

# CHAPTER 7: 1900 CE TO PRESENT

## IF YOU ONLY LEARN SIX THINGS IN THIS CHAPTER . . .

1. Due to improvements in health care and the decrease of the death rate, the world population went from 1 billion people in 1900 to over 6 billion. The movement of people has also increased throughout the world, with many in search of better economic opportunities. Some refugees, too, are being forced to leave their homelands.
2. Traditional social structures have been challenged as a result of movements that have attempted to empower the working class, such as the introduction of communist governments in various parts of the world.
3. Women gained the right to vote in many parts of the world and access to new economic opportunities and education. The development of the birth control pill empowered women by allowing them to control their own reproductive systems.
4. The world became more and more integrated through technology, cultures blended, and some came to dominate. At the same time, religious fundamentalism has developed in some regions, possibly to combat this Western-dominated global culture.
5. The rise in the nation-state and nationalism has led to the adoption of political systems from totalitarianism to democracy. At the same time, the rise of a more globally connected world may blur the lines of the nation-state.
6. The world wars demonstrated the influence of technology on warfare, but also indicated the decline of Europe as the global power. Colonial areas asserted themselves and fought for independence, but were later faced with a new global conflict called the Cold War. Since the end of the Cold War, nations have made attempts at both economic and political reforms, and international and multinational organizations have made attempts to establish a new world order.

## THE BIG PICTURE

### 1. Interactions between people and the environment

In other words: **How does the environment shape human societies, and how do humans shape the environment?**

One of the most significant changes in the 20th century was the growth from 1 billion people worldwide in 1900 to over 6 billion. The increase in technology and health care has led to longer lives and a higher rate of infant survival throughout the world. Movement of people has also increased throughout the world, with many individuals seeking better economic opportunities in new areas. Additionally, some refugees are forced to leave their homelands.

Though health care has improved tremendously, epidemic diseases such as AIDS and malaria have continued to plague the world, particularly in developing countries with the least access to new medicines. The development of nuclear weapons changed the nature of war. During the Cold War, the major goal was to stop the other side from dominating. Now that more nations have access to weapons of mass destruction, diplomatic issues are more tenuous than ever.

### 2. Development and interaction of cultures

In other words: **How do people express themselves, and what is the impact of ideas?**

Has our world developed a global culture? As the world becomes more and more integrated through technology, cultures blend and some come to dominate. Religious fundamentalism has developed in some parts of the world, partially to combat this Western-dominated global culture. Intellectually, the developments of the 20th century boggle the mind. From the airplane to the atom bomb, the discoveries in math, science, and technology have revolutionized how we live and communicate.

### 3. State-building, expansion, and conflict

In other words: **How do people govern themselves?**

If in the 19th century the nation-state had its start, in the 21st century the nation-state seems to have taken over the world. There seems to be no area that is not a nation-state. This rise in the nation-state and nationalism has led to the use of a variety of political systems from totalitarianism to democracy. At the same time, the rise of a more globally connected world may blur the lines of the nation-state. As regional trade organizations such as the European Union develop and become more interconnected and religious fundamentalism grows, are nation-states losing their political hold?

#### 4. Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems

In other words: **How do economic developments affect the world?**

It can be said that much of the change that occurs in this century had its beginning in the 19th century. The industrialization and increase in communication that began in the 19th century continued to grow and spread at a tremendous rate in the 20th century. The late 20th century saw the rise of an increasingly global economy and the rise in power of multinational corporations, which led to economic development in many parts of the world.

#### 5. Development and transformation of social structures

In other words: **How do people identify themselves socially, and what roles do men and women have?**

The introduction of communist governments in various parts of the world challenged traditional social structure models, attempting to empower the working class. Unfortunately, new elite party classes often emerged, which went on to replace the older ruling class. Women gained both the right to vote in many parts of the world as well as access to new economic opportunities and education. The development of the birth control pill empowered women by allowing them to control their own reproductive systems.

### **WHY THIS PERIODIZATION?**

The 20th century witnessed change occurring at a rate that had never been seen before in world history. The cataclysms of two world wars affected almost all aspects of human life in the first half of the century. The rise and fall of communist regimes, together with the decolonization movements of the second half of the century, also transformed the global political landscape. The world became more interdependent as economic, technological, and cultural globalization tied peoples together tighter than ever before.

## GLOBAL CONFLICT

### WORLD WAR I

#### LONGER-TERM CAUSES OF WWI

- **Alliances:** The alliance system had led to many open and secret agreements between nations. Most of these were defensive plans that would protect a nation in the event it was attacked. Germany, Austria, and Italy all had agreements to this effect. Likewise, France and Russia were allied if Germany were to attack either one.
- **Imperialism:** Tensions stemmed from imperialism and the competition for foreign colonies, as in Africa.
- **Militarism:** The arms race between the major powers—especially Germany and Britain—that were maintaining increasingly large fleets also led to a hope that these new tools of war would be used in the future. Military leaders were anxious to fight sooner than later, and civilians were also increasingly casualties of the fighting. Civilian fatalities in wartime climbed from 5 percent at the turn of the century, to 15 percent during World War I.
- **Nationalism:** After the successful creation of Italy and Germany by 1870, other ethnic groups hoped for nations of their own. This rising tide of nationalism was growing stronger among such peoples as the Poles, Bosnians, Czechs, and Yugoslavs. Pan-Germanism came into direct conflict with Pan-Slavism. An eagerness to redraw the map of Europe was mounting, and this was usually done through conquest and war.

The war actually began in the following way: During a tour of the southern Balkan provinces, the heir to the Austrian throne and his wife were assassinated in their car. The assassin was a Serbian Slav nationalist. Austria accused Serbia of supporting Yugoslav (southern Slavic) nationalism, and it declared war. Russia sided with Serbia, while Germany pledged support for Austria. When Germany declared war on Russia, France joined Russia. Great Britain was the last major European power to join, when Germany violated Belgium's neutrality on its way to attack France.

World War I was a new kind of war, particularly because of recent improvements in military weaponry. The use of machine guns and gas led to a significant increase in casualties. The war became defensive as **trenches** were built and defended. The heroic notion of war was gone.

Civilians, too, were involved in the war effort, as women entered the workforce. This **total war** involved the entire nation. Governments controlled industry, and they used propaganda to reinforce the evilness of the enemy.

