

QUESTIONS OF PERIODIZATION - Major characteristics that distinguish the time period 1900 - present include:

- ✓ **Redefinition and repositioning of the west** - During the 20th century, the term "west" came to have a new meaning. In the early part of the century, the west was centered in Europe. Although the United States and Australia were considered to be western nations, they were more or less off-spins from the European colonial powers. After World War II the western center moved to the United States, and by the end of the century, the phrase "western dominance" was a clear reference to U.S. power. Even so, power centers in other parts of the world challenged the west: Japan in the 1930s and 40s, and the Soviet Union during the Cold War era. The United States emerged as the dominant world power after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, but significant checks on that power appear to be emerging in the early 21st century. Birth control has meant that the west currently has a smaller percentage of the world's population than even before, a fact that adds to the question of whether or not the west will continue to dominate the world.
- ✓ **Increase in international contacts** - International trade and communication burgeoned during the 20th century, creating the phenomenon of globalization. Technological advancements were central to the swift, gigantic changes. Technological connections allowed the spread of culture and science to occur much more quickly than ever before. The century also saw the development of international organizations, starting with the League of Nations in 1918, and continuing with the United Nations, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. Migrations from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean headed toward the leading industrial centers from the 1920s, leading many people to question whether or not regional identities were being lost.
- ✓ **The democratic transition** - Very few countries had the same type of government in 2000 that they had in 1914. Monarchies all over the world were replaced by democratic governments or authoritarian regimes, and by the late 20th century, many authoritarian regimes were being replaced by democracies. Western democratic governments were often used as models, not only for newly independent countries, but for former powerhouses, such as the Soviet Union.
- ✓ **Changes in belief systems** - For most of world history, organized religions in all parts of the globe have been important influences on almost every other area of life, including government, family life, and culture. Many scholars see a 20th century trend away from religion toward a new reliance on non-religious philosophies such as liberalism, nationalism, and communism. Furthermore, by century's end, people in western nations, as well as some in the east, appeared to be relying less on religious explanations for social and natural phenomena than on new and rapidly developing scientific explanations. However,
- ✓ **Questioning of systems of inequality** - Although people had challenged social inequalities for many years before 1914, widespread reforms characterize the 20th century. Industrialized countries had abolished slavery in the 19th century, but major civil rights movements for racial and ethnic minorities shook the social systems around the globe in such countries as the United States, South Africa, and India. Women's rights movements also have their roots in the 19th century, but only in the 20th century did women in industrialized countries win the right to vote. Likewise, people in lands conquered by imperialist powers in earlier eras challenged international inequities, although they were far from successful in their goals for equality by the end of the 20th century.

WAR AND DIPLOMACY

20th century wars were unique in that they increasingly encompassed more and more of the globe. World War I began as a European conflict that spread into other regions, but World War II and the Cold War intensified international conflict to reach almost all parts of the globe. A series of international organizations formed in reaction to the wars, and provided a diplomatic alternative to world crises.

WORLD WAR I - World War I is an important marker event in modern history because it ushers in a new era in which the global framework changed dramatically. It also marks the collapse of European hegemony that had been solidly in place during the 1750-1914 era.

CAUSES

(MINA – Militarism, Imperialism, Nationalism, Alliance System)

The onset of war in 1914 resulted from years of tensions among European nations:

1) Nationalism - nationalism set the stage for World War I in two ways:

- ✓ National rivalries - The unification of Germany threatened to topple the balance of power that had existed in Europe since the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1815. The competition took many forms: industrialization, a naval race, arms build-ups, and colonial disputes over territories.
- ✓ Nationalist aspirations - Inherent in nationalism is self-determination, the right to form states based on ethnicity, language, and/or political ideals. This part of nationalism is apparent in the unification of Germany and Italy, and in the separation of Belgium from the Netherlands. However, in eastern Europe, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire resisted nationalist demands. Both empires confronted the nationalist aspirations of Slavic people -- Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Most menacing of all were the Serbs, who were encouraged by Russia's support and promotion of Pan-Slavism, a movement to unite all Slavic people.

2) Entangling Alliances - As countries and empires built their arms, they looked to one another for support and protection. The two major alliances were the Triple Entente (Russia, England, and France) vs. the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy). The allies generally had a common hatred for one or more of the countries on the other side.

