

8 – EUROPE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

OVERVIEW

The arms race of the nineteenth century, combined with a sense of competition and paranoia created by the entangling Bismarckian system of alliances, created a powder keg just waiting to explode in the twentieth century. The spark that would ignite the powder keg was the nationalistic desires of peoples in the Balkans. The Balkan War that resulted in the Great War, or World War I, marked the beginning of a war-filled century. Even though the First World War would draw to a close in 1919, the issues that sparked the war never went away. The festering bitterness and anger within Germany opened the door for Adolph Hitler. The poor economic conditions following the war, highlighted by the Great Depression, paved the way for the rise of other dictators in Russia and in Italy. After Europe failed to keep these dictators in check, the world would find itself bogged down in yet another world war just before the midpoint of the twentieth century.

Though the fighting ended in 1945, the continent stood divided into two camps – the East and the West. For the next several decades, the Soviet-backed Eastern bloc battled the U.S.-backed Western European nations of NATO in a war of wills and words known as the Cold War. While the two sides never engaged in real warfare, they did use satellite nations to conduct proxy wars in places like North and South Korea and North and South Vietnam. As the Cold War drew to a close in the 1970s and 1980s, communism lost its grip on Europe. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, Europeans threw off the chains of communism and tried their hand at more democratic forms of government. The initial economic success of the political reforms was limited, however.

The end of the twentieth century looked much like the beginning: trouble in the Balkans. War and ethnic cleansing marked the fighting there and once again drew the world's attention to the region. As the twentieth century passed and gave way to the twenty-first century, East versus West no longer defined the struggles of Europe. Rather, issues surrounding economic and political unity and the politically-charged War on Terror took center stage. Additionally, all eyes focused on the papacy with the changing of the guard in Rome in 2005. Looking ahead, the European Union, human rights, and energy concerns almost certainly will be topics of concern and debate for Europe in the early twenty-first century.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1905

Russia's industrialization in the late nineteenth century left laborers upset with their working

conditions, much the same way other European workers felt in the early nineteenth century. The Russian factory workers organized an illegal labor movement and sought the reforms other European nations had granted earlier in the century. The governmental reforms of the nineteenth century, which failed to provide a constitution and a representative assembly, left them completely unsatisfied. To make matters worse, Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 and prevented Russia from expanding too far into the east. These events and conditions contributed to a climate of political unrest in Russia.

In 1905, workers in St. Petersburg peacefully assembled in front of the Winter Palace to appeal to the czar, Nicholas II (1868-1918, czar 1894-1917), for relief from the poor conditions. Little did the workers know that the czar had already left St. Petersburg. On that cold Sunday in January, the czar's troops opened fire on the demonstrators. A thousand men, women, and children were killed on what became known as *Bloody Sunday*. That summer, fueled by resentment for the czar, workers and peasants alike held strikes, mutinies, and small revolts. Finally, in October 1905, the czar gave in and issued the October Manifesto, which granted civil rights for the people and created a *duma*, or popularly elected legislature. Many people were satisfied, but the Social Democrats rejected the Manifesto. The Social Democrats staged a violent uprising in December that was eventually put down. The following year, the government unveiled its new constitution. It left a great deal of power for the czar and not as much for the *duma* and the upper house of the legislature. Many members of the *duma* were unhappy and uncooperative. Nicholas dismissed that *duma* only to have a more radical one elected in 1907. Again, Nicholas dismissed the *duma*. Nicholas and his advisers rewrote the laws so that the propertied classes had more votes, and because of that legislation, the *duma* became much more loyal to the czar. Shortly thereafter, Peter Stolypin (1862-1911) introduced his "wager on the strong" legislation that encouraged modernization, especially among the peasants.

THE CAUSES AND OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR I

World War I marked the beginning of the end for many European powerhouses, including the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, Germany, and Russia. The causes of the Great War are very complicated and include nationalism, imperialism, militarism, and bitter rivalries between nations and military alliances.

The nineteenth century saw the rise of a nationalistic spirit across Europe that led individual countries to believe in their own sovereignty and superiority. But not all Europeans seeking their own independent state had achieved sovereignty. Slavic peoples in the Balkans and in the Austro-Hungarian Empire strongly desired their own states, free of outside influences. Many European leaders were growing fearful of the increasingly powerful influence of the socialists within their borders who threatened internal stability by staging strikes and revolts.

The strong sense of nationalism also fostered the tendency to look out only for a state's own interests and not the interests of the international community. It was precisely this that made imperialism such an important factor in the unrest prior to World War I. With most of the European powers scrambling to add foreign lands to their holdings, foreign lands were bound to become a point of contention. The industrialization of the nineteenth century had increased Europe's need to find new foreign markets for its goods as well as new sources of raw materials. As the majority of Africa was gobbled up by the hungry European imperial powers, nations began to argue over the land. In 1905 and in 1911, France and Germany almost went to war over Morocco. The brutality of the new imperialism also prompted some European nations to denounce the imperialistic actions of others, thus heightening tensions.

At the turn of the century, Germany possessed the most powerful army on the continent, and Britain controlled the most powerful navy. Germany rebuilt its navy and threatened Britain's naval supremacy. Both nations hurried to increase the size and power of their fleets and their armies in an attempt not to be outdone. The powers of Europe grew defensive and increased the production and storage of arms, further escalating the already high tensions. With the growing emphasis on military power came an increase in the influence of military leaders. These leaders of ten saw the world from a different perspective than did the political and diplomatic leaders of the era, and they exerted their influence upon those with political power. This militarism left Europe ready to go to war.

As the Great Powers amassed military weapons and technology, they grew increasingly defensive and perhaps a little paranoid. Nations sought strength in numbers, and they began forming alliances. During the nineteenth century, Otto von Bismarck worked hard to keep the peace by encouraging alliances. He had built Germany into a mighty nation, and he didn't want that to be undone by a war. The alliances changed frequently, though, during the last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. On the eve of the Great War, Europe was divided between two

powerful alliances: the *Triple Entente* and the *Triple Alliance*. The Triple Entente, composed of Britain, France, and Russia, stemmed from the earlier *Entente Cordiale* between Britain and France and the later agreement between Britain and Russia. The Triple Entente hoped to check the power of the Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria, and Italy. With ties firmly in place, any aggression toward a nation who was part of an alliance meant aggression toward all the members of the alliance. The two alliances sat ready to provoke or be provoked into war.

The spark that ignited the war came from the Balkans in 1914. On June 28, 1914, a Serbian nationalist named Gavrilo Princip (1895-1914) assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand (1863-1914), and his wife while they were visiting Sarajevo. Sarajevo was the capital of the Austrian province of Bosnia. Princip operated with the cooperation of the Black Hand, a radical Serbian nationalist group with members in the army and in the government. Princip and the other Serbian nationalists sought their own state, independent of Austro-Hungarian control. The Austro-Hungarians, of course, resisted this movement in order to preserve their empire. Because Princip was loosely associated with the Serbian government, Austria issued an ultimatum to Serbia that would bring them under Austrian control. Germany offered a "blank check" to Austria, promising them basically anything they might need in order to crush the Serbians. Russia backed Serbia, and Austria knew this. Austria also knew that war with Serbia meant war with Russia, too. In order to remain sovereign, Serbia rejected the ultimatum. In response to Serbia and prodded by Germany, Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914.