**The Treaty of Versailles:** The leading Allied powers—Italy, Great Britain, France, and the United States—were labeled the “Big Four.” They called a conference near Paris at the Palace of Versailles to settle the issues stemming from the war. In the end, France would not allow the generous peace that Wilson had envisioned. Instead, the treaty laid down harsh terms to which Germany had to agree. The map of Europe was redrawn, but nations such as Italy were still not satisfied with the results. Other nations such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia were all created in 1919 by the peace settlement.

President Woodrow Wilson entered the Versailles meetings with his plan, called the **Fourteen Points**. In it, he called for self-determination of nationalities, peace without victory, disarmament, fair treatment of colonial peoples, and the establishment of the **League of Nations**, a multinational organization aimed at maintaining world peace. Most of his ideas were rejected at the meeting, though the League of Nations was created. Ironically, when Wilson brought the treaty back to the United States, Congress opposed it and the United States did not join the new League. The League of Nations was established in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1921, but it struggled to keep the peace and control its members when tensions arose.

### IMPACT OF THE WAR ON THE ALLIES

- Though victorious, **Britain** was profoundly affected by the Great War. It had lost a significant percentage of its youth, and its economy was strained. After the war, debts were considerable and the once-proud empire took on a tired look. Britain’s great empire became more and more of a burden, and native movements for independence in Africa and Asia were underway.
- **France** was devastated by the war. Whole sections of the nation were destroyed, and the nation had also suffered many casualties. War widows and amputees were in evidence in every city.
- **Italy** was one of the Allied leadership nations and had been promised large pieces of the Austrian Empire when the Allies won. It received some, but not all it had hoped for. Postwar politicians were able to capitalize on this situation, and Italy continued to press for more territory along the Adriatic coast.
- The **United States** was elevated to true world-power status by the war but was not really interested in playing that role. Conservatives won the White House in 1920, and the United States largely retreated from European affairs.

## IMPACT OF THE WAR ON THE CENTRAL POWERS

- Germany was economically, politically, and socially wrecked. It had lost millions of men in the fighting, and now, by the terms of the Versailles treaty, was forced to pay huge amounts of reparations to the Allies. In addition, it lost all of its overseas empire, along with provinces on both eastern and western borders. The Kaiser abdicated and fled Germany, leaving a political vacuum. With the monarchy gone, a new government was assembled in Weimar in 1919. A weak democratic Germany with a president and chancellor was created.
- The Middle East: The Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1918. Turkey declared itself a republic and under the leadership of Ataturk, who instituted a program of modernization and westernization. Arab nationalism rose, in part inspired by Wilson's call for national self-determination, and disappointment in the terms of the peace treaty. In exchange for their help against the Central Powers, Arabs had been promised independence. Instead, their land was carved into French and British mandates. A center of tension was the British mandate of Palestine where Arab nationalists competed with Zionists for control of the land, land they had both been vaguely promised by the Allies.

## OTHER MAJOR PLAYERS

- **Russia** was in shambles as the revolution gave way to civil war after 1918. Russia was not a party to the Versailles treaty because it withdrew from the war and signed a treaty with Germany in 1917. For two years, the forces of the left—led by the Bolsheviks (Reds) and the supporters of the czar (Whites)—fought to control Russia. It took two years of bitter fighting and the deaths of as many as a million Russians for the Reds to claim victory and declare the birth of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Bolsheviks shot the czar and his family to ensure the monarchy would be finished in Russia.
- **Japan** had fought on the Allied side during the war and hoped to add to its empire. It did not get what it wanted at Versailles, and a postwar economic downturn led to hard times for this country. Japan entered the war late and hoped for support as a large nation aspiring to democracy.
- **China:** When Japan gained some concessions in China through the treaty, there were riots in Beijing to protest. This led to a surge of nationalism in China and to a cultural and intellectual movement known as the May Fourth Movement. This movement marked an upsurge of Chinese nationalism and a shift toward a more populist political base rather than the rule of intellectual elites.
- **India** fought on the side of the British in World War I and had been promised self-government after the war. When the fighting ended, little change occurred. This led to a surge in Indian nationalism under the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi, and to the eventual independence of India in 1947.

## GLOBAL DEPRESSION

The economy of the United States was crucial to the health of world markets. Europe had already seen an outflow of capital as the bull market in American stocks drew money to itself. When the market collapsed in October 1929, the reaction was felt around the world. American and foreign investors lost billions of dollars in the first week. The Depression led the United States government to take a more active role in the economy, a role that went largely unquestioned until the rise of American conservatism that began in the 1980s during the presidency of Ronald Reagan.

The impact was especially severe in Europe, which had depended on American loans to recover from World War I. The wave of bank failures in the United States had a ripple effect in London, Berlin, Tokyo, and other financial capitals. The bond market also shrank, and many investors were caught off guard as they tried to cover huge losses. This resulted in dramatic increases in bank failures and personal bankruptcies. Global unemployment rose to double-digit levels. In addition, the United States passed the highest tariff (a tax on imports) in its history, further blocking international trade.

### CAUSES OF GLOBAL DEPRESSION

- Overdependence on American loans and buying
- Increase in tariffs and protectionism
- Industrial and farming surpluses leading to deflation
- Poor banking management

The great hardships of the Depression led to political instability and a rise in political extremism in many nations. Communists on the left criticized the obvious failings of capitalism, while fascists on the right sought to protect private enterprise and promote their nations. Japan, Italy, and Germany looked to dictatorial rule in an effort to pull themselves out of their economic hardships.

In the 1930s in Japan, the military replaced civilian politicians in the highest posts of government. Lacking natural resources, Japan needed an empire to provide crucial minerals for its own industrial needs. It had already gained Taiwan and Korea, but it now fixed its eye on Northeast China. **Japan's invasion of Manchuria** in 1931 led to diplomatic protests in the League of Nations, but the Japanese kept their new territory and soon walked out of the League. Similarly, **Italy invaded Ethiopia** in 1935.

## RISE OF FASCIST AND TOTALITARIAN STATES

### ITALY

The triumph of Marxist revolution in Russia after 1921 had great impact on world political thinking in the 1920s. Fear about a spread of communism to other nations that had been

destabilized by the war led to new political movements in Europe. Groups of reactionary men started to organize in various European nations, but it was in Italy that the first expression of anticommunism emerged. A small group of men led by **Benito Mussolini** marched on Rome in 1922, demanding that they be allowed to form a government. The king gave in to this demand, and Italy was soon dominated by Mussolini and his fascists. Mussolini became the prototypical modern dictator as he accumulated more and more power.