SPARK FOR THE WAR

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, set in motion a series of events in which one country after the other declared war on another. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, who had an alliance with Russia. Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary, requiring Germany to declare war on Russia. And so the domino effect continued so that by August a local conflict had become a general European war.

NATURE OF THE WAR

World War I is often defined by the optimism that countries had going into the war in contrast to the horror, shock, and slaughter that traumatized them by the time the war ended in 1918. The balance of power struck in 1815 had been strong enough to delay conflict so that no one alive in 1914 could remember the devastation of war, and almost every nation glorified the excitement of war. The two sides settled into the Allied Powers - England, France, Russia, and Italy (who switched sides at the last minute) - and the Central Powers - Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. The net effect of the war was the slaughter of a huge portion of a generation of young men, primarily from Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, England, and France. Arguably, Europe never fully recovered from the loss.

THE VERSAILLES TREATY

The "Great War" is a marker event in world history because it is the first in a series of events that led to declining European power and ascending power for the United States and Japan. However, the Versailles Treaty at the end of the war is almost as important an event as the war itself because it changed the nature of international relations and set the stage for World War II.

Although 27 nations gathered at Versailles Palace in France in 1919 to shape a treaty, men from three nations dominated the proceedings: David Lloyd George from Britain, Georges Clemenceau from France, and Woodrow Wilson from the United States. Russia, who had pulled out of the war in 1917, was not represented. Woodrow Wilson came to the meetings with his plan, called the Fourteen Points, which was grounded in two important principles:

- ✓ Self-determination - the need to redraw the map of Europe and the old Ottoman Empire along the lines of self-determination, allowing groups based on nationalism to determine their own governments.
- ✓ The need for an international peace organization - a worldwide organization charged with keeping the peace and avoiding another war like the one that had just occurred.

Britain and France came to Versailles with different motivations. After all, their countries had suffered a great deal more from the war than the United States had. Revenge and control of Germany - who was a more immediate threat to them than to the United States - were more important to them.

The treaty that resulted was a compromise among the three countries. The many provisions include these important ones:

- ✓ Germany lost land along all borders, including Alsace-Lorraine and the Polish Corridor
- ✓ German military forces were severely restricted and a demilitarized zone was created along lands bordering France and Belgium.
- ✓ Germany had to pay very high reparations for war to specific Allied Powers.
- ✓ An international organization called the League of Nations was created.
- ✓ Germany's overseas possessions were placed under the control of the League, remaining as mandates until they were ready for independence.
- ✓ The map of Eastern Europe was redrawn along ethnic lines, recreating the country of Poland, and creating Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Austria, and Hungary. Austria-Hungary as a political empire was destroyed.
- ✓ Although the Ottoman Empire was dismantled as well, the resulting pieces were designated as mandates, not independent countries.

The treaty was a fiasco that satisfied almost no one and infuriated many. The Turks and Arabs of the former Ottoman Empire, as well as people of Germany's colonies, couldn't understand why eastern European countries were created as independent countries and they weren't. What's more the British occupied many areas of the Middle East, and did not leave once the treaty was signed. The League of Nations excluded Germany and Russia from membership, and the United States Senate failed to ratify the treaty and never joined the League. As a result, the international peace organization had very limited authority from the beginning. However, the most immediate reaction came from Germany, who saw the treaty as unfairly blaming them for the war and punishing them so severely that they could not recover. Their discontent provided fertile grounds for the rise of a demagogue that of course happened in due time.

THE ROOTS OF WORLD WAR II - World War II is often described as Chapter 2 of the War that started in 1914. Only 20 years of peace lie in between the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II, and in many ways the hostilities never ceased.

THE RISE OF JAPAN

Japan broke the post-war peace in 1931 by invading traditionally Chinese Manchuria, clearly reflecting their intention to expand their empire at the expense of China. This invasion angered the international community, and many nations reacted by enacting economic sanctions, but Japan was undeterred. From there, China itself was threatened, even after the League of Nations condemned Japanese actions. In 1937, they began a full-scale invasion of China, and rapidly began to control more and more of the mainland.

EXPANSIONISM IN EUROPE

Post-war Struggles in Germany

After World War I ended, Germany established a republican form of government under the leadership of General Hindenberg, a hero from the war. However, the government had countless obstacles in reestablishing order and stability. War debts were crushing, vital resources in the west had been claimed by France, and inflation became rampant as the country tried to rebuild itself after the devastation of the war. When the Great Depression spread throughout Europe in 1929-30, weakened Germany was the most vulnerable to its punch.

