the north. The extension of Russian power in the Caucasus and Inner Asia resulted from a series of wars from the 1770s to the 1870s against the Ottoman empire, Persia, Chechnya, Dagistan, and numerous smaller territories and tribal groups.

The Europeans were victorious in all these wars except two, the First Anglo-Afghan War of 1839–1842 and the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1895–1896. But their victories were costly. The French were forced to commit 100,000 troops to fight in Algeria, one-third of its army at the time. Between 1899 and 1902 the United States sent 126,000 troops to fight in the Philippines and lost over 4,000 of them. Asian and African casualties were much higher. It is estimated that between 1750 and 1913

colonial wars cost 300,000 European lives and between 800,000 and 1 mil lion among their opponents. Some historians claim that if deaths by famine, disease, and forced migration are included, as many as 25 million Africans and Asians may have died as a result of colonial wars.

Once colonial rule had been established, victors faced the challenge of governing millions of new subjects, few of whom were pleased with their new status. In a number of notorious cases, the first impulse was self-enrichment through plunder. After taking control of Bengal, officials of the British East India Company extorted "gifts" from Indian princes, appropriated tax revenues, took advantage of special trade arrangements, and happily accepted bribes from Indian merchants and bankers. Robert Clive, the victorious commander at Plassey, returned to England in 1760 at age 32 as one of the kingdom's wealthiest men. The actions of Clive and his colleagues were roundly condemned, and soon the English government imposed controls over the behavior of its greedy merchants.

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Other examples abound. In the 1830s the Dutch imposed the so-called Cultivation System on Sumatran and Javanese farmers, who were forced to allocate acreage to cash crops such as coffee, tea, sugar, and indigo, which the Dutch then sold on the international market. By the 1850s, profits from the system provided over 30 percent of state revenues for the Netherlands government. However, by the 1860s Dutch public opinion had turned against the Cultivation System as excessively exploitive, and the system was gradually dismantled. A few decades later Belgian king Leopold II also had dreams of instant riches when he managed to turn much of east-central Africa into his private colony, the Congo Free State. After claiming all uncultivated land in the colony, his agents compelled villagers through torture, intimidation, mutilation, and murder to meet quotas for the collection of rubber and ivory. His enterprise became an embarrassment for the Belgians, whose government took over his holdings after information about his brutal regime caused an international outcry.

In most cases the goals and policies of the colonizers were more modest, though no less motivated by self-interest. At minimum, colonial administrators sought to create and maintain a level of economic activity that would provide sufficient tax revenues to make the colonies self-supporting while simultaneously benefiting the economies of the mother countries by providing food and raw materials, opportunities for investment, and a market for manufactured goods. Reaching such goals required administrations capable of providing law and order and efficient tax collection, all at minimal expense.

Colonial regimes varied, but overall their similarities are more striking than their differences. All of them were basically authoritarian, with authority in the hands of Europeans. In the Indian Raj, policy decisions and appointments were made at first by the East India Company's Court of Directors, next by the royal Board of Control, and after company rule

ended in 1858 by the secretary of state for Indian affairs. Until 1854 administration of Britain's other colonies was the responsibility of the secretary of war and afterward the colonial secretary. By the early 1900s all major imperialist states had ministries to oversee their colonies except the United States, which gave the president authority to set policy for the Philippines. In the colonies themselves authority was exercised by an appointed official, usually a governor-general, under whom served department heads and provincial administrators. Overall the number of European colonial officials was small. In the late 1800s approximately 6,000 English officials worked in the Indian Civil Service at a time when India's population was around 300 million. In Rwanda and Burundi, two kingdoms in German East Africa with a combined population of 4.5 million, there were 11 German civil servants and 40 German soldiers in 1914.

Nowhere was a serious effort made to seek input and advice from the colonized. Though natives served on legislative councils to advise the governor-general and provincial governors in several British colonies in Africa (from the 1840s) and in India (from the 1860s), they were handpicked from the elite and rarely dissented from the official line. Only in 1909 was a highly restricted Indian electorate given the right to vote for assembly representatives. In any case, neither the governor-general nor the provincial governors were obligated to accept the advice they received.