### FASCISM AS AN IDEOLOGY

- Opposition to communism as a threat to tradition and private property
- Ultrnationalism and glorification of the state
- Militarism and glorification of war as the ultimate expression of power
- Alliances with big business and destruction of labor unions
- Rejection of liberalism and democracy, which were seen as weak and ineffective

### SOVIET UNION

At the same time that Mussolini was consolidating his power in Italy, there was a transfer of power in Moscow. Lenin, the architect of the Bolshevik Revolution, died of a stroke seven years after the revolution. The power struggle within the Bolshevik party led to the rise of **Joseph Stalin**, who took control in 1927.

Stalin's ruthless elimination of all his rivals allowed him to take complete power in Russia by the 1930s. His leadership became associated with Soviet communism, but it is also referred to as Stalinism.

### GERMANY

The establishment of the Soviet state in Russia led to political backlashes in many other countries. After the war, Germany rebuilt its government as a parliamentary democracy. Burdened with war debts and rampant inflation, the new government tried to reestablish Germany's place in the

### STALINISM AS PRACTICED

- Centralized control of the economy through the use of **Five-Year Plans**
- World leadership of the international communist movement
- Forced collectivization of all farming
- Promotion of atheism and forcing organized religion underground



international community. With the coming of the Depression, many feared that Germany would experience its own revolution and become the next communist state.

One of the political parties that developed in postwar Germany was the National Socialist German Workers' Party (the Nazi Party). Its charismatic leader **Adolf Hitler** spoke out against communism and used the anti-Semitic racism of his day to suggest that communism was really a global conspiracy organized by Jewish people and that Germany's economic problems could be blamed on the nation's Jewish population. Hitler also preached ultranationalism and the promise of a greater Germany, much as Mussolini had done in Italy. In 1933, he was appointed chancellor through the success of aggressive anticommunist propaganda. He became dictator, or *führer*, within a few years by eliminating most of his political opponents. He reorganized the government by insinuating the Nazi party into many areas of national life.

Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini represented a new form of political leadership in the modern context. These 20th-century dictatorships defined the modern totalitarian regime. Whether in Berlin or Moscow, the following features were apparent:

### TOTALITARIAN REGIMES

- A single leader with almost unquestioned authority
- A single party in charge of all government
- Creation of a police state to terrorize and control the populace
- Aggressive elimination of all opposition groups

### THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Treaty of Versailles had called for and organized a **League of Nations**, an organization made up of mostly European nations but also Ethiopia, Japan, Siam, and many Latin American nations. The United States, which reverted to an isolationist foreign policy after WWI, never joined. The League was never successful on a large scale with its primary purpose, that of stopping international conflict. Dominated by Britain and France, neither of whom wanted to go to war after the First World War, the League failed to act after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and the Spanish Civil War. This inaction emboldened Hitler, who began his own expansion of German territory within Europe unopposed. The policy of **appeasement** (giving in to a bully in a vain attempt to hope the bullying will stop) culminated in the 1939 Munich Agreement in which Britain and France handed Hitler the Sudetenland, a largely German-speaking area in northern Czechoslovakia, with the understanding that Hitler would not take any other territory in that nation. He invaded and took the rest of the country in the spring of that year. Despite its many failings, the League had some successes, notably with combating malaria and other diseases in Europe, stopping labor abuses, controlling the distribution of opium products, and lessening the slave trade in Africa and Asia.

## THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

In the 1930s, Spain was a conflicted country, barely industrialized, with a growing urban population and a largely semi-feudalistic countryside controlled by rich families who were allied with the Roman Catholic Church. In 1932, the king abdicated and a republic was created. The first republican government was very liberal and attempted to introduce many reforms such as universal, non-religious education, equality for women, land reforms, etc. After an even more liberal government was elected in 1936, officers in the army, led by General Francisco Franco, revolted and began a civil war that lasted for four years. During the war, the fascist-leaning Franco asked for and received aid in the form of troops and equipment from both Italy and Germany. Hitler, in particular, saw the war as a way of testing new military equipment and practicing new tactics, tactics that would become the famous blitzkrieg of the German land and air forces during World War II. One such attack, on the town of Guernica, was a deliberate attack on a non military target to test the German air force, killed hundreds of civilians who previously had not taken part in the civil war. In response to this slaughter of innocent civilians, the painter **Pablo Picasso** produced one of the 20th century's most famous artistic works, *Guernica*. This work stands as a continual reminder of the tragedies of war and the suffering it inflicts upon individuals, particularly innocent civilians. Although the Republican government repeatedly asked for help from the League of Nations, it only received limited help from the Soviet Union and from international volunteers (to include many Americans) who formed brigades to help them fight. Franco defeated the Republican forces in 1939 and ruled the country with an iron hand until his death in 1975.

## WORLD WAR II

Many of the unresolved issues at the end of the Great War were instrumental in causing the second—and far more devastating—World War. Tensions in both Europe and Asia were building throughout the 1930s, and both continents saw extensive fighting. As in the years before 1914, there were tense matchups between nations, which would eventually lead to war breaking out.

Historians debate when the Second World War began. While many point to the **German invasion of Poland in 1939**, the war in Asia had been going on since the Japanese **invasion of China in 1937**. Events in Europe affected the Asian conflict, especially when Germany overran France in 1940. This allowed Japan to take French Indochina, which had rubber and tin that the Japanese needed for their military machine. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor resulted in the United States abandoning its post-World War I isolationism and entering this new global conflict, a development that would alter its course and outcome.

From 1938 to 1942, the expansionism of both Japan and Germany was impressive. The Germans first succeeded in taking control of most of Eastern and Northern Europe with few casualties. After the fall of France, only Britain was left to fight the German army and air force, which bombed England aggressively in anticipation of an invasion. But the Royal Air Force managed to defend the skies over England, and Hitler turned his attention to his proclaimed enemy, the Soviet Union. A key year was 1941, as Germany launched a surprise invasion against the USSR, and Japan attacked the U.S. Navy in Hawaii. Both attacks were very well planned, catching the Russians and Americans completely off guard.

## ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

There was no peace conference at the end of World War II. The Allies demanded unconditional surrender, and the Axis nations were in ruins from bombing raids. Their defeat had been total, and both Japan and Germany were occupied by the Allied armies. Within the framework of the occupation, the Allies held war trials to hold the Japanese and Germans accountable for the worst war in human history. Top generals and government officials were charged and convicted, and some were executed for crimes against humanity. This set a new precedent in international law, as making war would now be punishable in international courts. The toll of the war was staggering. Some estimates of the dead exceed 60 million, and millions more were brutalized and wounded in the greatest example of total war in human history. The fighting ranged from Africa to Asia to Europe to Australia. The two nations that emerged from the conflict in the best position to influence the postwar world order were the United States and the Soviet Union. These two superpowers would go on to engage in a “cold” war that largely shaped the political course of the second half of the 20th century.

By mid-1942, Japan controlled most of the western Pacific Ocean from New Guinea to the Aleutians, and Germany controlled most of Europe and parts of North Africa. But the Germans were turned back at Stalingrad, and the Japanese lost a large naval battle to the United States near Midway Island in June of 1942. From that point on, the industrial capacities of the United States and the USSR were able to out-produce both of their enemies, and the Axis powers were put on the defensive.

The occupation of nations by Germany and Japan was a brutal exercise in militarist oppression and even extermination. Millions were killed in both Asia and Europe, as camps were set up to detain and even murder political enemies. China and Poland were the scenes of wholesale slaughter. The death toll in Europe alone is estimated at 20 million, as communists, labor leaders, Jews, homosexuals, the mentally disabled, and Gypsies were shot or gassed to death in specially designed chambers. In particular, Hitler targeted the Jews, blaming them for all of Germany's problems. Six million of Europe's 9.5 million Jews were killed in the Nazis' **Holocaust**. Millions of Chinese were also killed before the war ended, as the Japanese pushed across the continent.

New technologies were born during the war as both sides sought to outdo each other. The Germans and British developed radar to detect each other's planes. Sonar was invented to locate unseen submarines. Rockets were used in war for the first time—most notably by the Germans—as they delivered high explosives to Britain. But the most awesome weapon of all was the **nuclear bomb** that America developed and used to finish the war against the Japanese in the Pacific. Two bombs were dropped, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing over 150,000 people and forcing the final capitulation of Japan in August 1945.

## OUTCOMES OF WWII

The outcomes of World War II can be summed up as a **United States-Soviet ascendancy**:

- World War II only had two “winners” in that many of the victorious Allied powers were devastated in the fighting (especially France and China). Britain was crippled economically and was already losing control of parts of its empire. The greatest postwar status fell to the United States, which had entered the war late but had built up a gigantic military and industrial response to the Axis. Possession of the A-bomb meant that the United States was now alone at the pinnacle of power. It had suffered smaller losses in terms of men killed and, except for the attack on Hawaii in 1941, none of its territory was damaged.
- On the other side of the world, the Soviet Union had faced annihilation and survived to emerge as a great military power. Its losses had been almost 27 million, which was immensely traumatizing. Whole tracts of land had been decimated. Once victorious, the USSR participated in the founding of the United Nations, a successor to the League of Nations that was established after the war and participated in the War Crimes Tribunal, and established its hegemony in Eastern Europe.

Much of the responsibility for settling postwar problems fell on the **United Nations (UN)**, headquartered in New York City. Led by the five Allied victors of the war (United States, USSR, Great Britain, France, and the Republic of China), the UN established relief agencies and peacekeeping mechanisms. The task of postwar recovery—especially in war-torn Asia and Europe—was immense. As the leading superpower and wealthiest nation, the United States took on many of the costs for postwar rehabilitation.

The UN is a confederation that nations join voluntarily. The **General Assembly** is a forum for discussing world problems and their solutions. It cannot pass laws, but it can raise issues and suggest resolutions. Shortly after its founding, the UN was busy settling disputes in the Middle East and helping the many refugees left by World War II. To keep the peace, the UN has three responses to military aggression:

- Diplomatic protest and pressure brought to bear on the belligerent nation
- Economic sanctions used to pressure the aggressor nation
- Collective military action by member states to defend the nation(s) being attacked

## CIVILIANS AT WAR

Although civilians have always been affected by war, World War II saw the first deliberate targeting of civilians as a strategy to defeat the opposing side. From the Spanish Civil War to the Japanese “Rape of Nanjing” to the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews to Allied firebombing of first

German then Japanese cities, civilians became direct targets in the war. This culminated in the dropping of both atomic bombs to end the war in the Pacific. New types of media to include radio and cinema extended governments' ability to propagandize the war. From this point forward, no conflict, no matter how small, has excluded civilians from being targets. Terrorism, the deliberate use of violence or threat of violence for political purposes designed to influence a population's attitude, would become the norm for many political and non-political actors on the global stage.

## THE COLD WAR (1945–1989)

Within a year of the end of the war, there were already tensions between the former Allies. Working together to occupy Germany and to help found the United Nations, the United States and the USSR found more and more points of contention. The Soviet Union sought to control the nations on its western frontier, partly as a promoter of communism, but also to create a buffer to protect itself from future invasions. The United States protested, as this was in violation of wartime agreements.

Eventually, a de facto division took place, which divided Europe into a **capitalist West** and a **communist East**. In the middle of it all stood the divided former capital of Germany. Berlin had British, Russian, French, and American troops stationed in close proximity to one another. War almost erupted in 1948 when the Russians sealed off the city, denying the others access, but they finally relented.

### FEATURES OF COMPETITION BETWEEN THE US AND USSR

- **Technological:** The race to build bigger and more destructive weaponry intensified after the USSR tested its first nuclear bomb in 1949. The thermonuclear bomb (H-bomb) followed in the 1950s. Space technology created new competition when the USSR launched the first satellite in 1957. After this, there was a "space race," and then a "moon race," with both nations hoping to be the first to launch people into space. Moon landings by the United States in 1969 and Soviet space stations of the 1970s were some of the byproducts of this competition.
- **Geopolitical:** Both superpowers vied for influence across the globe, especially in the developing nations of Asia and Africa. Wars in Korea, Vietnam, India, Afghanistan, and Angola were fought with weapons provided by the Americans and Soviets.
- **Ideological:** Capitalism and communism were presented to the world as the two choices available for political organization. At least four nations were divided by this Cold War dichotomy in the 1950s.

The following year, the USSR exploded its own nuclear device, and the rivalry with the United States turned to outright animosity and competition. This rivalry continued for four decades, as the United States and the USSR competed for political influence throughout the world. It all came to an end when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

The **Cold War** produced military alliances, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact, that divided much of the world into anti-Communist and Communist camps. Proxy wars between the two sides took place in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

By the mid-1950s, relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China began to deteriorate as they differed in their interpretation of Marxism. China encouraged a movement of **nonaligned nations** made up of developing countries. India and Indonesia were two prominent nations in this group. A famous meeting in Indonesia in 1955 gathered these nations together and China cultivated the many national leaders present. China hoped to connect with the developing world and use this to counteract Soviet Russian diplomacy. Chinese aid flowed to African and Asian nations as a part of this ideological outreach.