In their desperation, Germans were open to new political solutions, including those advocated by communism. On the other end of the political spectrum, Adolf Hitler, an Austrian artist who had fought in World War I, attracted attention as the leader of the German Socialist Workers Party. In a series of clever political moves, he established his party in the Reichstag, and eventually convinced Hindenberg to appoint him as chancellor. After Hindenberg died, he and his "Nazi" party came to dominate German politics with promises to restore German prosperity. That they did, but by blatantly breaking the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. He rebuilt the army, seized the resource-rich Rhineland from France, and played upon the loss of German pride suffered by the humiliations of the Versailles Treaty. His Nazi state was authoritarian and militaristic, and like Japan and Italy, also incredibly expansionistic.

German Expansion

Under Hitler, Germany began claiming territory around but outside its borders established by the Versailles Treaty. The claims were backed by military force, and at first they were only the lands that Germany believed had been unfairly taken from them by the Versailles Treaty. But eventually Hitler's forces attacked the Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia with many German people, but also home to Czechs and other Slavs. Finally, with this action, Hitler experienced some reaction from the old Allied Powers.

The Munich Agreement and the Start of the War

Under the leadership of Britain's Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, the Allies reached an agreement with Hitler, infamously known as **appeasement**, or giving Hitler the land he had already seized in exchange for his promise to not take any more. Chamberlain promised the British people upon his return home that he had achieved "peace in our time," but the war began the very next year when Hitler broke his promise by attacking Poland. England and France were still war-weary from World War I, but they reluctantly declared war on Germany.

THE NATURE OF THE WAR

The nations of the world aligned themselves with the Allied Powers (originally led by Britain and France, later joined by Russia and the United States) and the Axis Powers (led by Germany, Italy, and Japan.) Even though the causes of World War II were rooted in unsettled business from World I, the nature of the war was far different from any previous conflict in world history. Some distinct characteristics of World War II are:

- ✓ Worldwide participation
- ✓ Fighting in "theatres" or "arenas" - Whereas in most previous wars, including World War I, "fronts" where opposite sides clashed were identifiable, changing war technology and military techniques meant that the war was fought in two large arenas: Europe (including North Africa) and the Pacific Ocean.
- ✓ Technology - Major war technologies contributed to changes in the nature of warfare. Although airplanes and tanks had been used to some extent in World War I, they came to dominate World War II. Other technologies, such as radar and more accurate and powerful weaponry, helped submarines and warships to target the enemy. The most unique and deadly technology - the atom bomb - was introduced at the end of the war.
- ✓ Widespread killing of civilians - Whereas civilian casualties were not unique to World War II, the war is characterized by deliberate targeting of non-military people. Because the bombings sought to destroy the industrial infrastructure, they focused on urban areas where many people lived. In some cases the bombs were intended to torment populations so that the enemy would surrender. The German Nazis deliberately killed Jews and many other groups of people that they considered to be inferior to them, and of course, the atom bomb killed all those in its path, regardless of their military or civilian status.

THE HOLOCAUST

Genocide (ethnic based mass killings) characterized World War II. For example, the Japanese tortured and killed as many as 300,000 Chinese citizens in Nanking after the city had fallen. The bombings of Hiroshima killed 78,000 Japanese, and Nagasaki killed tens of thousands more. The largest slaughter resulted from Hitler's decision to eliminate Jews in Germany and eastern Europe resulting in 6 million deaths in concentration camps that specialized in efficient methods of extermination. The Holocaust was an unprecedented modern genocide that also targeted gypsies and political dissidents.

The "final solution" to the "Jewish problem" included death by gassing, electrocution, phenol injections, flamethrowers, and machine guns. Others died in concentration camps from starvation and medical experiments.

POST-WORLD WAR II INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Instead of being settled by one sweeping peace treaty, World War II ended with many negotiations and meetings. An important result of Allied discussions was the formation of the United Nations, only one of many international organizations that formed in the decades that followed World War II.

- ✓ The United Nations - Like the League, the United Nations' main purpose was to negotiate disputes among nations, but it also has addressed world issues, such as trade, women's conditions, child labor, hunger, and environmental protection.
- ✓ North Atlantic Treaty Organization - NATO was formed in 1949 as a defensive alliance among the U.S., Canada, and western European nations. In response, the Soviet Union formed the Warsaw Pact, including eastern European nations. The formation of these two international organizations was a reflection of changing politics and a new type of warfare called the Cold War that was to last until 1991.