Russia immediately began to mobilize its forces. Germany reacted to the Russians with an ultimatum of their own. Germany demanded that Russia cease mobilization within 12 hours. The Russians ignored the ultimatum, and Germany declared war on Russia on August 1, 1914. Germany immediately put into action the *Schlieffen Plan*, a military strategy that was based on a scenario of war with Russia and France, Russia's ally. The plan was to deploy some troops to Russia while the bulk of the forces went to France via Belgium. On August 2, Germany demanded that Belgium allow German troops to pass through Belgium into France. The next day, Germany declared war on France. In response to German aggression toward Belgium, a neutral nation, Britain declared war on Germany. German aggression toward Belgium also enraged the United States. After August 4, all the powers of Europe, except Italy, had become entangled in a war that would have unforeseen consequences on not only Europe but

also on the world. Italy remained neutral until 1915, when it separated from the Triple Alliance and declared war on Austria-Hungary. Also in 1915, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers. The European nations each believed their cause was right and that they or their allies had been wronged. As a result, each nation eagerly entered the war and sent their troops to battle with real celebration.

At the outbreak of war, fighting began on three European fronts: the western, or Franco-Belgian, front; the eastern, or Russian, front; and the southern, or Serbian, front. When Turkey joined the war on the side of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary) in November 1914, some fighting occurred in the Dardanelles as well. All nations involved in the war anticipated a short war, one in which all the troops would be home by Christmas. The war on the western front pitted the British and Belgian forces against the Germans in Belgium and the French forces against the Germans in France. In September 1914, the French government had left Paris for fear of German occupation. The Germans crossed the Marne River and ran into the French forces led by General Jacques Césaire Joffre (1852-1931). The French held off the Germans at the First Battle of the Marne. After that battle, both sides dug in and held on. A war that was hoped to be quick had deteriorated to trench warfare.

The first trenches were just ditches created for soldiers to hide in for a small amount of time. Before long, though, huge trenches created by both Central and Allied forces stretched almost the entire length of the French border. The soldiers hid in the trenches and periodically emerged to run across the territory in between, known as *no man's land*, to attack enemy trenches. With the introduction of artillery fire, poisonous gas, and tanks, the trenches became death traps for the soldiers. The opposing sides remained entrenched in their positions, and neither side gained any significant amount of territory. Trench warfare accounted for an almost inconceivable number of World War I casualties – literally in the millions – and turned the Great War into an incredibly bloody war, the likes of which no one had predicted. Offensives launched at Verdun, the Somme, and Passchendaele were typical of the inefficient, inhumane warfare of World War I.

Although no fewer lives were lost in the east, the warfare of the eastern front proved to be markedly different from that on the western front. Because of the enormous size of the eastern theater, troops were much more mobile than in the west. Early in the war, the Russian armies won numerous victories over the Germans and Austro-Hungarians. However, as the war stalled in the west, Germany redirected its forces to the east to combat the Russians. Nearly bankrupt and

running low on food and weapons, Russia suffered huge, demoralizing losses. These losses would contribute to the internal turmoil of Russia only a few years later. On the southern front, the British attacked the Turks. In an attack orchestrated by Winston Churchill (1874-1965), the British forces landed at Gallipoli in 1915. The British hoped to remove the Turks so that British forces could supply the Russians via the Black Sea. After months of losses against the fortified Turks, the British withdrew.

The pivotal year in the war proved to be 1917. Russia, on the verge of revolution, sought peace with Germany. This would allow Germans to concentrate their efforts elsewhere and win the war – or so they thought. In 1915, German submarines sank a British passenger ship called the *Lusitania*, a ship carrying more than 120 Americans who lost their lives. The Americans issued a stern warning to Germany, and Germany agreed not to attack neutral ships. However, in 1917, Germany resumed its unrestricted submarine warfare. As a result, the United States entered the war against Germany. Although the United States did not immediately affect the war, they did eventually turn the tide.

The Germans tried to organize an offensive that would end the war before the American troops arrived and made an impact. In 1918, the German forces advanced within 35 miles of Paris. Combined French and American forces repelled the Germans at the *Second Battle of the Marne*. Two million fresh troops landed in Europe, and allied forces began their march toward Germany. German General Ludendorff advised his government that all was lost. Germany created a new republic, and Kaiser William II capitulated. In November 1918, the republic signed an armistice with the Allies that ended the war.

World War I required of all its participants a new form of warfare called a *total war effort*. Total war meant that the entire population of a country was required to mobilize for the war effort. The governments of the nations realized that a quick war was out of the question. Therefore, the governments required the citizens to contribute in every imaginable way. Women went to work in factories, and children worked in the streets collecting all sorts of raw materials. The governments instituted price controls and rationing programs. The government also restricted the use of natural resources, such as coal. In order to keep spirits high on the home front, governments used propaganda. Governments created posters and movies to heighten morale and focus the citizens' attentions on the enemy and the task at hand. The enemies of the day were portrayed as monsters, and the citizens, to whom the propaganda was meant to appeal, were portrayed as heroes and heroines. In

addition, governments censored information that entered and exited their borders to prevent undesirable information from upsetting the people on the home front.

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

In 1919, the Big Four met at Versailles to work out a peace settlement. President Woodrow Wilson (1856--1924) represented the United States, David Lloyd George (1863-1945) represented Britain, Georges Clemenceau (1841 -1929) represented France, and Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (1860-1952) represented Italy. France, Britain, and the United States were the major players in peace talks; Germany had no say in the talks, and Russia was preoccupied with its own revolution. Wilson wanted to implement his *Fourteen Points* which included free trade, arms reductions, national self-determination, and the establishment of an international peacekeeping organization called the *League of Nations*. Wilson's approach to the peace talks seemed idealistic compared to those of Lloyd George and Clemenceau. Because the British and the French suffered enormous loss of life and tremendous economic devastation, Lloyd George and Clemenceau sought a harsh and punitive resolution, almost revenge. They wanted immense reparations from Germany, and they wanted insurance that Germany would never again pose a threat to European nations. Ultimately, Britain and France won out over Wilson.

The Treaty of Versailles blamed Germany for World War I and required Germany to pay 132 billion gold marks in reparations. Germany was forced to give Alsace-Lorraine back to France. The treaty created an occupied, demilitarized zone along the Rhine to act as a buffer. Germany was forbidden from having an air force, and the German army and navy were severely restricted. Other treaties with Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey in 1919 redrew political boundaries. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, and Finland were all created after the war. For many Europeans, the dream of an independent state was realized. At first glance, it may seem that the Treaty of Versailles accomplished a great deal. However, it failed miserably. The treaty failed to resolve the problems that led to the war in the first place. The United States eventually rejected the treaty, and Britain backed out of its defensive alliance with France. France felt isolated, Germany was resentful, and the League of Nations as Wilson envisioned it never came to fruition. The Treaty of Versailles was a quick fix that quickly unraveled.