The United States took advantage of the Sino-Soviet split and normalized relations with China in the 1970s. The Cold War took on more of a tri-polar feel, as China had its own nuclear weapons and space program by the 1970s. The James Bond film series glamourized and promoted the conflicts associated with the Cold War. In these films, Bond invariably and dramatically saved the United States and the world from a variety of Cold War villains.

## INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

Throughout the 20th century, independence movements and nationalism rose in many parts of the world. They were often set off as an opposing response to a colonial power or a competitive nationalist group.

### INDIA

India's nationalist movement was led by the British-educated members of the **Indian National Congress**. The Government of India Act of 1919 transferred power over some domestic issues over to the Congress, but as political independence seemed to be on the rise, British repression rose alongside it. In 1919, the government cracked down on freedom of the press and assembly, and at Amritsar, a British general ordered troops to fire on a protest rally. In the eyes of India, British colonial rule had lost its legitimacy.

Under the leadership of **Mohandas Gandhi**, the Indian nationalist movement grew. Gandhi focused on the peasant roots and spiritual traditions of India and created a mass movement. His methods of **ahimsa**, nonviolence in the face of an attack, and **civil disobedience** against unjust laws effectively challenged British authority. Gandhi was unsuccessful, however, in allying with Muslim leadership, and a movement to create a separate Muslim state gained strength.

The British suspended the movement toward home rule during World War II, but after the war, it was difficult for them to maintain their empire. On August 15, 1947, independence was granted to India. However, when independence was granted, a long-standing issue emerged about the fate of the Muslim minority in a newly independent Hindu-dominated India. The leader of the Muslim League, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, insisted that Muslims have their own state. Violence between Hindus and Muslims persuaded the British to partition the subcontinent, which led to the creation of Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. This division led to a mass migration of Muslim and Hindu refugees and terrible violence. Gandhi was devastated by the division of India and was later assassinated by a Hindu extremist.

## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

By 1914, almost all of Africa had been carved up by European powers. Economically, it had been transformed into a **monoculture** of cash crops and mines of precious metals such as gold and diamonds, but the ownership of these plantations and mines was exclusively in the hands of Europeans. As in India, the post-World War II independence movements in Africa were often led by a small minority of Africans who had received a European education. Labor organizations, social clubs, literary circles, and youth movements all became vehicles for protest. A transnational Pan-African movement sought unity beyond national boundaries.

The process of independence itself varied widely across Africa. The Gold Coast, later **Ghana**, was the first to achieve its independence in 1957. Led by the U.S.-educated **Kwame Nkrumah**, strikes and protests were used to remove the British from power. **Kenya**, on the other hand, had a sizable European population that blocked independence. This led to an armed revolt and eventually independence in 1963.

The independence of the Belgian Congo was not planned at all. The Belgian government departed the **Congo** suddenly in 1959, leaving behind a country beset by chaos and civil war.

The **political borders** created by the European colonial powers led to nations that were comprised of unrelated ethnic groups who had a history of conflict that began long before the war and that often became rivals competing for power. This led to ethnic tension in many areas of Africa, including Nigeria with the Biafra secessionist movement and **Rwanda**, where conflict between the majority Hutus and minority Tutsis (formally favored by colonial powers) led to a 100-day genocide, resulting in the deaths of almost one million Tutsis in 1994.

In **South Africa**, the path to independence was very different. The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 from former British colonies, but the majority black population was granted no rights. Instead, a series of restrictive laws was enacted with the goal of controlling the black population and maintaining the separate societies of black and white. This system was known as **apartheid**.

Under apartheid, 87 percent of the territory was designated for white citizens, and the remaining area was for black citizens. But under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC), an organized resistance was formed. The government combated this resistance with repressive measures such as extensive jail times for opponents. International opposition against South Africa, like the United Nations economic sanctions and international boycotts, brought global attention to the problem.

Finally, in 1989, the National Party began to take apart the apartheid system. **Nelson Mandela** was released from jail after 26 years and the ANC was legalized. In 1994, elections for all people were held, and Mandela became the first freely elected president of South Africa.

## ZIONISM AND PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM

Following World War I, the British held a **mandate** (a system in which a nation administers a territory on behalf of the League of Nations) in Palestine, but made conflicting promises to the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews. In the **Balfour Declaration of 1917**, the British government committed to support the creation of a homeland for Jews in Palestine and allowed Jews to migrate to Palestine during the mandate period. The Arab Palestinians saw the British rule and Jewish settlement as forms of imperial control, however.

Jewish migration to Palestine increased as Nazi persecution increased during World War II. By the end of the war, the Pan-Arabism movement opposed the creation of a Jewish state, and the Holocaust increased the Jewish commitment to the creation of a homeland. By 1947, the British gave up the mandate and turned the land over to the United Nations, which had plans to divide the area into two states. A civil war ensued and Jewish victories led to the creation of the Jewish state of **Israel** on May 1948.

Continued fighting has plagued this region, including the Six Day War in 1967. The **Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)** was created and is dedicated to reclaiming the land and establishing a Palestinian state.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS

During the 20th century, movements that used violence against civilians developed in many parts of the world. The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) is a paramilitary organization whose aim is to free Northern Ireland from British rule. It was formed in 1969 as a result of a split in the Irish Republican Army over how to respond to British colonialism. Al-Qaeda is a global militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s. Al-Qaeda has attacked both civilian and military targets in various countries, including the September 11 attacks in the United States, the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya, and the 2002 Bali bombings.

## VIETNAM

The French colonial rule of Southeast Asia also had to deal with rising nationalism. Both France and her colonies were occupied by the Axis powers during the war. A group of Vietnamese nationalists under the leadership of **Ho Chi Minh** first fought the Japanese during the war, and then began a guerrilla campaign against the returning French. Ho was a Marxist who also admired the American revolutionary Thomas Jefferson. He hoped that the United States would support his movement, but the growing tensions between the United States and the USSR worked against him.