THE COLD WAR - The Cold War describes the decades-long period after World War II that centered around tensions between the two most powerful countries that emerged from the war: the United States and the Soviet Union. The era marks the replacement of European hegemony with two competing power centers. The globe during this time was divided into three parts: the United States and its allies, the Soviet Union and its allies, and a "Third World," of unaligned, generally less developed countries that both "superpowers" competed to influence.

THE ROOTS OF THE COLD WAR

The World War II alliance between the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the United States and Britain on the other, was based primarily on a mutual enemy: Germany. The lack of trust between the two "sides" was apparent even before the war was officially over. The United States and the Soviet Union reacted by seizing control of lands that they occupied in Asia, with the northern half of Korea controlled by the Soviets, and the southern half by the United States. The U.S. maintained its occupation of Japan, China regained most of its former territory, and the old colonial powers maintained control in Southeast Asia.

In Europe, the Soviet Union pushed its boundaries westward, and the nations of eastern Europe (with the exceptions of Greece and Yugoslavia) fell under Soviet domination. Since the countries of western Europe were seriously weakened by the war, they depended on the United States to help them maintain their democracies. The United States sent aid to them with the Marshall Plan, a program of loans to help them rebuild their infrastructures.

The Soviets saw this as a vehicle for American economic domination, and in the words of Winston Churchill, an "Iron Curtain" descended across Europe, dividing east from west.

THE ARMS RACE

The competition between the United States and the Soviet Union extended to almost all areas, including a race to develop space technology and attempts to gain support from Third World countries. However, the deadliest competition came as both countries built their nuclear arsenals.

The Cold War was at its height during the 1950s and 1960s, with people around the globe fearing the worst – the outbreak of a third world war - but this time with nuclear weapons that would almost certainly destroy the world.

During the 1970s, both countries saw the need to compromise, and a series of negotiations led to arms reductions.

Tensions eased further during the late 1980s, partly because the Soviet Union was on the verge of economic collapse.

NEW PATTERNS OF NATIONALISM

Nationalism was as important a force during the 20th century as it had been in the previous era. People under the control of imperialist nations continued to strive for their own identities, and new, independent nations popped up in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and southeast Asia. Nationalist movements also were a major cause of the late 20th century breakup of the Soviet Union, again changing the balance of world power in the post-Cold War era.

NATIONALISM IN AFRICA

By the early 20th century Europeans had colonized most of the African continent. Christian missionaries set up schools that educated a new native elite, who learned not only skills and literacy but western political ideas as well.

They couldn't help but notice the contrast between the democratic ideals they were being taught in class and the reality of discrimination that they saw around them. This observation sparked nationalist movements in many places.

DECOLONIZATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

One by one native leaders negotiated treaties with their imperialist masters, so that by the late 1960s, the African continent was composed primarily of independent nations. A Pan-African movement was started by Kwame Nkrumah, who in 1957 became the prime minister of Ghana, and Jomo Kenyatta, a leader of Kenya, but the focus of nationalism was on independence for the individual colonies.

Independence led to many new problems for African nations. Many border disputes occurred, since colonial boundaries often did not follow ethnic lines. The borders of some countries, such as Nigeria and Zaire, encompassed several different ethnic groups that struggled with one another for control of the country. Race conflict became particularly severe in the temperate southern part of the continent, where Europeans clashed with natives for political and economic power. South Africa was left with apartheid, an attempt by European minorities to keep natives in subservient, and very separate, roles in society. The African National Congress, formed in South Africa in 1912, led a bloody struggle against apartheid, which eventually led to success when Nelson Mandela became the first native president of South Africa in 1994.

NATIONALISM IN INDIA

The movement was fractured from the beginning, largely because the diversity of people on the Indian subcontinent made a united independence movement difficult. Tensions were particularly high between Hindus and Muslims. Muslims constituted only about a quarter of the entire Indian population, but they formed a majority in the northwest and in eastern Bengal.