THE IMPACT OF THE WAR

The war that was supposed to be over quickly soon became known as the "war to end all wars." The

European powers, by hastily entering into a massive, multi-front war, devastated much of the continent. The war claimed more than 10 million lives, both military and civilian. Approximately twice that number of people suffered injury as a result of the war. It is safe to say that every French family between 1914-1918 either lost a family member or knew a family that lost someone. In addition to the incredible human carnage, entire cities, towns, and villages were decimated during the fighting. It was estimated that the total cost of the war topped \$330 billion. The economies of Europe were virtually destroyed. Once the economic leaders of the world, the European nations found themselves in debt to other nations, primarily the United States, with virtually no means to repay. Psychologically, the men and women who participated in the war were scarred, and many found it very difficult to rejoin society. Europeans thought the twentieth century was going to be a century of prosperity and progress, but the war shook their belief in humanity, order, and reason. These doubts and fears manifested themselves in the art, writing, and philosophy of the early twentieth century.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

In 1915 alone, Russia lost 2 million soldiers in World War I. The underequipped and under-funded Russian army continued to fight valiantly, though. To worsen matters, Russia's leadership was very poor. Public opinion began to call for a new government led by the Duma and not by Czar Nicholas II. Foolishly, Nicholas dismissed the Duma and left Russia to lead the troops on the front. Nicholas left his wife, Alexandra, in charge. In the czar's absence, Alexandra attempted to rule the way she had always encouraged Nicholas to rule, as an absolutist. Alexandra's chief adviser was a mystic named Gregori Rasputin who supposedly had the power to heal Alexandra's hemophilic son. Under the influence of Rasputin, Alexandra dismissed and reappointed many of the top positions in the Russian government. In December 1916, amid rumors that Alexandra and Rasputin were lovers, Rasputin was assassinated. In March of the following year, riots broke out in Petrograd (formerly known as St. Petersburg). Nicholas sent orders for troops to put down the revolt, but the soldiers joined the rioters. The Duma created a provisional government to restore order, and Nicholas abdicated within days.

From its creation, the new provisional government had to deal with the Petrograd Soviet. The Soviets were councils of workers, and they began appearing in many towns and rural areas. The members of the Soviets were generally socialists who were more radical than the provisional government. In April, with help from Germany, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) arrived

in Russia and immediately denounced the provisional government. Lenin was the leader of the Bolsheviks, a radical socialist party that advocated a violent working-class revolution in Russia led by professional revolutionaries. Lenin's opponents, the Mensheviks, believed that a bourgeois revolution must occur first in Russia before Russia could move toward socialism. After Lenin arrived, the Bolsheviks began convincing people to join their cause, and they worked toward a majority in the Petrograd Soviet. In the meantime, the provisional government tried desperately to deal with the peasants who had been waiting for the redistribution of lands. Many peasants had begun taking land for themselves. Also, because of the Petrograd Soviet's Army Order No. 1, the military was in disarray.

After fleeing the country and then returning, Lenin, along with his avid supporter Leon Trotsky (1879-1940), convinced the Petrograd Soviet to make Trotsky the leader of a revolutionary group of military personnel. In November 1917, the revolutionaries seized government buildings and the provisional government. The Bolsheviks then declared Lenin the leader of their new government. Lenin and Trotsky provided outstanding leadership, leadership that the provisional government lacked. In addition, Lenin and Trotsky appealed to the masses and the workers. These things made Lenin and Trotsky successful in the revolution.

After assuming control, Lenin realized that Russia could not prevail in World War I. At a very high and unreasonable price, Lenin withdrew Russia from the war. He signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 and gave away a huge chunk of Russia. However, by doing so, Lenin saved Russia from certain disaster. Lenin created a one-party Communist government by dissolving the newly elected Constituent Assembly. This action made many realize that the republic they wanted was becoming a dictatorship. Popular opinion began to turn against Lenin's government. Led by military officers from different parts of Russia, the *Whites* rose up against the Bolsheviks, or *Reds*. However, the Reds defeated the Whites and won the civil war. The Whites failed because they were never well organized and because they had no clear-cut policy for people to rally behind. Above all, however, the Red army was simply superior.

The real accomplishment for Lenin and Trotsky was not the revolution but maintaining power and control. Under the leadership of Trotsky, the military was reorganized under a rigid system of discipline. The Bolsheviks nationalized everything from labor to banking. Especially during the civil war, the government instituted a *war communism*, or total war effort, in a civil war scenario. The secret police of the czar was reintroduced as the Cheka. The Cheka used terror to

control Russia by hunting down and executing enemies of the state. The Russian Revolution proved to be one of the most significant events of the twentieth century because a one-party socialist dictatorship emerged in a powerful European country. Perhaps more importantly, this new government encouraged and advocated communist revolution around the world.

THE RISE OF STALIN

Lenin died in 1924 and left vacant the leadership of Russia. Two leading candidates vied for the position. One candidate was Trotsky, the leader of the Left Opposition. Trotsky believed that Russia needed to help spread communist revolution to other countries, and Trotsky wanted to return to the state-controlled war communism of the past. Trotsky's opponent and leader of the Right Opposition was Nikolai Bukharin (1888-1938). Bukharin believed that Russia needed to focus on the development of communism within Russia instead of spreading it into other nations. Bukharin also advocated the New Economic Policy, the policy with which Lenin replaced the old war communism.

As it turned out, neither man replaced Lenin. Rather, Joseph Stalin (1879-1953) became leader of Russia. Stalin's goal was to increase the Soviet's power. One of Stalin's first steps was the expulsion of Trotsky from the party. Two years later, Stalin expelled Bukharin from the party, too. In 1928, Stalin began his *Five-Year Plan* to further industrialize Russia. He planned to finance this plan through the collectivization of Russian farms. Stalin sent troops into the rural areas and forced the peasants to join the agricultural collectives. The peasants who refused to join were shot on sight. Millions of these peasants, or *kulaks*, died because of Stalin's brutal policy. Within a decade, though, the Soviet Union rivaled the other industrial powers of Europe.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Although many people look to the Stock Market Crash of 1929 as the beginning of the Great Depression, its roots go farther back. During the Roaring Twenties, people spent money haphazardly. People extended their credit to the limit. Speculators and investors invested heavily in stocks and futures, hoping for a huge return. However, farm prices dropped in the post-war era. Stocks were overvalued and destined to plummet. When the market crashed in 1929, the world took notice. The speculators and investors lost everything. Purchasing declined, prices fell, production declined, and unemployment rose meteorically. The United States economy was failing. As a result, American banks began recalling loans from foreign countries. As European countries paid their loans, the gold supply of Europe was nearly depleted. In 1931, the most

important bank in Austria, the Credit-Anstalt, collapsed. Prices worldwide fell, and investors dumped their goods to get cash. In Europe as in the United States, production slowed and unemployment rose. Also in 1931, Britain went off the gold standard. Shortly thereafter, nearly twenty other countries went off the gold standard, too. Nations introduced protective tariffs to protect their domestic markets. Against the advice of John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), European governments reduced their spending. Keynes argued that governments should increase their spending through such programs as public works projects similar to Roosevelt's New Deal in the United States. The world finally began its slow road to recovery in 1933, but it wasn't until the coming of World War II that most nations made a full recovery. The desperation of many Europeans during this era made them look to anyone for leadership – even dictators.