The French-Indochina war lasted a gruesome nine years before the defeat at Dien Bien Phu forced France to admit it could not keep hold of its Asian possessions. A conference in Geneva in 1954



created four zones out of the former French Indochina: North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

After the French departure, Vietnam became a cold war sideshow: The United States gave aid to the south, while Beijing and Moscow supported the communists in the north. This evolved into a large-scale American war after 1965, as the United States tried to protect South Vietnam from communist encroachment. The costly effort failed, ending in a negotiated peace and communist victory in 1975.

## REVOLUTIONS

### RUSSIA

By 1914, Russia was far behind Western Europe economically and technologically. It lacked the capital to sufficiently build its own industry; was in debt to foreign investors; and was agriculturally unproductive. Losses in the Russo-Japanese War pointed out Russia's technological backwardness. After the Revolution of 1905, the czar conceded and allowed a legislative body (the **Duma**) to be assembled, but it was often dismissed if not in agreement with the czar. During World War I, Russian casualties numbered over two million, and that led to more tension throughout the country. Among other things, worker strikes began.

The disorder and chaos during **March of 1917** allowed the Duma to force the czar to abdicate the throne and put the provisional government in power. The government decided to stay in the war, and the food shortages, revolts, and continued strikes led to more disorder. **Vladimir Lenin**, the leader of the Bolsheviks, promised the people "**Peace, Land, Bread**"—exactly what they wanted and needed.

In November of 1917, Lenin's party seized power; in March of 1918, it signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovok with Germany, ending Russia's part in the war. For the next few years, a civil war raged throughout Russia between the Reds (communists) and the Whites (loyalists).

The **Bolshevik government** took control of the land, banks, and industries and used the Cheka, the secret police, to keep an eye on its people. However, the aftermath of World War I and civil war had caused famine throughout the Soviet Union, and so Lenin decided to take a more moderate course of action.

The **New Economic Policy**, NEP, instituted in 1921 allowed peasants to sell their products, but the government still controlled banking, trade, and heavy industry. Lenin died in 1924, and after a power struggle, **Joseph Stalin** came to power. Stalin instituted his **Five-Year Plans** with the goals of increasing industrial and agricultural productivity. Individual farms became collectivized (those who refused collectivization were killed, numbering over 14.5 million), and agricultural productivity declined, leading to great hardship. Industrial productivity increased a few years later, however, when Western Europe and the United States were hurting from the Great Depression. The Russian people experienced tremendous oppression during Stalin's **Great Purges** of the 1930s. Thousands were tried and executed and millions were imprisoned.

## CHINA

China was on the winning side of both world wars, but few nations suffered more from World War II. Technically, the Nationalist (Guomindang) government had been ruling China since the **Revolution of 1911**, but in reality, the country was fragmented into a series of warlord-dominated zones. **Sun Yixian** (Sun Yat-sen), the father of modern China, died in 1924 and a young army officer named **Jiang Jieshi** (Chiang Kai Shek) inherited leadership of the struggling Republic of China.

After 1921, a new dynamic in the nation was exhibited by the stirrings of a **Chinese Communist Party** (CCP). Jiang tried to work with the communists until he turned on them in 1927, driving them underground. The CCP leadership and membership was harassed and hunted down throughout the 1930s until they retreated to the north and reorganized. The Japanese attacks in 1931 and 1937 rallied all of China to the defense of the nation. When Japan invaded, Chinese nationalists and communists alike tried to cooperate in their fight against the Japanese, but there was little trust.

After Japan surrendered in 1945, the United States tried to encourage a coalition government, but negotiations broke down and civil war resumed. For three years, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Nationalist Guomindang (GMD) fought each other. The communists prevailed in 1949, and their leader **Mao Zedong** proclaimed the birth of the People's Republic of China (PRC) from Beijing as the nationalists fled to Taiwan to regroup.

### MAO'S INITIAL CHANGES TO CHINA

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<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All businesses were nationalized.</li> <li>• Land was distributed to peasants.</li> <li>• Peasants were urged to pool their land and work more efficiently on cooperative farms.</li> </ul>
<b>Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A one-party totalitarian state was established.</li> <li>• Communist party became supreme.</li> <li>• Government attacked crime and corruption.</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peasants were encouraged to "speak bitterness" against landlords (10,000 landlords were killed as a result).</li> <li>• Communist ideology replaced Confucian beliefs.</li> <li>• Schools were opened with emphasis on political education.</li> <li>• Health care workers were sent to remote areas.</li> <li>• Women won equality (but little opportunity in government and were paid less than men).</li> <li>• The extended family was weakened.</li> </ul>

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In order to increase agricultural and industrial production, Mao came up with and instituted a personalized plan (as Stalin had done) in the late 1950s. In the **Great Leap Forward**, all life was to be collective—family houses were torn down, and commune life replaced family life. Backyard steel furnaces were set up, which used scrap metal to make iron and steel.

The Great Leap Forward proved to be a great failure. Initial production statistics had been grossly inflated, and the backyard furnaces did not turn out iron of acceptable quality. The bad weather of the 1950s and 1960s and declining food production led to the deaths of at least 16 million Chinese.

As a result, some modifications were made to moderate the system. Mao's second major initiative was the **Cultural Revolution** of the 1960s. In an effort to re-revolutionize China, a group of university students known as the Red Guards rampaged cities, ordered the destruction of temples, and closed schools. The military was eventually needed to suppress the anarchy created by the Red Guards. As a result of this attempt to rid China of "bourgeois" or non-revolutionary tendencies, the country lost an entire generation of educated people.

### COMPARATIVE CLOSE-UP: THE ROLE OF WOMEN DURING THE RUSSIAN AND CHINESE REVOLUTIONS

Russia	China
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women served in the Red Army.</li> <li>• 65% of factory workers were women.</li> <li>• Government ordered equal pay (though it was not enforced).</li> <li>• Maternity leave with full pay was established.</li> <li>• Women entered professions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New marriage law forbade arranged marriage (was met with resistance).</li> <li>• Women worked alongside men in factories.</li> <li>• State-run nurseries were set up to care for children.</li> <li>• Party leadership remained male.</li> <li>• Efforts were made to end foot-binding.</li> </ul>

## MEXICO

In the late 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, Mexico was ruled by the dictatorship of **Porfirio Díaz**. Under this rule, 95 percent of the people owned no land, and foreign investors owned 20–25 percent of the land.