Although denied political power, Africans and Asians were essential for the functioning of all colonial regimes. Colonial armies were officered by Europeans but consisted mainly of native troops. Native people also were responsible for local administration. The British Empire is best known for its reliance on "indirect rule," a policy identified with the colonial administrator Frederick Lugard in which the British relied on traditional rulers—princes, chiefs and emirs—to collect taxes, settle minor disputes, and enforce other regulations. Although French and Dutch administrators had somewhat more interactions with their colonial subjects, they too depended on appointed "chiefs" or village leaders to carry out policies at the ground level.

To meet demands of European businesses for workers, colonial governments requisitioned unpaid labor and forced villagers to accept wage-paying jobs by requiring that taxes be paid in cash rather than in agricultural products.

With the exception of the Portuguese, who were content to make their money in Mozambique and Angola "the old-fashioned way" through the sale of slaves and the export of contract labor, other colonial powers sought to profit from their possessions by encouraging economic development and integrating the colonial economies into global markets. This meant claiming whatever mineral wealth the colony might have and encouraging farmers to grow crops for which there was global demand. Vast tracts of land were appropriated and given or sold at bargain prices to individual Europeans or businesses for mining or farming. Europeans also received rights to mine diamonds and gold in southern Africa, tin in Malaya, and phosphates on Pacific islands. For lands that remained in the hands of Asians and Africans, colonial regimes frequently

required that acreage be set aside for cash crops, such as cotton in eastern Africa and sugar and coffee in Java. To meet demands of European businesses for workers, colonial governments requisitioned unpaid labor and forced villagers to accept wage-paying jobs by requiring that taxes be paid in cash rather than in agricultural products.

Colonial regimes supported infrastructure projects when they could afford them, and the projects served their purposes. Mainly using money raised through taxes on the colonies themselves, they improved harbors, built roads, installed telegraph systems, and, most importantly, introduced railroads. The first railroad lines were laid in India in the 1850s, and by the end of the century India had more than 25,000 miles (40,234 kilometers) of track, more than all of Asia combined and the fourth- largest railroad system in the world behind the United States, Canada, and Russia. The railways were foreign-owned, financed through the issue of bonds guaranteed by the Indian colonial government, and consisted of rails and moving stock manufactured in England.

One thing that was not encouraged was native industrialization. Only India showed a modest degree of industrialization, and this only after its handicraft-based cotton industry had been damaged (but not wiped out entirely) by cheap English imports. The first Indian cotton mills were built with English capital in the 1850s, and more such mills were established after the 1870s when a number of Indian entrepreneurs became involved in the industry. By the late 1870s India was supplying cotton yarn for the Chinese and Japanese markets, but weaving enterprises struggled to

overcome English competition. India and the rest of the colonial world were still overwhelmingly agrarian in 1914 and remained so at the time of independence later in the twentieth century.
By the early 1900s it was still too early to offer answers to the question of whether imperialism, as many of its advocates claimed, benefited the Africans and Asians who came under its sway. In many regions the colonial era had just begun. Even in the early 1900s, however, some preliminary judgments could have been made. Imperialism's defenders could cite the Europeans' success in limiting slavery and the slave trade, founding schools and universities, introducing modern medical care and industrial-age technologies, providing security, and spreading Christianity. Imperialism's detractors also could have made some strong points. They could have pointed to the deaths of many tens of thousands of native Australians, Maori in New Zealand, and other Pacific islanders from contact with European-borne diseases. They could have cited the millions of Asian and Africans who died in colonial wars and rebellions. They also could have cited atrocious examples of cruelty that occurred in the jungles of Leopold II's Congo and the deserts of German Southwest Africa, where rebellious Herero were driven into the Kalahari Desert to die of thirst when German troops were ordered to block their access to water. Others could point to the underlying racism of the whole imperialist project, the self-interest behind economic policy, and the hypocrisy of campaigning against slavery while using forced labor to build roads.
Many Asians and Africans accommodated themselves to their new rulers. Some, who benefited from new educational and professional

opportunities, expressed their gratitude to Europeans for opening the door to science, Western thought, and new technologies. Many, however, were deeply resentful. The Java War (1825–1830), the Maji-Maji Rebellion (1905), the Herero War (1912), and the Indian Rebellion (1857–1858) were major uprisings, and there were countless others on a smaller scale. By the late 1800s nationalist movements were taking shape in Vietnam, Africa's Gold Coast, Egypt, and especially India. In 1885 the Indian National Congress was founded to win educated middle-class Indians a voice in decision making and greater opportunities in the Indian Civil Service. Two decades later extremists within the organization were calling on the British to "quit India" and were sponsoring civil disobedience campaigns and boycotts to make sure the British got the message. The Indians rallied to the British cause in World War I, sending troops to fight in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. But nationalism grew in the interwar years, and after World War II India and Pakistan won their independence, the first major step in the disintegration of the vast European empires built between 1750 and 1914.