FASCISM IN GERMANY AND ITALY

Although Italy and Germany developed different models of authoritarian governments, the government of choice for these two nations after World War I was fascism. First used by Mussolini in 1919, the word *fascism* comes from the word *fascis*, a bundle of sticks tied around an ax that was the ancient Roman symbol of civic unity and power. Fascism grew out of Italy's discontent following World War I and the growing threat, or at least the perceived threat, of the spread of communism. Fascism tended to be intensely nationalistic. There always was an enemy, either real or perceived, for fascists to defend or take offensive measures against. War was a noble cause for fascists. Fascism placed little or no value upon the individual and forced subordination of the individual to the state. Fascism disapproved of the modern parliamentary system. Instead, fascism manifested itself in single-party dictatorships. Fascist governments were unapologetically sexist and advocated the subordination of women to men and to the state. In some circumstances, especially in Germany, fascists were racist as well. The Germans, of course, harbored particular hatred for the Jews. More than just a political system, fascism represented economic policy as well. This applied much more in the case of Italy than in Germany, though. Unlike communism and socialism, fascism did not seek to eliminate classes, property, or private business.

In 1919, Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) created in Italy the *Fasci de Combattimento*, or League of Combat. Many of the members were disgruntled veterans who felt betrayed by the Treaty of Versailles; many Italian nationalists shared these sentiments, too. The members also feared the spread of socialism. In addition, the members of Mussolini's group had lost confidence in

the parliamentary system. After the elections of 1919, the parliament, dominated by two uncooperative parties, proved itself to be incompetent as it became hopelessly deadlocked. Mussolini, being an opportunist, saw his chance to gain power for his party and for himself. In 1920 and 1921, Mussolini unleashed his *squadristi* on socialist offices and establishments where they used violence and fear to squelch socialist activity. Mussolini's activities brought attention to his *Fasci*. Mussolini's early rise to prominence was topped off by the threat of a march on Rome where he and his fascist blackshirts were going to seize control of the government. King Victor Emmanuel III (1869-1947, king 1900-1946) granted Mussolini the title of Prime Minister and virtually limitless power for one year.

Over the next few years, Mussolini and his men rigged elections, intimidated opponents, and terrorized dissenters. He instituted constitutional changes that eliminated nearly all hints of democracy. In 1925, after the murder of an Italian politician named Giacomo Mancini threatened Mussolini's career, he turned Italy into a dictatorship. As a dictator, Mussolini implemented a secret police force and censored the media. State-sponsored propaganda filled the newspapers and airwaves. Mussolini encouraged the development of fascist youth organizations and used schools to indoctrinate the children. Mussolini passed laws to encourage women to stay at home and reproduce.

Mussolini wanted and tried desperately to create a totalitarian state. However, for all his efforts at terror and censorship, Mussolini basically failed. His state never developed into the authoritarian state of which he dreamed. Mussolini planned to help the workers and peasants but sided with big business. He never destroyed the monarchy, and he never completely controlled the military as he had hoped to do. Mussolini even sought the support of the Church by granting sovereignty to the Vatican. In the end, Mussolini's fascism paled in comparison to the fascist regime established by one of his admirers, Adolf Hitler.

The founder of the German fascist movement was none other than Adolf Hitler (1889-1945). Hitler was born in Austria and spent his early years in Vienna where he was heavily influenced by the mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger (1844-1910). It was in Vienna that Hitler began his hatred of Jews and Slavs, for Vienna was a hotbed of German nationalism and anti-Semitism. In 1913, Hitler moved to Munich and joined the German army. When Germany lost World War I, Hitler became convinced that Germany lost because of a Jewish and Communist conspiracy. In 1919, Hitler joined the German Workers' party, and by 1921, Hitler had total control of the party. In 1922 and 1923, membership in Hitler's party skyrocketed. As the Weimar Republic

collapsed around him, Hitler decided to follow the example of Mussolini and lead a military uprising against the government. Hitler marched on Munich but ended up in prison. During his trial, Hitler gained attention and support by condemning the Republic. While in prison, Hitler wrote his autobiography *Mein Kampf*. Also while in prison, Hitler realized that he would have more political success by using legal means than by using military force.

Over the next five years, Hitler built the membership of his party up to approximately 100,000. In 1928, Hitler's Nazi party won only twelve seats in the *Reichstag*. As the Great Depression gripped Germany, Hitler seized the opportunity to further his cause by renouncing capitalism and advocating social programs for the middle- and lower-class workers. As the Depression worsened, Hitler's popularity grew. In 1930, the Nazi party won more than a hundred seats in the Reichstag. In 1932, the Nazis became the largest party in the Reichstag. Hitler's popularity continued to grow because he appealed to the masses and to the youth of Germany by using propaganda.

Germany faltered under the leadership of Chancellor Heinrich Brüning and President Paul von Hindenburg. Neither was able to work with the Nazi-dominated Reichstag. Therefore, in 1933, President Hindenburg asked Hitler to be chancellor. Hitler had achieved great political power, and he had done so legally. After his ascension, Hitler began his quest for dictatorship. The Reichstag building burned, and Hitler, who may have been responsible, blamed the Communists. Based on that accusation, Hitler persuaded Hindenburg to pass laws that virtually abolished personal freedoms. In the next election, when the Nazis failed to win a majority, Hitler outlawed the Communist party and arrested its representatives. The Reichstag then passed the Enabling Acts, legislation that made Hitler dictator, or Führer, for four years. Hitler brought all state organizations under the control of the Nazi party, except for the military. To bring the SA under his control, Hitler had nearly 1,000 SA leaders arrested and executed. The army leaders swore their allegiance to Hitler, and the army, henceforth known as the SS, grew in numbers and reputation under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler (1900-1945). Throughout the 1930s, the military and the Gestapo targeted Jews and persecuted them, causing a mass exodus of German Jews.

Hitler enacted new policies and programs that spurred the economy and reduced unemployment in Germany. Whether or not the standard of living improved, though, is uncertain. Many people believed that their conditions were improving, but much of this feeling could be attributed to propaganda. The fact is

that many of the lower classes did not achieve the status for which they had hoped or that Hitler had promised. There was some new potential for social advancement in Hitler's Germany, but there was no social revolution.