Very little had changed after Mexico achieved its independence from Spain in 1821 and the **Mexican Revolution** began. In 1910, the people rose up against Díaz under the leadership of Francisco Madero. Many of the leaders, who were mestizos, wanted to break the control of the Creole elite. Leaders such as Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata advocated land reform. Power changed hands continually throughout the civil war, as leaders were assassinated or overthrown. Eventually, conservative forces won out and Venustiano Carranza became president in 1916. He convened an assembly to write the **Constitution of 1917**.

The Constitution promised land reform, imposed restrictions on foreign economic control, set minimum salaries and maximum hours for workers, granted workers the right to unionize and strike, and placed restrictions on Church-ownership of property and control over education. In 1929, the National Revolutionary Party (later named the **Party of Institutionalized Revolution (PRI)**) was established in response to the political unrest that followed the assassination of president-elect Álvaro Obregón a year earlier. The PRI dominated politics for the remainder of the century, instituting land redistribution and standing up to foreign companies.

## IRAN

The **Shah Reza**, who ruled Iran from 1953 to 1979, was heavily influenced by the West and pushed to modernize and westernize his country. He was oppressive, using secret police to monitor his people. Opposition to the shah's rule came from three camps: **the religious ulama**, who felt that traditional religion was being suppressed; **students and intellectuals**, who felt deprived of freedom; and **farmers and urban workers**, who were hurt by inflation and unemployment.

In 1979, demonstrations led by the religious leader **Ayatollah Khomeini** forced the Shah into exile. Under Khomeini's rule, the sharia (Islamic law) became the law of the land. Women, for instance, were required to return to traditional Islamic clothing and were also placed under legal restrictions. Some women saw this return to tradition as a stand against Western culture and imperialism.

## CUBA

From 1939 to 1959, Cuba was ruled by the dictatorship of **Batista**, under which a small percentage of people were very wealthy and the masses of peasants were quite poor. **Fidel Castro** organized a guerrilla movement which initially failed, but eventually captured power in 1959. Though he had promised to hold elections, Castro did not do so, and at first, even denied that he was a communist. When he established close ties with the USSR, the United States viewed him as a threat.

In 1961, Castro announced his communist plans for Cuba: collectivized farms, centralized control of the economy, and free education and medical services. Tensions with the United States continued when a group of Cuban exiles in 1961, supported by the United States, attempted a failed invasion, known as the **Bay of Pigs**.

In 1962, a standoff known as the **Cuban Missile Crisis** occurred when Soviet missiles were discovered in Cuba. The United States and the Soviet Union compromised, and a third world war was avoided.

## POLITICAL REFORM AND ECONOMIC CHANGES

Toward the second half of the 20th century, many countries experienced economic and political changes. These changes would set them on their future courses.

## CHINA

After Mao died in 1976, **Deng Xiaoping** came to power and instituted a new program of economic modernization. The **Four Modernizations** included the following: industry, agriculture, technology, and national defense. Foreign investment was encouraged, and thousands of students were sent abroad to study.

As a result of these capitalist reforms, the economy boomed. Deng, however, was criticized for leaving out any democratic reforms. Criticism of the past was acceptable, as long as it didn't directly involve criticism of Marxist ideology. In May of 1989, massive student demonstrations

occurred in **Tiananmen Square**. Students called for democratic reforms, but instead were met with troops and tanks sent to crush the rebellion. The Chinese government reinforced the ideas that party leadership and political stability were the keys to China's success.

## INDIA

After independence from the British was achieved, India adopted under the leadership of Nehru a parliamentary political system based on that of Britain. The state took ownership of major industries, resources, transportation, and utilities, but local and retail businesses and farmland remained private.

Unlike Gandhi, Nehru advocated industrialization. India's foreign policy was one of **nonalignment** during the polarized Cold War. Tension continued with Muslim Pakistan when war broke out over the disputed land of **Kashmir**. Nehru's daughter, **Indira Gandhi**, later became prime minister and was extremely concerned about the growing population problem. As a result, she adopted a policy of forced sterilization that was extremely unpopular. Also, militant Sikhs in the Punjab demanded autonomy, and Gandhi ordered the rebels attacked. She was later assassinated by her Sikh bodyguard in 1984.

## SOVIET UNION/RUSSIA

After the death of Stalin, **Khrushchev** came to power in 1953 and initiated a de-Stalinization movement which criticized Stalin's faults and encouraged more freedom of expression. From 1964 to 1982, **Brezhnev** maintained power and retreated from de-Stalinization. He instead took a restrictive policy toward dissidents and free expression. During this period, industrial growth declined; the primary problem was the absence of economic incentives and a system of production quotas.

When **Gorbachev** came to power in 1985, he introduced his policy of **perestroika** (restructuring), which marked the beginning of a market economy with limited free enterprise and some private property. His policy of **glasnost** (openness) encouraged a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system. The formation of other parties and two-candidate elections were also introduced.

The Soviet Union, however, had major problems with its multiethnic population, and tensions rose along with the development of nationalist movements. The republics soon opted for independence, and the USSR came to an end, as did the Cold War.

In December of 1991, Gorbachev resigned and Boris Yeltsin came to power. As the new ruler of Russia, Yeltsin pushed for economic reform, fighting economic inequality and corruption. Russia continues to struggle with major problems of corruption and an unstable economy. Perhaps the changes were too great and too fast.

## EASTERN EUROPE

The Soviet Union dominated their satellite states in Eastern Europe following World War II, installing communist leaders and closely monitoring their progress. However, the economic hardships there and lack of political liberties led to growing discontent.

In 1956, a student-led protest in Hungary expressed this discontent, but the powerful Soviet army was sent in to crush the movement. In the late 1960s in Czechoslovakia, a movement (known as the **Prague Spring**) began in the hopes of creating a form of socialism with more freedom of speech and economic freedom. This movement was short-lived, however, after Soviet troops invaded with the intention of crushing it.

Throughout the communist-controlled period, Eastern European nations did experience a rise in education and an increase in the urban working class. The former “privileged class” was removed and replaced by a new privileged class—members of the Communist Party.

As the USSR was declining in the 1980s, liberation movements spread throughout the area. An independent labor movement, *Solidarity*, led by **Lech Walesa** fought for change in Poland. Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1994. In East Germany, mass demonstrations in the summer and fall of 1989 led to the opening of the border with West Germany, the tearing down of the **Berlin Wall**, and the eventual reunification of Germany.

Now that Soviet domination was removed, Eastern European countries moved to join **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the **EU** (European Union). Beginning in 1990, ethnic conflict developed in Yugoslavia, and under the Serbian leadership of Slobodan Milosevic, a policy of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo was instituted. In 2000, Milosevic was ousted from power and was tried for war crimes at the **International War Crimes Tribunal**. Milosevic died in 2006.

