

# Mass Society and Democracy 1870-1914

## THE STORY MATTERS...

The industrialization that began transforming Europe in the late 1700s had largely matured by a century later. Starting around 1850, the Second Industrial Revolution produced goods on a much larger scale. It created largely urban societies and a growing working class. This phase of industrialization also saw new advances in communications technology. A key figure was physicist and inventor Guglielmo Marconi.

## Lesson 24-4

# The Nation State and Democracy

### READING HELPDESK

#### Academic Vocabulary

Insecure controversy

#### Content Vocabulary

ministerial responsibility Duma

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How can industrialization affect a country's economy?
- How are political and social structures influenced by economic changes?

### IT MATTERS BECAUSE

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, democracy expanded in Western Europe, while the old order preserved authoritarianism in central and eastern Europe. During this time, the United States recovered from the Civil War and became the world's richest nation. Meanwhile, international rivalries began to set the stage for World War I.

## Western Europe: Political Democracy

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What happened with democracy in Western Europe in the late nineteenth century?*

By the late nineteenth century there were many signs that political democracy was expanding in Western Europe. First, universal male suffrage laws were passed. Second, the prime minister was responsible to the popularly elected legislative body, not to a king or president. This principle is called ministerial responsibility and is crucial for democracy. Third, mass political parties formed. Great Britain had long had a working two-party parliamentary system. In a parliamentary system, the party with the greatest representation in parliament forms the government, the leader of which is the prime minister. The two parties – the Liberals and Conservatives – competed to pass laws that expanded the right to vote. Reform acts in 1867 and 1884 increased the number of adult male voters. By 1918, males over 21 and women over 30 could vote.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, then, political democracy was becoming well established in Britain. Social reforms for the working class soon followed. In 1900, a new Labour Party emerged and dedicated itself

to the interests of workers. To retain the workers' support, the Liberals voted for social reforms, such as unemployment benefits and old-age pensions.

In France, the collapse of Louis-Napoleon's Second Empire left the country in confusion. Finally, in 1875, the Third Republic gained a republican constitution. The new government had a president and a two-house legislature. The upper house, or Senate, was elected by high-ranking officials. All adult males voted for members of the lower house, the Chamber of Deputies. A premier (or prime minister), who led the government, was responsible to the Chamber of Deputies.

France failed to develop a strong parliamentary system. The existence of a dozen political parties forced the premier to depend on a coalition of parties to stay in power. Nevertheless, by 1914, the Third Republic had the loyalty of most voters.

Italy had emerged by 1870 as a united state. However, there was little national unity because of the gulf between the poverty-stricken south and the industrialized north. Turmoil between labor and industry weakened the social fabric of the nation. Even universal male suffrage, granted in 1912, did little to halt the widespread government corruption and weakness.

### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Comparing** How did Italy's government in the 1870s compare to Great Britain's?

## Central and Eastern Europe: The Old Order

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What political developments did Central and Eastern Europe experience in the late nineteenth century?*

Central and eastern Europe had more conservative governments than did Western Europe. In Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Russia the old ruling groups continued to dominate politics.

The constitution of the new imperial Germany that Otto von Bismarck began in 1871 set up a two-house legislature. The lower house, the Reichstag, was elected on the basis of universal male suffrage. Ministers of

government, however, were responsible not to the parliament but to the emperor, who controlled the armed forces, foreign policy, and the bureaucracy. As chancellor (prime minister), Bismarck worked to keep Germany from becoming a democracy.

By the reign of William II, kaiser from 1888 to 1918, Germany had become the strongest military and industrial power in Europe. With the expansion of industry and cities came demands for democracy.

Conservative forces – especially the nobility and big industrialists – tried to thwart the movement for democracy by supporting a strong foreign policy. They believed that expansion abroad would increase their profits and would also divert people from pursuing democratic reforms.

After the creation of the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1867, Austria adopted a constitution that, in theory, set up a parliamentary system with ministerial responsibility. In reality, the emperor, Francis Joseph, largely ignored this system. He appointed and dismissed his own ministers and issued decrees when the parliament was not in session.

The empire remained troubled by conflicts among its ethnic groups. A German minority governed Austria but felt increasingly threatened by Czechs, Poles, and other Slavic groups within the empire. Representatives of these groups in the parliament agitated for their freedom, which encouraged the emperor to ignore the parliament and govern by imperial decrees.

Unlike Austria, Hungary had a parliament that worked. It was controlled by landowners who dominated the peasants and ethnic groups.

In Russia, Nicholas II began his rule in 1894 believing that the absolute power of the czars should be preserved. Conditions were changing, however. By 1900, Russia had become the fourth-largest producer of steel. With industrialization came factories, an industrial working class, and pitiful working and living conditions. Socialist parties developed, but government repression forced them underground.

Growing discontent and opposition to the czarist regime finally exploded. On January 22, 1905, a massive procession of workers went to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg to present a petition of grievances to the czar. Troops opened fire on the peaceful demonstration, killing hundreds. This “Bloody Sunday” caused workers throughout Russia to strike.