Independent States in Africa and Asia

In all of Africa and Asia, only seven states were still independent in 1914. One of them, Liberia, which was founded as a colony by private philanthropists for repatriated American slaves, avoided partition by England and France only because of diplomatic pressure from the United States. In the other six states—Ethiopia, the Ottoman empire, Persia, Thailand, China, and Japan—leaders understood the precariousness of their situations and implemented programs of military, political, and economic reform to defend their territorial integrity and sovereignty. The timing, implementation, and results of these programs differed, but only one was an unequivocal success. Japan not only avoided foreign control but also became an agent of imperialism itself.

Against an Ethiopian army of 80,000 to 100,000, Italy suffered a humiliating defeat and was forced to sign the Treaty of Addis Ababa, which recognized Ethiopian independence.

Ethiopia preserved its independence as a result of military preparation and battlefield success against Italy, one of the weaker European powers. Although steps toward strengthening Ethiopia's military had been taken by his immediate predecessors, Emperor Menelik II (r. 1889–1913) receives most of the credit for preserving Ethiopia's independence. On taking power he was aware of Ethiopia's vulnerability especially in relation to Italy, which was eager to prove that it was a great power by jumping into the scramble for Africa. In 1889 he conceded to the Italians the disputed province of Eritrea to buy time to outfit and enlarge his army in anticipation of an Italian attack. The attack came in 1895, when a dispute over the wording of the 1889 Treaty of Uccialli provided Italy a reason to invade. At the Battle of Adowa, fought on March 1, 1896, the 18,000-man Italian Army, consisting mainly of new conscripts and Eritreans, was hampered

by a shortage of artillery, outdated guns, and inaccurate maps. Against an Ethiopian army of

80,000 to 100,000, Italy suffered a humiliating defeat and was forced to sign the Treaty of Addis Ababa, which recognized Ethiopian independence.
After his victory, Menelik took steps to modernize Ethiopia's economy and educational system. New roads were built, harbors were upgraded, and banks, a postal service, railroads, and telephone and telegraph systems were all introduced with the help of European advisers and capital. Nonetheless, Ethiopians feared renewed European interference when Menelik died in 1913. They were saved by the outbreak of World War I in 1914, but in the end they could not escape colonization. In 1936 an invasion ordered by the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini led to Ethiopia's annexation in May 1937.
Whereas Menelik relied on military preparedness to protect Ethiopia's independence, the rulers of Thailand, Mongkut (r. 1851–1868) and his son Chulalongkorn (r. 1868–1910), took a more nuanced approach to prevent a British or French takeover. Aware of European military capabilities, their strategy was to avoid giving England or France a pretext for armed intervention while simultaneously pursuing government reform and economic modernization. Mongkut, for example, in 1855 signed a treaty of commerce and understanding with Britain that served as a model for treaties with other Western powers. By doing so, he not only avoided conflict but also attracted capital for banks and construction projects. Chulalongkorn continued his father's policy of conciliation and reform. He gradually abolished slavery, reformed the police and judicial system, and overhauled his administration. Working with European experts, he founded academies to train army and navy officers, sponsored schools for children of aristocratic families, and encouraged study abroad. Despite these efforts, Chulalongkorn still faced French and English territorial demands. Between 1893 and 1909 he ceded Laos and two Cambodian provinces to the French and four Malay provinces to the British. But the core of the country was preserved.
Persian rulers also pursued a policy of diplomacy, military reform, and economic development to protect their nation's territorial integrity and independence. But their plans were poorly executed, and as a result, by the early 1900s much of Persia was under the control of Russia and Britain. In the early 1800s Persia was just beginning to recover from decades of anarchy following the fall of the Safavid dynasty in the 1720s. When the Qajars, a Shia tribe from northern Persia, took power in 1794, they inherited a disunited country, an entrenched clerical elite, and an economy based almost entirely on agriculture and pastoralism. Aware of the Qajars' tenuous hold on power and stung by military defeats at the hands of the Russians in the 1810s, Crown Prince Abbas Mizra (1783–1833) and a number of other Persian princes sought to reform the military. They developed "new armies" comprised of full-time soldiers trained by European officers and equipped with modern fire-arms and artillery. These troops performed poorly in the Russo-Persian War of 1828–1830, and for the rest of the nineteenth century military reform was a low priority for the Qajar shahs. As a result, in the early 1900s Persia had a tiny navy and only a 25,000-man army, comprised of