THE CAUSES AND OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II

From the time Hitler rose to power, he planned to undo the Treaty of Versailles. Openly and defiantly, Hitler began the reconstruction of his military, which had been severely restricted by the Treaty. No one stopped Hitler from rearming, so Hitler took another defiant step. In 1936, German troops marched unopposed into the Rhineland. Hitler could have been stopped here, but he wasn't. The British and French wanted to avoid war at all costs, so they adopted a policy of appeasement to buy time and prevent war. Also in 1936, Hitler and Mussolini created the Rome-Berlin Axis. Hitler also helped the fascist Francisco Franco (1892-1972) achieve power in Spain. Hitler turned his sights to Austria and Czechoslovakia and marched into Austria unopposed in 1938. Hitler announced that he wanted Sudetenland, a Germanic area of Czechoslovakia, added to the German empire. Following their policy of appeasement, France and Britain agreed to the cession of Sudetenland. Hitler went on to occupy the rest of Czechoslovakia, too. In 1939, Hitler and Stalin signed a treaty of nonaggression, a move that stunned everyone. The final straw, though, was the German invasion of Poland in 1939. Two days after the invasion, France and Britain ended their appeasement by declaring war on Germany.

Hitler's army took Poland in four short weeks using the new *blitzkrieg* method of warfare, a method that involved tanks and planes. After a short period of down time, Germany attacked Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and then France. In a matter of just six weeks, Germany defeated the French army and occupied France. The French were unprepared for Germany's blitzkrieg but were entrenched just as in World War I. In a tremendous effort, the British staged a magnificent retreat at Dunkirk. The British used every available ship and boat to take more than 300,000 Allied soldiers from France back to Britain. A new French government, the Vichy government, was installed. Throughout the war, the Vichy government battled against French resistance forces and against the forces led by Charles de Gaulle (1890-1970). Hitler wanted to use France and Belgium as a launching pad for the invasion of Britain. He sent his air force, or *Luftwaffe*, on many raids into Britain, where German planes successfully attacked military sites. In one of the bigger German military blunders, though, Herman Göring (1893-1946) decided to demoralize Britain by attacking civilian targets instead of military targets. As a result, Britain increased

its military production and recovered enough to repel the German attacks. Hitler changed his plan of invading Britain and turned to the Soviet Union. In June 1941, Hitler invaded Russia. German forces drove deep into Russia, basically all the way to Leningrad and Stalingrad. However, the Russians did not give in.

In December 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. base at Pearl Harbor, and the United States entered the war – now truly a World War. On the same day, Germany declared war on the United States. The *Axis Powers*, composed of Germany, Italy, and Japan, faced the *Allied Powers*, composed of the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union. The Allies decided that they must take care of Europe first and then they would turn their attentions to the Pacific. The entry of the United States into the war marked one of the major turning points in World War II. The American troops made an instant impact, even in Africa where they helped drive out the Italians and the Germans. In 1943, the Allies knocked Italy out of the war. Then the Allies decided to invade Western Europe using Britain as a launching pad. On June 6, 1944, under the direction of General Dwight Eisenhower (1890-1969), the Allies landed on the beaches of Normandy in the famous D-Day invasion. A year later, the Allied forces finally crossed the Rhine and entered Germany. On the eastern front, the Russians moved through Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Poland before marching into Germany, where they met the Allied forces. Germany capitulated in May 1945, a day after Hitler committed suicide. In August, the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, a terrible act that ultimately brought the war to an end in the Pacific. World War II ended as the most violent conflict the world had ever seen. More than 50 million lives were lost during the war.

Originally a term that described a religious ceremony in which an offering was consumed by fire, the term *Holocaust* has come to mean the all-out attack on European Jews by Hitler's regime. Beginning with the Night of Broken Glass, or *Kristallnacht*, in 1938, when Jewish synagogues, businesses, and homes were attacked and destroyed, Hitler ruthlessly persecuted the Jews. When Germany occupied Poland in 1939, Polish Jews were moved into ghettos surrounded by barbed wire. As the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, they began executing Russian Jews on sight. As a part of Herman Göring's "final solution to the Jewish question," the Nazis developed death camps, or concentration camps. These camps were equipped with gas chambers and incinerators to destroy the Jews. The worst of these camps was at Auschwitz, where more than a million Jews lost their lives. By the time the war ended and the camps were liberated, at least 6 million Jews and millions of

Slavs, Communists, and homosexuals were dead as a result of the intense racial hatred of the Nazis.

World War II left Europe physically, emotionally, and economically devastated. The end of the war brought with it the daunting task of rebuilding. The two great wars of the first half of the twentieth century left everyone in the world looking for ways to prevent such a crisis from occurring again. In 1945, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) suggested the League of Nations be replaced by a new international peacekeeping organization. In 1945, delegates met and created the United Nations, or UN, with its headquarters in New York. Another issue facing the world was how to deal with Germany after it had surrendered unconditionally. In February of 1945, the Big Three, which included Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States, met in Yalta, a city in the Ukraine, to discuss post-war Germany. The Big Three decided to divide Germany into zones of British, French, American, and Soviet occupation. The Allies also agreed to let the Soviet Union keep and administer its Polish lands acquired in 1939. At Potsdam, later in 1939, the Big Three met again but with new U.S. President Harry Truman (1884-1972). The Allies agreed to each administer a zone in Germany. The participants became antagonistic, though, when the Soviet Union demanded reparations from Germany, but the United States wanted to rebuild the German economy instead. Tensions also mounted between East and West because of the Truman Doctrine that sought to stop the spread of Communism by granting military and economic aid to nations that were susceptible to Communist aggression. The Marshall Plan for the rehabilitation of the European economy also upset Stalin. In 1948, after the United States and Britain had agreed on an economic merger of their German zones, Stalin cut off the city of Berlin from western aid. In response, the United States and Britain staged the Berlin airlift in which supplies were dropped behind the Soviet blockades. In 1949, Britain, France, and the United States combined their zones and established the Federal Republic of Germany. The Soviets then created the German Democratic Republic, a Communist nation created from the Soviet-controlled eastern zone in Germany. The years following the war were filled with antagonistic meetings and discussions between the East and the West. This antagonism led to the icy relations over the next several decades known as the *Cold War*.

COLD WAR, COMMUNISM AFTER WORLD WAR II

The roots of the Cold War lie in the post-war talks between the East and the West, between the United States and the Soviet Union in particular. President Truman wanted Eastern European nations to have free elections, but Stalin would not allow it. Stalin wanted

only Communist nations on his western border, and free elections would end any chance of that happening. Truman was not willing to go to war to give those nations the freedoms he wanted for them. Therefore, Stalin got his way in eastern Europe. In response, Truman cut all aid to the Soviet Union and announced that the U.S. would not recognize any governments established against the will of the people. In 1946, Churchill proclaimed that an *iron curtain* had fallen over Europe, thus dividing it into two sides. The anti-Soviet mindset began to establish itself in the United States, and the Soviet Union launched a worldwide anti-capitalism campaign. In 1949, the United States created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, as an anti-Soviet alliance of nations. Stalin strengthened his hold on eastern Europe and firmly divided Europe into two blocs, or groups of nations acting together. The Cold War intensified as Communism won out in China in 1949 and as the Stalin-backed North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950. In 1955, the Communist bloc set in stone its opposition to NATO by creating the *Warsaw Pact*. The Warsaw Pact united the Communist satellite states of eastern Europe, although it was dominated by the Soviet Union.