During World War I Indians supported Britain enthusiastically, hoping that they would be rewarded for their loyalty. However, Britain stalled on independence, and political tensions mounted. For the next twenty years, Indians and British clashed often and violently, and the colony threatened to descend into chaos. The downward spiral was halted by Mohandas K. Gandhi. Gandhi denounced violence and popular uprisings and preached the virtues of ahimsa (nonviolence) and satyagraha (the search for truth.) He demonstrated his identification with the poor by wearing simple homespun clothing and practicing fasting. He was also a brilliant political tactician, and he had a knack for attracting public attention. His most famous gesture was the Walk to the Sea or Salt March, where he gathered salt as a symbol of Indian industry, an action forbidden by the British government. Such non-violent persistence landed him in jail repeatedly, but his leadership gave Indians the moral high-ground over the British, who eventually agreed to independence in 1947.

The independence agreement was complicated: violent riots between Hindus and Muslims broke out, so that the British negotiated with the two organizations to partition India into two states. Most of the subcontinent remained under secular rule dominated by Hindus, but the new Muslim state of Pakistan was formed in the northwest and northeast. Independence celebrations were marred by violence between Muslims and Hindus. The partition led to massive movements of Indians from one area to the other, and Gandhi himself was assassinated by a Hindu who was upset because the partition meant that he had to leave his home. Religious conflict continued to plague the subcontinent for the rest of the 20th century and into the 21st century.

NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

As in Africa, the French provided the most resistance to decolonization in southeast Asia. Throughout the area, independence leaders were also drawn to communism, and French Indochina was no exception. The Communist leader Ho Chi Minh led his supporters against the French, capturing the colonial stronghold of Dienbienphu in 1954. Ho Chi Minh's government took over in the north, and a noncommunist nationalist government ruled in the south, which eventually came to be heavily supported by the United States. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the United States waged an unsuccessful war with North Vietnam that eventually ended in the reunification of the country under communist rule in 1975.

NATIONALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

Nationalism in Latin America took the form of internal conflict, since almost all the nations had achieved independence during the 19th century. However, most were still ruled by an authoritarian elite. During the 20th century, many nations experienced populist uprisings that challenged the elite and set in motion an unstable relationship between democracy and militarism. Some teetered back and forth between democratically elected leaders and military generals who established power through force. Coups d'etat became common, and political legitimacy and economic viability became serious issues.

- ✓ Mexico - At the beginning of the century, Mexico was ruled by Porfirio Diaz, a military general who enriched a small group of elites by allowing them to control agriculture and welcoming businessmen from the United States to control industry. The Revolution of 1910 began not with the exploited poor, but with elites that Diaz did not favor, almost all of them military generals. As early as 1911 the revolutionary fervor had spread to peasants, who were led by regional strongmen, such as Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa. Despite the creation of a democratic-based Constitution in 1917, the revolution raged on, with every President assassinated during his term of office until Lázaro Cárdenas took over in 1934. Finally, the country stabilized under an umbrella political party (PRI), which tightly controlled Mexican politics until the 1990s, when some signs of democracy began to appear.
- ✓ The Cuban Revolution and its aftermath - Revolutions against dictators were often inspired by communism, especially after the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro in 1959. Military leaders of Brazil led a conservative reaction by staging a coup of the democratically elected government in 1964. There the "Brazilian Solution" was characterized by dictatorship, violent repression, and government promotion of industrialization. A similar pattern occurred in Chile in 1974 where the socialist president Salvador Allende was overthrown in a military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet. Socialist Sandinistas led a rebellion against the dictator of Nicaragua in 1979, where their communist affiliations led them to disfavor with the conservative United States government led by Ronald Reagan. The Reagan administration supported Contras (counterrevolutionaries) who unsuccessfully challenged

the Sandinistas. By the 1990s, most Latin American nations had loosened the control by the military, and democratic elections appeared to be gaining ground. However, they continued to be economically and militarily dominated by the United States.

MAJOR GLOBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The stock markets in the United States had boomed during the late 1920s, but the optimism of investors that drove the markets upward far outstripped the strength of the economy. When the bubble burst in October 1929, the New York Stock Exchange tumbled, losing half of its value within days. Millions of investors lost money, as did the banks and brokers who had lent them money. New York banks called in their loans to Germany and Austria who in turn could no longer pay war reparations to France and Great Britain. The series of events led to a domino effect of crashing markets in Europe and other industrialized countries, ushering in the deepest and most widespread depression in history. Companies laid off thousands of workers, farm prices fell, and unemployment rates soared. The catastrophe caused many to rethink the free-enterprise system, and increased the appeal of alternate political and economic philosophies, such as communism and fascism.