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poorly trained conscripts, irregular tribal fighters, and a Russian-trained "Cossack" brigade.
Persia managed to retain a semblance of independence only because the two interested European powers, Russia and Great Britain, counterbalanced one another. Beginning in the 1850s, Russian and British diplomats sought to influence Persian foreign policy (often through bribes), while their businessmen competed for concessions to control Persian shipping, railroad construction, insurance, petroleum, and tobacco. Such concessions attracted foreign capital and lucrative bribes for the shah and his officials but disgusted many of his subjects. In 1891 the government was forced to revoke a tobacco concession to a British firm after it caused nationwide demonstrations and a boycott of all tobacco products.
By the turn of the century government policies had generated opposition from many groups including the Shia clergy, who opposed their rulers' infatuation with things European; businessmen who resented concessions; and officials, journalists, and intellectuals who sought constitutional limitations on the Qajars' arbitrary rule. In 1905 antigovernment protests in Teheran forced Shah Muzaffar al-Din to approve a new constitution that provided for a parliament with control over finances and foreign affairs. With the new government facing bankruptcy and widespread disorder, in the fall of 1907 Russia and Britain announced the Anglo-Russian Convention. This made northern Persia a Russian sphere of influence and allocated a smaller region in the southeast to Britain. The Persian government maintained authority over a middle portion of the country, which faced civil war and continued Russian and British interference until World War I. Persia was still independent, but its experience in the nineteenth century was hardly a success.
In contrast to Persia, Ethiopia, and Thailand, the Ottoman empire and China were both major world powers in 1750. China was fresh from conquests in central Asia, had the world's largest economy, and was in the midst of a long period of effective rule under its fourth Manchu emperor, Qianlong (r.

1735–1796). The Ottoman empire, centered in Anatolia, was no longer a feared military power, but it still ruled a multi-ethnic, religiously diverse empire that stretched over three continents.
China and the Ottoman empire both experienced foreign and internal threats in the nineteenth century, and in response their rulers made efforts to introduce wide-ranging reforms. Much was accomplished but not enough to preserve the Ottoman empire or China's tradition of imperial rule. China's imperial age ended in 1911 when the Qing dynasty was overthrown, and the Ottoman empire ended in September 1922 when the parliament of the new Turkish republic abolished the sultanate. The heir of the Ottoman empire was the smaller secular nation-state of Turkey, in which its new leader Mustafa Kemal relentlessly pursued policies of modernization and Westernization that in many respects drew upon the efforts of nineteenth-century Ottoman reformers.
Reform became a topic of discussion among Ottoman officials much earlier than in China. Beginning in the seventeenth century, many Ottoman officials wrote memoranda outlining plans for ending corruption, increasing revenues, revitalizing the army, and regaining control of the