Even in the beginning, there were problems within the Communist bloc. Workers in East Germany demanded freedoms and better conditions. When their demands were not met, many fled to West Germany. To prevent further emigration, the Soviets constructed the Berlin Wall, the enduring symbol of the iron curtain of which Churchill spoke. Similar movements took place in Poland and Hungary, too. The Soviets, however, put down those movements. Hungary wanted out of the Warsaw Pact to establish its own independent government. The Soviet Union brutally ended Hungary's hopes of such a state. In 1953, Stalin died. The death of Stalin opened the door for change. Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) assumed power in the Soviet Union and almost immediately renounced the brutal actions of Stalin. Khrushchev argued in 1956 that Stalin's methods had strayed from the pure Marxist-Leninist communism. He announced that the Soviet Union would only follow policies in line with Marxism-Leninism. Khrushchev visited the United Nations in 1959 and relieved some tension, but when the Soviets shot down a U.S. U-2 spy plane, the tension again mounted. The tension almost erupted in 1962 over the Cuban Missile Crisis, and nuclear war was narrowly avoided. The Soviets stationed missiles in Cuba. Thankfully, President John F. Kennedy was able to diffuse the situation. Khrushchev was forced to retire in 1964 and was replaced by Leonid Brezhnev (1906-1982).

Brezhnev reinforced the position of the Soviet both at home and in the satellite states. In response to the unrest in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Brezhnev announced the Brezhnev Doctrine, which said that the Soviet Union would put down any unrest or uprising in any Communist state by the use of any means necessary. Events in Poland in 1980 tested the Brezhnev Doctrine. An electrician named Lech Walesa led the Solidarity movement in Poland, a labor movement that used protests and strikes to call for reforms. Solidarity had the support of millions of Polish workers and the Catholic Church under Polish Pope John Paul II. Supported by the Soviet Union, the Polish government arrested the Solidarity leaders and declared martial law. The martial law was lifted in 1982, and in 1988, the government began talks with Solidarity. In 1990, Lech Walesa was elected president of Poland.

Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931) became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985 and sought some reforms in the Communist bloc. He opposed the Brezhnev Doctrine and found opposition in the old-school hard-line Communists. The four years after Gorbachev assumed power were filled with events that culminated in the monumental year of 1989. The Communist governments of Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Albania all collapsed. The following year, the Berlin Wall came down, and East and West Germany were reunited. Romania followed a different path, though. The people of Romania rose up against the oppressive government of Nicolae Ceausescu (1918-1989) and executed both Nicolae and his wife in December, 1989. The people of the Soviet Union also wanted change. Gorbachev did not resist change, but he wanted the Communists to lead the reform movement. He accepted both *glasnost*, or openness, and *perestroika*, or economic restructuring. Nationalism swept through some of the Soviet states, and Gorbachev appointed hard-line Communists to deal with these problems. A last-ditch effort by the Communists was a coup attempt in 1991 that failed. Throughout 1991, the Soviet states left the Union, the Soviet Union fell apart, and Gorbachev resigned. In 1991, Boris Yeltsin (b. 1931) became the first popularly elected president of Russia. To this day, Russia struggles to adjust to its new political order.

THE END OF COLONIZATION AND IMPERIALISM

In 1947, India declared its independence from Britain, and other British holdings followed suit. Also in 1947, the British withdrew from Palestine and left the United Nations the task of determining the area's future. The UN divided Palestine into Arab and Jewish lands. The nation of Israel was born in 1948, but the Palestinian state never came to fruition. After a conflict with Egypt over control of the Suez Canal in 1956, the

British Empire basically dissolved. Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Sierra Leone broke with Britain without any real incident. Rhodesia declared their independence in 1965 but did not earn their freedom until 1980 because of the large number of British who lived there. In 1949, the Netherlands granted independence to Indonesia. France lost Indochina, or Vietnam, and struggled to hold on to Algeria. After great internal turmoil over Algeria, France granted the nation its independence in 1962. The great colonial empires of the previous century had finally been dismantled.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AFTER WORLD WAR II

After the war, the United States and the *Marshall Plan* paved the long road to economic recovery. Under the Marshall Plan, the United States invested more than 9 billion dollars in the reconstruction of Europe. The United States sent money and aid to Europe to help struggling nations avoid Communism. The Marshall Plan helped Europe move past subsistence and toward economic expansion. The economic growth, however, outpaced the increase in wages. As a result, many nations turned to socialist reform. Nations such as Britain nationalized industries and implemented pensions and employment insurance. The extremely high cost of such welfare systems, though, caused some nations to move away from extreme socialist policies. The nations still using socialist welfare programs have found it extremely challenging to remain competitive in the new global market. One of the key developments in the economic recovery of post-war Europe was the creation of an economic community. In 1951, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, West Germany, and Luxembourg formed the European Coal and Steel Community. Six years later, the same six countries formed the European Economic Community or Common Market. In 1973, Britain, Ireland, and Denmark joined the Community. In 1979, the European Monetary System, or EMS, was established in order to move Europe toward an economic and monetary union, or EMU. In 1993, the Maastricht Treaty established the European Union our of the twelve members of the European Community and began working toward a common currency and a common banking system.

In 1999, the European Union (Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, and Finland) adopted the euro as the new currency for the Union. Greece joined these nations in 2001. The European Union began working toward the introduction of the euro as the official and only currency of its member states with 2002 as its target date. On January 1, 2002, the euro became the official and only currency used by the member states and by February 28, 2002, all national

currency of the member states was removed from circulation. The euro can be used anywhere within the European Union and is not subject to money-changing when consumers cross from one nation into another. The European Union currently has twenty-five member nations and the nations of Romania and Bulgaria are in the process of applying for membership. Turkey, Macedonia and Croatia are also exploring the possibilities of joining the EU in the next several years.

CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

Perhaps one of the most pressing issues in contemporary Europe is the situation in the former Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia managed to steer clear of the Eastern bloc under the strict leadership of Josip Tito (1892-1980). After Tito died, Slovenia and Croatia broke away from Yugoslavia and created their own independent states. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic (b. 1941) responded with military force in an attempt to create a single Serb state. The war spread to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992 when it declared independence. The Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina refused to live under Bosnian Muslim rule. The Serbs seized land and began what has come to be known as *ethnic cleansing*. Ethnic cleansing, reminiscent of the Nazi Holocaust, involved the imprisonment, torture, and execution of those who were ethnically and religiously different. The war in Bosnia has resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees. In 1995, under the Dayton Accord, a tentative peace was established and then policed by U.S. and UN troops. Despite the tentative peace, fighting continued in the region as the factions continued to disagree about religion, politics, and geographical boundaries. Then, in 2001, Slobodan Milosevic was arrested in dramatic fashion and charged with war crimes. Milosevic faces charges relating to atrocities and war crimes allegedly committed in Croatia between 1991 and 1992, in Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995, and in Kosovo in 1999. Milosevic's trial began in February 2002. After two years, the prosecution finally got its case underway and the trial has yet to conclude.