Nicholas II was eventually forced to grant civil liberties and to create a legislative assembly, the Duma. By 1907, the czar curtailed the power of the Duma and again used the army and bureaucracy to rule Russia.

#### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Identifying Central Issues** Did the government of Germany, Austria-Hungary, or Russia adhere to the principle of ministerial responsibility?

## The United States

**GUIDING QUESTION** *How did the Second Industrial Revolution affect the United States?*

Four years of civil war had preserved the American nation, but the old South had been destroyed. In 1865 the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was passed, abolishing slavery. Later, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments gave citizenship to African Americans and the right to vote to African American males. New state laws in the South, however, soon stripped African Americans of the right to vote. By 1880, supporters of white supremacy were back in power everywhere in the South.

Between 1860 and 1914, the United States shifted from a farm-based economy to an industrial economy. American steel and iron production was the best in the world in 1900. Industrialization led to urbanization. By 1900, the United States had three cities with populations of more than 1 million, with New York reaching 4 million.

In 1900 the United States was the world’s richest nation, but the richest 9 percent of Americans owned 71 percent of the wealth. Many workers labored in unsafe factories, and devastating cycles of unemployment made them insecure. Many tried to organize unions, but the American Federation of Labor represented only 8.4 percent of the labor force.

In the late 1800s, the United States began to expand abroad. The Samoan Islands in the Pacific were the first important U.S. colony. By 1887, Americans controlled the sugar industry on the Hawaiian Islands. As more Americans settled in Hawaii, they wanted political power. When Queen Liliuokalani (lih • LEE • uh • woh • kuh • LAH • nee) tried to strengthen the monarchy to keep the islands under her people’s control, the United States sent military forces to the islands. The queen was deposed and the United States annexed Hawaii in 1898. In 1898 the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War. As a result, the United States acquired the former Spanish possessions of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.

#### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Analyzing** How did the U.S. Civil War affect African Americans?

## International Rivalries

**GUIDING QUESTION** *How did international rivalries push Europe close to war?*

Otto von Bismarck realized that Germany’s emergence in 1871 as the most powerful state in continental Europe had upset the balance of power established at Vienna in 1815. Fearing that France intended to create an anti-German alliance, Bismarck made a defensive alliance with Austria-Hungary in 1879. In 1882 Italy joined this alliance.

This Triple Alliance thus united the powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy in a defensive alliance against France. At the same time, Bismarck maintained a separate treaty with Russia.

## New Directions: William II

In 1890 Kaiser William II fired Bismarck and took control of Germany's foreign policy. The kaiser embarked on an activist policy dedicated to enhancing German power. He wanted, as he put it, to find Germany's rightful "place in the sun."

One of the changes William made in foreign policy was to drop the treaty with Russia. Almost immediately, in 1894, France formed an alliance with Russia. Germany thus had a hostile power on her western border and on her eastern border – exactly the situation Bismarck had feared!

Over the next decade, German policies caused the J.~ British to draw closer to France. By 1907, an alliance of Great Britain, France, and Russia – the Triple Entente – stood opposed to the Triple Alliance. Europe was now dangerously divided into two opposing camps unwilling to compromise.

## Crises in the Balkans

In the 1800s, the Ottoman Empire began to fall apart. Most of its Balkan provinces gained their freedom. As this was happening, two Great Powers saw their chance to gain influence in the Balkans: Austria-Hungary and Russia. Their rivalry over the Balkans was one of the causes of World War I.

By 1878, Greece, Serbia, Romania, and Montenegro had become independent. Bulgaria was not independent but was allowed to operate autonomously under Russian protection. The Balkan territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina were placed under the protection of Austria-Hungary.

In 1908 Austria-Hungary took the drastic step of annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbia was outraged.

The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, two Slavic-speaking territories, led to an international controversy and dashed the Serbians' hopes of creating a large Serbian kingdom that would include most of the southern Slavs.

The Russians, self-appointed protectors of their fellow Slavs, supported the Serbs and opposed the annexation. Backed by the Russians, the Serbs prepared for war against Austria-Hungary. At this point, Emperor William II of Germany demanded that the Russians accept Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina or face war with Germany.

Weakened from their defeat in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the Russians backed down but vowed revenge. Two wars between Balkan states in 1912 and 1913 further embittered the inhabitants and created more tensions among the Great Powers.

The Serbs blamed Austria-Hungary for their failure to create a large Serbian kingdom. Austria-Hungary was convinced that Serbia and Serbian nationalism were mortal threats to its empire and must be crushed.

As Serbia's chief supporters, the Russians were angry and determined not to back down again in the event of another confrontation with Austria-Hungary or Germany in the Balkans. Finally, the allies of Austria-Hungary and Russia were determined to support their respective allies more strongly in another crisis. By the beginning of 1914, these countries viewed each other with suspicion. Europe was on the verge of war.

### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Sequencing** Describe the events in the Balkans up through 1914.

## REVIEWING VOCABULARY

**ministerial responsibility** the idea that the prime minister is responsible to the popularly elected legislative body and not to the king or president

**Duma** the Russian legislative assembly