provinces. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reform also became a priority of the sultans and their closest advisers. With territories in Europe and a history of fighting European armies, Ottoman leaders were aware of the economic and military changes taking place in Europe and their need to catch up if they hoped to compete with their long-time rivals.
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In contrast, reform in China became a priority only in the mid-nineteenth century. Although signs of dynastic decline first appeared in the late 1700s, they failed to spark major concern. Indifference also characterized China's early dealings with
Europeans. British appeals to expand trade were rejected, and emperors and officials continued to view Europeans as their inferiors. Then in the mid-1800s catastrophe struck. Following defeat by the British in the First Opium War (1839–1842), China was forced to accept the first of what proved to be several unequal treaties that resulted in territorial losses in Burma, Vietnam, Korea, and Taiwan and the acceptance of spheres of influence in which foreigners claimed special rights and economic privileges. More catastrophic was the eruption of three major rebellions: the Tai-ping Rebellion (1851–1864), which raged through central China; the Nian Rebellion (1851–1868) in the north; and a series of Muslim revolts (1855–1873) in the west. The rebellions were suppressed but at great cost: an estimated 20 million deaths resulted from the Taiping Rebellion alone.
Early Chinese and Ottoman reform movements both focused on strengthening the military. The centerpiece of the New Order introduced by Sultan Selim III in 1792 was a new army unit made up of professional soldiers trained by European officers and given modern weapons and artillery. Administrative changes and tax reforms were devised to pay for these new troops, and educational reform meant founding military schools for future officers. China's Self-Strengthening Movement, which began in the 1860s, had a similar focus. Its advocates believed in the superiority of Chinese values and institutions but conceded that China had fallen behind Europe militarily. Thus, China could strengthen itself by recommitting to Confucian values and by introducing the study of Western languages, mathematics, and science. This would give them the expertise to build the ships and weapons needed to surpass and defeat the West.
In both the Ottoman empire and China, the meaning of reform changed over time. Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839) continued to emphasize strengthening the military but made a broader commitment to Westernization. His government sent young men to Europe to study, encouraged steamship service between France and Anatolia, and founded publishing houses, newspapers, and schools with specialties in science and mathematics. During the era of Tanzimat, or restructuring, that took place under sultans Abdul Mejid (r. 1839–1861) and Abdul Aziz

(r. 1871–1876), the government went further still. It revamped the legal system along European lines, committed itself to guaranteeing the rights of the sultan's Christian and Jewish subjects, established provincial assemblies, and drew up a blueprint for a system of public education. Toward the end of the Tanzimat era, the concept of reform was expanded to include constitutionalism and parliamentary government. In 1876 progressive government ministers convinced the newly

installed Abdulhamid II to accept a constitution with provisions for cabinet government and a parliament but to no avail. In 1878 Abdulhamid suspended the constitution and ruled as an autocrat until 1908.

In its different stages Ottoman reform was consistently supported by the sultans, some of whom acted decisively against conservative opponents. Mahmud II, for example, knowing that the Janissary corps and the Islamic clergy had undercut Selim III's reforms, crushed and disbanded the Janissaries in 1828. He and his successors found ways to weaken the clerical establishment by limiting its role in law and education. Even the autocratic Abdulhamid II fully embraced the Tanzimat program of educational reform and economic development.

The concept of reform underwent a similar evolution in China, but the process took place in just a few decades rather than over a century. In 1898 Emperor Guangzhu went beyond self-strengthening when in three months he issued dozens of decrees that committed his government to deemphasizing the importance of Confucian studies for the civil service examinations, streamlining administrative procedures, establishing technical and engineering schools, and promoting economic development by stimulating industry and commerce and encouraging farmers to grow crops for export. The emperor's program was scuttled by conservative opponents, but in the early 1900s reformers pushed for even more radical changes, some of which were implemented. They abolished the civil service examination system; established new ministries of education, police, and commerce; reformed the penal code; introduced budgetary planning; and established a program for a transition to constitutional government.

Although Chinese reformers accomplished a great deal, ultimately they failed to provide China with the economic and military weapons to stand up to Japan and the Western powers; they also failed to save the dynasty and China's Confucian tradition. By the 1890s many Chinese, stirred by nationalism and inspired by ideologies of constitutionalism and liberalism, were convinced that even the most vigorous reforms could not revive China's fortunes. A clean break with the past—revolution—was needed. The revolution came in 1911 when an army mutiny in central China spread to other provinces and led to the abdication of the last emperor in February 1912. After more than 2,000 years of imperial rule, China now became a republic.

The Ottoman empire also experienced political upheaval in the early 1900s. In 1908 the Young Turks, led by Turkish-speaking army officers, took advantage of army mutinies and popular disturbances to pressure Sultan Abdulhamid II to reinstate the Constitution of 1876 in 1908 and force him to resign in 1909. He was replaced by Mehmed V, Abdulhamid's 65-year old younger brother, who had never showed the

slightest interest in pubic affairs. It was now left to the Young Turks to guide the Ottoman empire through the perils of World War I and its aftermath.

Like Persia, the Ottoman empire, China, and Thailand, Japan faced foreign threats and internal tensions in the nineteenth century and, like these other states, managed to remain independent. Japan did so, however, without foreign spheres of influence, and losses of territory. Rather than becoming a victim of imperialism, Japan itself became an imperialist power.