TWENTIETH CENTURY TECHNOLOGY

The new inventions sparked by the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century continued to develop during the 20th century. When applied to industry, many of the World War II technologies increased productivity, reduced labor requirements, and improved the flow of information. After both world wars, pent-up demand for consumer goods spawned new inventions for peacetime economies. Improvements in existing technologies kept economies healthy during the 1950s and 60s, especially as European countries began to recover from the war.

THE COMPUTER AGE

One of the most important new technologies of the 20th century was the computer. The internet rapidly developed and expanded during the 1990s, and its ability to connect computers to one another and access information transformed communications by the early 21st century.

MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

With improved transportation and communications, these corporations became truly international in the late 20th century with their multinational ownership and management. International trade agreements and open markets reinforced the trend. Many of the companies were American (General Motors, Exxon, Microsoft) or Japanese (Honda, Sony), but by 2000 many other multinational corporations were headquartered in countries with smaller economies.

One result of the growth of transnational corporations was the increasing difficulty that national government had in regulating them. Often the companies simply repositioned their plants and labor force by moving their bases to countries with fewer regulations and cheaper labor. As a result, the worst cases of labor and environmental abuses tended to occur in poor nations.

THE PACIFIC RIM

Another important development of the late 20th century was the increasing economic strength of many countries and cities along the "Pacific Rim," such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

Japan experienced a faster rate of economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s than did any other major developed economy. In contrast to the American model of free enterprise, giant Japanese business conglomerates known as *keiretsu* have close relationships with government. The government supports business interests in industry, commerce, construction, automobiles, semiconductors, and banking through tariff and import regulations. By 1990 Japan enjoyed a trade surplus with the rest of the world that caused many observers to believe that Japan would soon pass the United States as the world's strongest economy. However, by 2000 the Japanese economy was slowed by overvalued stocks and housing, speculation, and corruption.

South Korea, as one of the Asian Tigers (along with Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore), followed the model of close cooperation between government and industry. Through a combination of inexpensive labor, strong technical education, and large capital reserves, South Korea experienced a "compressed modernity" that transformed the country into a major industrial and consumer economy that, despite a recession in 1997, continued into the early 21st century.

In China after Mao Zedong's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping emerged as the new communist leader. He advocated a socialist market economic, a practical blend of socialism and capitalism, to solve China's economic woes. By century's end, China's economy had expanded rapidly, and by the early 21st century, China was granted membership in the World Trade Organization, and was rapidly become one of the most important trading nations in the world.

IDEOLOGIES AND REVOLUTIONS

Many of the conflicts of the 20th century, including World War II and the Cold War, represent important ideological clashes between industrialized democracies and industrialized totalitarian powers. Two important ideologies that greatly influenced the century were communism and fascism.

- ✓ Communism - Karl Marx's communist theory was revolutionized during the early 20th century in Russia by Vladimir Lenin. Lenin advocated democratic centralism. He and a small group of leaders became a "vanguard of the revolution," leading in the name of the people, but concentrating control in the hands of a few. Even though his version of communism emphasized equality and the destruction of class distinctions, the highly centralized control translated into totalitarian power. In China, Mao Zedong's communism stressed the importance of agriculture and the peasants, but he also exercised totalitarian power after his takeover of the country in 1949.
- ✓ Fascism - As communism became more popular in Europe, especially as capitalism faltered with the Great Depression, fascism developed as an alternative doctrine to countries in economic distress. Fascism, an authoritarian political movement that sought to subordinate individuals to the service of the state, first developed under Benito Mussolini in Italy. Mussolini advocated an extreme nationalism that claimed to regain the power and glory of the ancient Roman Empire. Fascism spread to other countries, including Germany, where Adolf Hitler fashioned it into Nazism.

Whereas fascism played an important role in World War II, communism sparked numerous revolutions, including those in Russia and China.

COMMUNISM IN RUSSIA

Under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, Russia withdrew from the WW I and was named the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. After a four-year civil war, Lenin established his control over the country, and the U.S.S.R. became the first communist regime of the 20th century.

STALINISM

When Lenin died in 1924, his position as General Secretary of the Communist Party was eventually claimed by Joseph Stalin. Stalin emphasized internal development, and set in place Five-Year Plans that set industrial goals designed to strengthen the power of the Soviet Union. Stalin did not focus on producing consumer goods. Instead his plans increased the output of electricity and heavy industry, such as iron, steel, coal, and machinery. Agriculture was collectivized, a process that abolished small private farms and forced farmers to work on large government-controlled farms that produced food to support industry.