Another grave issue facing contemporary Europe is the ever-increasing threat of terrorist activity. On September 11, 2001, terrorists with anti-American agendas crashed two airplanes into the World Trade Center in New York City and a third airliner into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. This attack caught the attention of all of Europe as many European citizens lost their lives in the attacks. In unprecedented fashion, European leaders joined together in condemnation of those responsible and in support of the investigation of terrorist activity. In the weeks and months that followed September 11, 2001, authorities from the United States

and from European states began to uncover a tangled web of terrorist activity and conspiracy around the world, including Europe. Leading the way for Europe was Great Britain's Tony Blair. Despite the War on Terror, terrorists attacked a Madrid train station in 2004 and a Russian School later that year. In 2005, terrorists struck London with several bombs. Blair has since proposed a number of bold reforms to make the War on Terror more effective.

MAJOR PLAYERS

Neville Chamberlain (1869-1940) – Neville Chamberlain was born in Birmingham, England, was educated there, and became mayor of Birmingham in 1915. He worked his way up the political ladder and became Prime Minister in 1937. As Prime Minister, Chamberlain adopted a policy of appeasement toward Hitler in order to keep Britain out of war. In 1938, Chamberlain returned from the Munich Conference, having signed the Munich Pact, and claimed that he had achieved peace. Later, Chamberlain led his nation into war against Hitler. Although some historians have painted Chamberlain as a naïve and gullible politician, Chamberlain may deserve more credit because he did buy Britain some time before they faced imminent war.

Vladimir Ilich Lenin (1870-1924) – Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov was born to a government official in Simbirsk in 1870. In 1887, his brother was arrested and hanged for an attempt on the life of Czar Alexander III. Vladimir entered college but was expelled for being a troublemaker. After he was kicked out of college, he studied Marx's writings and became a self-proclaimed Marxist. He became a lawyer and moved to St. Petersburg in 1893 where he became involved with a labor organization. He, along with other leaders of the group, was arrested and put in jail. After his jail term, he fled to Siberia for a year. When he returned, he changed his name to Lenin to keep the authorities at bay. Lenin met Trotsky and began the development of his Communist philosophy. He wanted a revolution, and he believed that a band of professional revolutionaries would lead the workers against the czar. When World War I broke out, he opposed the war and said that the workers were fighting the war for the bourgeoisie. Lenin was not in Russia when the Revolution erupted in 1917. With the help of the Germans, Lenin returned to Russia and made a grand entrance. He became the leader of Russia, with the help of Trotsky, and he steered Russia toward socialism in a moderate, cautious manner. In 1921, Lenin initiated the New Economic Policy that allowed for a mixed economy of both nationalized and privatized industry and business. Regardless of the evaluation of Lenin as a philosopher or thinker, Lenin excelled as a leader. He should be remembered most as a

revolutionary figure and as a leader whose greatest feat was simply maintaining control as long as he did.

Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874-1965) – Born into an aristocratic family, Churchill attended military college before serving in India and the Sudan. He quit his military duties to become a correspondent during the Boer War, where he was captured. After escaping his captors, Churchill became a national hero. He entered the political arena and worked his way up to the lord of the admiralty. During World War I, he almost ruined his career with the Gallipoli fiasco. He resigned the admiralty as a result. He continued his political career by serving in various positions. During the 1930s, Churchill criticized Chamberlain for his passive attitude toward Hitler. Churchill was one of the few who realized the danger of the Fuhrer. In 1940, Churchill became Prime Minister. During the war years, Churchill became one of the greatest leaders in British history. His fiery speeches and passionate quotes inspired the nation to dig in and fight against Hitler. Churchill's determination and will led the people of Britain from the brink of disaster to victory over the hated Germans. Churchill also played a major role in the peace talks and diplomatic meetings of wartime and post-war Europe. He will be remembered both as a leader and statesman, although he also won a Nobel Prize for literature in 1953.

Joseph Stalin (1879-1953) – Josif Vissarionovich Dzhughashvili was born in Georgia in 1879 where he attended a church school as a youngster. As a devout Orthodox Christian, he began studying for the ministry. However, he soon became influenced by Marxist writings and abandoned his religious education. He joined the Russian Revolutionary movement against the monarchy and distributed Marxist propaganda. Eventually, he was arrested and exiled to Siberia. Unfortunately for the world, he escaped. Until 1917, he was arrested and exiled again several times, but each time he returned. Some time before 1912, he adopted the name Stalin, a Russian word meaning "man of steel." During the Russian Civil War, he led military efforts against the Whites. After the civil war, he worked in politics until Lenin's death in 1924 when he took control of the government. Stalin undid the New Economic Policy of Lenin and introduced his Five-Year Plan. He industrialized Russia and initiated the collectivization of agriculture. These processes cost millions of Russian lives. In the 1930s, he purged the party of thousands who he suspected of being disloyal or threatening. Late in the decade, the Great Purge included all of the Soviet Union, and historians estimate that somewhere between 2 and 7 million Soviets lost their lives during Stalin's Purge. Stalin signed a secret treaty with Hitler but suffered an attack on his nation by

Germany in 1941, after which Stalin found himself somehow allied with Britain and the United States. After World War II, Stalin grabbed onto much of Eastern Europe and created many puppet governments there. Although he industrialized and modernized Russia, he did so at the expense of millions of lives. Some people consider Hitler the most abominable of all dictators, but Stalin deserves serious consideration for that dubious honor.

Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) – Born and raised in Italy, Benito Mussolini began his career as a teacher and a journalist. When World War I began, he spoke out against it and then changed his mind and advocated Italy's entry into the war. He was kicked out of the Socialist party, but he created his own newspaper that was to become a primary instrument in the development of the Fascist party. His Fascist party grew to such an extent that Victor Emmanuel III asked Mussolini to head the government of Italy. Over the next four years, Mussolini turned Italy into a Fascist dictatorship. In his new state, workers were organized into party-controlled groups, unions and strikes were forbidden, and big business thrived. Mussolini used schools to recruit young fascists, and he encouraged women to have as many children as possible also to increase the number of young potential fascists. Mussolini's foreign policy could be described as aggressive, with the takeover of Ethiopia and Albania and the aid to Franco in his struggle to rise in power in Spain. Despite Mussolini's attempts to be an authoritarian dictator, he never assumed total control of the army, and he never destroyed the monarchy. Near the end of World War II, Mussolini was dismissed and arrested. After the Germans helped him escape, they placed him in a puppet government in Northern Italy. In 1945, he and his mistress were shot and killed by Italians.

Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) – Adolf Hitler was born and raised in Austria. He never completed a high school program. In Vienna, he read incessantly and became fascinated by the words of the mayor of Vienna. He began to develop an intense racism and nationalism, a fondness of the individual, and disgust of the masses. In World War I, he left Austria and joined the German army but met with little success. In 1919, he joined the German Workers' Party, and by 1921, he was the head of the newly named National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi party. He tried to exert power with a march, the way Mussolini had done, but his failed attempt landed him in prison. While in prison, he wrote *Mein Kampf*. After his release from prison, he tried a new legal approach to gaining power. He blamed the Great Depression and the loss of World War I on a Jewish-Communist plot against Germany. He promised a strong economy and national power. Millions of voters

flocked to the Nazi party, especially young people. Hitler became chancellor in 1933 and immediately began his dictatorial regime. He used his secret police to control his opponents through violence and terror. He arrested those who opposed him as well as Jews and Slavs. He single-handedly instigated World War II through his ambitious and aggressive foreign policy. He wanted to create more living space for Germans by eliminating those subhuman races, such as the Jews and the Slavs. Fortunately for Europe, Hitler was not the military genius he thought he was. After a number of serious military blunders, Hitler realized that all was lost. In 1945 in a bunker, Hitler killed himself. He was a charismatic speaker who had the ability to control large numbers of people. His dynamic personality combined with his hatred of non-Germans made him one of the most dangerous of all dictators.

Charles De Gaulle (1890-1970) – Charles De Gaulle was born in France and was destined to be a leader. He attended a military school and then served in World War I, where he was injured several times. Between the wars, he wrote books on military tactics. During World War II, he formed a French resistance effort while in exile to combat the Germans. He commanded both the French forces fighting alongside the Allies and the French resistance forces in France. After the Second World War, he became president of the new government. He soon resigned, though, when the French people resisted his attempts to strengthen the presidency. In 1953, De Gaulle retired from politics. He came out of retirement in 1958 to lead the nation through a crisis created by the issue of Algerian independence. Soon, the Fifth Republic was created, and he was elected to be its president. He served as president until 1969. During his administrations, he led France through economic disasters, entered France in the European Economic Community, and pulled France out of NATO. He consistently stood by the United States during the Cold War, although he kept close ties with both China and the Soviet Union. He believed in a strong presidency, and he used his office to strengthen France's position in the world.

Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev (1894-1971) – Nikita Khrushchev was born to a Russian peasant family and received very little formal education. He did manual labor until he joined the Bolsheviks and served in the Red Army during the Russian Civil War. In 1929, he moved to Moscow and became affiliated with the Communist Party. He moved up through the party and became a member of the Party's highest bureau, the Politburo. He served during World War II and was in charge of the recovery efforts in the Ukraine after the war. When Stalin died in 1953, Khrushchev became the Party leader. Khrushchev denounced the methods of

Stalin as too harsh. Although he predicted that the Soviet Union would eventually “bury” the United States, he sought nonviolent ways to compete with and coexist with non-Communist nations. However, it was Khrushchev who built the Berlin Wall and took the United States to the brink of war with the Cuban Missile Crisis. His politics caused the relations between China and the Soviets to deteriorate. He attempted to restructure the political system in the USSR by decentralizing some of the elements of the government. His colleagues removed him from office while he was on vacation in 1964 because he had failed to deliver on his promises.

Willy Brandt (1913-1992) – Herbert Ernst Karl Frahm was born in Lubeck in 1913. In 1933, he left Germany for Norway to escape the Nazis, whom he had opposed as a journalist, and he changed his name to Willy Brandt. He returned to West Germany after World War II and was elected to the legislature where he served until 1957. From 1957 to 1966, Brandt served as mayor of West Berlin. He served as Chancellor of West Germany from 1966 until 1974 when it was discovered that an East German spy had been serving on his staff. In 1971, Brandt won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to ease the East-West tensions with his policy of *Ostpolitik*. Under his policy, West Germany signed treaties of nonaggression with Poland and the Soviet Union.

Pope John Paul II (b. 1920-2005) – Karol Wojtyla was born in Wadowice, Poland, in 1920. He studied poetry and drama as a young man and then prepared for priesthood. He eventually earned a Ph.D. and a Th.D. In 1978, he was elected to succeed Pope John Paul I as Pope John Paul II, the first non-Italian pope since the sixteenth century. Only three years later, he was shot in an unsuccessful assassination attempt. In his time as pope, Pope John Paul II addressed the rivalry of the superpowers and the injustices of capitalism. He opposed birth control, abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, and genetic engineering. He became the first pope to visit the countries of the former Soviet Union, and he encouraged the establishment of democratic governments in eastern Europe. In the months and years before his death, Pope John Paul II asked Jews and other groups for forgiveness for any injustices committed by the Church in the past. Pope John Paul II will be remembered as a tireless advocate of peace and mercy near the end of the tumultuous twentieth century. In 2005, Pope John Paul II was succeeded by Pope Benedict XVI.

Helmut Kohl (b. 1930) – Helmut Kohl was born in Ludwigshafen in 1930 and later attended university at Frankfurt and Heidelberg. In 1959, Kohl became active in politics as a member of the Christian Democratic Union, or CDU. He became national

chairman of the CDU in 1973 and became Chancellor of West Germany in 1982. After the East German government collapsed in 1989, Kohl strongly advocated German reunification. East and West Germany united the following year, and Kohl became the first freely elected chancellor of a unified Germany in fifty years.

Tony Blair (b. 1953) – Born in Edinburgh in 1953 to a lawyer and politician, Anthony Charles Lynton Blair attended Fettes College and St. John’s College at Oxford. At Oxford, Blair developed an interest in politics. Blair went to work as an apprentice for a prominent Labour Party member’s law firm where he later earned a full-time position. Blair joined the Labour Party in 1976 but soon became dissatisfied with the direction of the party.

Following “Britain’s Winter of Discontent” in 1978, Margaret Thatcher’s Tory Party moved British politics in a new, conservative direction and away from the traditional liberal Labour policy. Blair won a seat in Parliament in 1983, and by 1994, Blair had risen to such prominence that he was elected Labour Party Leader. He reformed the party’s politics by placing a new emphasis on free enterprise. He also helped restructure party goals so that they were more in line with what modern Brits wanted. In 1997, Tony Blair upset the Tory Party and became the new Prime Minister by a huge majority vote. Blair won a second election in 2001 just months before the September 11 terrorist attacks shook the world. Blair immediately positioned Great Britain in a position of support for the United States and condemned those responsible for the attacks. Blair moved to the forefront again when he officially named known terrorist Osama Bin Laden as the perpetrator of the attacks. In 2005, Blair won reelection again, the same year terrorists struck London. Blair has since proposed new reforms to make the War on Terror more effective.