Since the early 1600s Japan had been governed by members of the Tokugawa dynasty, who as shoguns ruled on behalf of the ceremonial and politically powerless emperors. Under their rule Japan experienced 250 years of peace and economic expansion, but by the early 1800s disenchantment was growing. The shoguns had provided no meaningful response to problems of rural discontent, famines, samurai indebtedness, higher taxes, conflicts between daimyo and the shogunal administration, and foreign pressures to end Japan's seclusion policy. Then in July 1853 Commodore Matthew Perry entered Edo (present-day Tokyo) Harbor with eight ships and demanded on behalf of American president Millard Fillmore that Japan open its ports to foreign trade and accept the presence of an American consul. In early 1854 the shogun acquiesced, and by 1858 he had signed commercial treaties with the major European powers. Perceived as a humiliation and a threat, these events further discredited the shogun and inspired support for a radical restructuring of Japanese politics in which the emperor would resume political authority. Tensions grew in the 1860s and came to a head in early 1868 when forces led by the Satsuma and Choshu clans deposed the shogun and replaced him with the 14-year-old Emperor Mutsuhito. The new era of Meiji ("Enlightened Rule") had begun.

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Although the events of 1867–1868 theoretically restored the emperor to power, decisions during

the Meiji era were made by a small group of ministers devoted to the spirit of their mottos: "rich country, strong army" and "civilization and enlightenment." They achieved breathtaking results. Centrally controlled prefectures and municipalities replaced the approximately 250 semiautonomous daimyo domains. All taxes, to be paid in money rather than grain, went directly to the central administration. The daimyo and samurai lost their privileges, and all class distinctions relating to dress, marriage, travel, and occupation were abolished. A ministry of education, founded in 1871, established a national system of schools and universities in which foreign languages, mathematics, science, and other Western subjects were taught in addition to Japanese and Chinese literature and history. The government worked with former samurai, merchants, and even men of peasant backgrounds to open mines, construct factories, build shipyards and arsenals, and create nationwide railway, telegraph, postal, and banking systems. The Meiji

leaders' willingness to borrow from the West is perhaps best illustrated by the Constitution in 1889, which called for a bicameral parliament, an all-male propertied electorate, and the guarantee of freedom of religion, speech, public assembly, and the press.

All these policies had the objective of strengthening Japan to fend off the West and earn the West's respect. This meant building a strong army and navy. Along these lines, one of the first acts of the Meiji leadership was to abolish private daimyo armies and replace them with a national conscript army equipped with modern weapons and led by officers schooled in European methods of training and strategy. Their success can be measured by the Japanese victories over China and Russia and the winning of an empire in Korea, Taiwan, and southern Manchuria.

Many factors contributed to the success of the Meiji reformers. Japan's relatively small size and homogeneity made it easier to push through radical changes than in a giant empire like China or the religiously and ethnically diverse Ottoman empire. Also, the country's high literacy rate and well-developed commercial system prepared it well for the changes introduced after 1868. Japan's tradition of borrowing from foreigners (Confucianism and Buddhism, for example) made it easier to learn from the West. Furthermore, once in power, the Meiji leaders faced less interference from foreign powers, with the United States recovering from its civil war and the Europeans focused on China. Most importantly, the Meiji leaders were able to draw on the support of the Japanese people, who were committed to avoiding India's and China's fate at all costs. Nurtured by the educational system and reinforced by the military training experienced by millions of Japanese men, nationalism was a powerful force driving the Japanese achievement.

The End of an Era

With the benefit of hindsight, we can now see that the world in the early twentieth century once more was on the brink of momentous changes, just as it had been in the late eighteenth century when the Industrial Age was beginning, France and the Americas were experiencing revolutions, and Great Britain was pushing into India. In the early 1900s, Ottoman, Persian, and Chinese revolutions showed the determination of Asian peoples to break free from ancient traditions. The transformation of Japan and its victories over China and Russia showed that industrialization and military modernization, along with all the political and social changes that made them possible, were attainable by non-Westerners. Resistance to colonialism was becoming stronger. Meanwhile in Europe, nationalism intensified, armies continued to swell, and one diplomatic crisis followed another until the summer of 1914, when diplomacy failed and the generals took over. What everyone expected to be a short war lasted four years, with unimaginable costs. A new era of transformation was about to begin.