Stalinism was characterized not only by industrialization and collectivization, but by brutal, centralized control of government that held little resemblance to Marxist doctrine. Despite his purges of untold millions of people, Stalin did lead the Soviet Union to industrialize faster than any country had ever done.

POST-STALIN ECONOMIC CRISES

Russia emerged from World War II as a superpower, largely as a result of Stalin's focus on industrial strength. However, economic development was uneven. The USSR produced a great army, developed a sophisticated missile program, and participated in a "race to space" with the United States. Much money was spent on maintaining control over satellite states, but the consumer failed to grow. By the mid-1980s, the country was on the verge of economic collapse, although the severity of its problems was largely unknown to outsiders. Mikhail Gorbachev attempted to revive the country through a 3-pronged program:

- ✓ Perestroika - Economic reforms attempted to infuse some capitalism into the system, reduce the size of the army, stimulate under-producing factories, and stabilize the monetary system.
- ✓ Glasnost - Loosely translated as "openness", glasnost attempted to loosen censorship restrictions and allow nationalist minorities to address their concerns to the government.
- ✓ Democratization - Gorbachev's plan allowed some choice of candidates for the national congress, a body that in turn selected a president.

The Gorbachev reforms backfired after a conservative coup attempt in 1991. Although the coup failed, and Gorbachev retained his position as president, the crisis resulted in unrest that quickly brought an end to the U.S.S.R. as the republics one by one declared their independence. By the year's end, Gorbachev had no job because he had no country, and Russia - the largest of the republics - emerged under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin. The 1990s saw a weakened Russia struggling to establish a democracy and regain some of its former power.

COMMUNISM IN CHINA

CHINA UNDER MAO

Maoism always differed the Soviet-style communism, partly because Mao believed in the importance of keeping an agricultural-based economy. He broke with the Soviet Union in the late 1950s and instituted his Great Leap Forward to compensate for the loss of Soviet aid. This program emphasized both agricultural and industrial development, but the economy nose-dived. Mao responded with the Cultural Revolution in 1966 - a much more profound reform in that it encompassed political and social change, as well as economic. Mao was still unhappy with China's progress toward true egalitarianism, and his main goal was to purify the party and the country through radical transformation.

A primary goal of the Cultural Revolution was to remove all vestiges of the old China and its hierarchical bureaucracy and emphasis on inequality. Scholars were sent into the fields to work, universities and libraries were destroyed. Emphasis

was put on elementary education - all people should be able to read and write - but any education that created inequality was targeted for destruction.

CHINA UNDER DENG XIAOPING

When Mao died in 1976, the country was on the verge of collapse, traumatized by massive changes brought by the Cultural Revolution. His successor, Deng Xiaoping, encouraged a practical mix of socialism and capitalism called the socialist market economy, a tactic that brought better economic health to China. During the late 20th century, China became more and more capitalistic while still retaining centralized control by the government. Tensions between economic reform and the centralized communist political system erupted into popular disruptions, most famously at Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989. By the early 21st century, China remained the largest (and one of the only) communist-controlled country in the world, but had become increasingly prosperous with the government openly encouraging trade with capitalist countries.

GLOBALIZATION OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND CULTURE

Globalization is an integration of social, technological, scientific, environmental, economic, and cultural activities of nations that has resulted from increasing international contacts. On the other hand, fragmentation is the tendency for people to base their loyalty on ethnicity, language, religion, or cultural identity. Although globalization and fragmentation appear to be opposite concepts, they both transcend political boundaries between individual countries. At the beginning of the 21st century it is possible to predict that new homogenizing forces will further reduce variations between individual cultures or that a new splintering among civilizations is taking place, with each region advocating its own self-interest.

FORCES FOR GLOBALIZATION

The cross-cutting forces of the past century or so have increasingly homogenized cultures. Most civilizations find it very difficult to isolate themselves from the rest of the world since they are tied together in so many ways. Some factors that promote globalization include:

- ✓ Modern transportation and communication - People are able to go from one area of the world to another much more easily than at any previous time in history. Likewise, communication is faster and more reliable than ever before.
- ✓ Increasing international trade - many barriers to international trade were removed during the second half of the 20th century.
- ✓ Spread of "popular culture" - The popularity of Western fads and fashions, from clothes to television to sports, leads to cultural contact between ordinary people in everyday life. Although this phenomenon may be seen as the "westernization" of world culture, in recent years culture from other lands has influenced the west as well.
- ✓ Sharing of international science - Nationality is secondary to their mutual interests.
- ✓ International business - business leaders learn from other organizational forms and labor policies.

FORCES FOR FRAGMENTATION - Some factors that encourage fragmentation include:

- ✓ The decline of European power- A major factor that led to the mid-20th century de-colonization in Africa and Asia was the desire for cultural and political independence from European nations.
- ✓ The breakup of multicultural empires - During the 20th century, many multicultural empires broke apart, leaving their subject people to quarrel among themselves. When British India broke into two countries - India and Pakistan - old hostilities between Hindus and Muslims came to the surface. Likewise, when the Ottoman Empire broke up after World War I, Slavic and Muslim peoples fragmented so deeply that intercultural wars broke out in the Balkans many decades later.
- ✓ The end of the cold war - The end of the cold war gave many nations dependent on American or Soviet aid the opportunity to reassert themselves in new ways. For example, the Soviet breakup gave independence to many subject states that have fragmented into different countries. In the Middle East, leaders of the 1979 revolution in Iran committed themselves to ousting U.S. influence and reinvigorating Islamic traditions.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

MIGRATIONS - Two distinct types of migrations characterized the 20th century:

- ✓ Rural to urban - The industrialized nations saw significant migrations from the farm to the city during the 19th century, and that patterns continued well into the 20th century. However, most migrants to cities made economic gains until the scale of the migration grew to such proportions that many cities have not been able to keep up with the demand for services. Nearly every poor nation today still faces the challenge of rapidly growing cities.
- ✓ Global migration - Whereas most countries of the 20th century experienced internal migration from rural to urban areas, another major migration occurred among countries, with people leaving the developing world to emigrate to industrialized nations. For example, illegal immigration across the border from Mexico to the United States has increased significantly. In Europe, migrations from Islamic countries were encouraged beginning in the 1960s when an expanding European economy needed new sources of labor. However, as the size of the immigrant populations grew and the economies slowed, right-wing anti-immigration political movements sprang up in reaction, especially in Germany and France.

POPULATION INCREASES

Human reproductive and life expectancy patterns changed profoundly in the second half of the 20th century. By the late 1960s Europe and other industrial societies had made a demographic transition to lower fertility rates and reduced mortality. Lower birthrates occurred as more women went to work, couples married at later ages, and birth control methods became more effective. Death rates declined as well, as modern medicine and better health led to increased longevity. The number of births in the developed nations was just enough to replace the people that died, and populations began to stabilize. Many experts predicted that the same thing would occur in developing nations once their industrialization process was more advanced. However, as of the early 21st century, the demographic transition has not occurred in developing or less developed countries around the globe.

THE GROWTH OF DEVELOPING NATIONS

Whether the transition will occur in the future is open to debate. However, some political leaders of developing nations have encouraged high birth rates, thinking that a larger population would increase political power. In other areas, cultural patterns enforce values that support large families. Whatever the reasons, at current rates, most of the population increases of the 21st century will almost certainly take place in developing nations. Areas of rapid population increase include most nations of Africa and Latin America. In Asia, the populations of India and China have continued to grow despite government efforts to reduce family size.

"GREEN" MOVEMENTS

During the 1960s environmental activists began movements devoted to slowing the devastating consequences of population growth, industrialization, and the expansion of agriculture. These "green" movements raised public awareness of the world's shrinking rainforests and redwood trees, the elimination of animal species, and the pollution of water and air. Predictably, pressure on environments is greatest in developing countries, where population is increasing the most rapidly. By the early 21st century, environmental movements were most effective in industrialized nations, where they have formed interest groups and political parties to pressure governments to protect the environment. However, these movements have had less success in developing nations, where deforestation and pollution continue to be major problems.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Since 1900 two world wars and a cold war have led to the decline of European power and the rise of the United States. Politically, more and more nations are experimenting with democratic governments, and authoritarian regimes appear to be on the decline. Social inequality has been challenged on many fronts, and gender, racial, and social class distinctions have been altered radically in at least some areas of the world. By the early 21st century, the forces of globalization clash with those that encourage fragmentation. Perhaps it is this dynamic that will shape our future. Will advances in global connections, trade, and communication lead to a more unified world, or will regional differences fragment the world in ways that will lead to division and conflict?