## JAPAN

For the five years following World War II, Japan was governed by an Allied administration which instituted a constitution, land reforms, and an education system. The goal was to make Japan **economically strong** so it could serve as a defense against communism in East Asia. The Japanese and United States formed a defensive alliance which allowed Japan to spend almost no money on its own defense—less than 1 percent of its gross domestic product.

Without having to pay for its own defense, Japan was able to focus on its economy. It soon experienced tremendous growth through the development of an **export economy**, with a large focus on technology. In recent years, however, Japan has suffered economic difficulties, with long-lasting economic stagnation that began in the 1990s and still continues today. Culturally, it has become a more individualistic society, but it retains an emphasis on the importance of a strong work ethic.

## DEMOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The human population of the world has grown tremendously in the past century and a half, topping over six billion people just before the 21st century. Improved life expectancy rates through the use of vaccines, sophisticated sewage systems, new medicines, and education contributed to this rise. Technological advances in agriculture, such as chemical fertilizers and high-producing

seeds, transformed farming in much of the world. This Green Revolution produced more food for the growing population of the world. Birth rates in the industrialized West, where the nuclear family is the norm, dropped significantly, while birth rates in Asia and Africa increased dramatically through much of the 20th century. China and India both have populations over a billion, despite the one-child policy in China and birth control programs in India.

Although medical advances (such as antibiotics, vaccines, and new surgical techniques) increased the life span of people in wealthier countries, diseases associated with poverty (such as malaria, tuberculosis, and cholera) persisted. New epidemic diseases also flourished in the increasingly interconnected 20th-century world, such as the influenza pandemic of 1918 and AIDS. In addition, longer lives and changing lifestyles led to increases in diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and certain kinds of cancer.

Though migration has been a theme throughout world history, it has increased throughout the past century, both internally (when people move from rural to urban areas or when they flee urban areas due to civil strife) and externally (when people migrate long distances and across borders, often in search of better economic conditions). Push-pull factors include a lack of resources, job opportunities, political, religious, and ethnic persecution, as well as population pressures. One result has been rapid urbanization in many parts of the world, which brings a whole new set of challenges: slums, unemployment, and underemployment for some recent migrants.

Often, external migrations followed the connections created by previous imperialism. Communities of Algerians and Vietnamese, for example, have settled in Paris. Pakistanis and Jamaicans have settled in London. The increased interactions among different groups of people have resulted in new cultural identities as well as exclusionary reactions, such as anti-immigration movements.

This huge population growth, combined with industrialization, contributed to significant environmental problems that include the overuse of natural resources and a loss of animal species. Many oceanic fish species are significantly depleted to the point where governments have to prohibit commercial fishing. Unique flora and fauna species disappear with the destruction of tropical forests for slash-and-burn agriculture and timber operations. Smog pollutes many city areas, causing lung diseases and often death. Water pollution denies the use of fresh water for many, particularly in third world nations. The damming of rivers often interrupts aquatic species' life cycles, and in some cases so much water is drained off of rivers and lakes for irrigation projects that they fail to reach their natural delta. Deforestation is as much a problem now as it has ever been in the past. The increased use of petroleum and heavy metals like mercury contribute to the pollution of land, air, and sea alike. The increased human population has also led to dramatic increases in the amount of trash produced by industrialized societies. Non-degradable and often toxic trash byproducts of modern societies end up in landfills or are transported to third world countries to be salvaged, but still leave mountains of trash.

Many scientists have theorized that global warming may be a consequence of the use of fossil fuels and the release of other pollutants.

However, this past century has also seen an increase in positive attitudes toward our environment. Environmentalism, a movement to protect and wisely use our natural resources, spawned in the late 19th century, is stronger than ever. Organizations like Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, and the World Wildlife Fund work to protect the environment through both direct action and in lobbying governments. Most national governments now have agencies designed to monitor industrial use of resources and their waste products. The use of local, regional, and national parks and wildlife refuges tries to keep natural areas intact for the enjoyment of future generations. International organizations track pollution and overuse of resources and provide aid to governments and communities. One of the biggest challenges facing the near future is that many nations who want to raise their standard of living through industrialization want to do so rapidly and end up having the same environmental issues that the Western countries like England and the United States did in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as contributing to global environmental issues such as global warming.

## TECHNOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES

During the 20th century, new methods of communication (such as radio, television, and the Internet) and transportation (automobiles and airplanes) eliminated the problems associated with geographic distance. Major advances in energy technology, such as the use of oil and nuclear power, increased industrial productivity, but came with considerable environmental costs. New scientific theories, such as Einstein's **theory of relativity**, led to significant advances in human understanding.

## SOCIETAL CHANGES

### CHANGING GENDER ROLES

In 1914, there were few opportunities for women in most professions. The 19th century had seen a few pioneering women become doctors, but most females were relegated to child-rearing, nursing, or teaching. The fight for female suffrage in the West saw its first successes in New Zealand, Australia, and Finland. Militant activists in Great Britain and the United States won the right to vote after 1920. Fashion and popular culture helped create a new image of the modern woman—free from some of the constraints of traditional gender roles.

Social and economic parity was a much longer fight. Both world wars gave women more and more power in terms of wage-earning, but the demands of the workplace and the home continued to be a challenge for the modern woman. The postwar **feminist movement** publicized the issues of child care and equal pay for equal work in the 1970s. Politics, law, and medicine have become more open to women in the last half of the 20th century. Successful female heads of government in Israel, Great Britain, and the Philippines demonstrated that politics was no longer an all-male domain.

The sexual revolution of the sixties and seventies further defined male and female roles. Key issues such as access to **birth control** were advanced, giving women more control over their own lives. Greater earning power in the workplace also meant more independence. The institution of marriage was challenged, and some women opted to remain unattached or even to have children



by themselves. Given the magnitude of these recent social changes, the impacts are still being felt and processed.

In parts of the developing world, changes to gender roles have varied. Some socialist and communist societies instituted important legal reforms for women, such as the 1950 marriage law in China which grants free choice of partners. In reality, many traditional beliefs still exist in China and other areas. The large population problem in China led to the establishment of the **one-child policy**, and as a result some 250 million births have been prevented, saving China from a population increase it would have had trouble accommodating. Despite having had powerful female heads of state, such as Indira Gandhi in India and Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, **literacy rates** for women in South Asia are still far below those of men. In the 1980s, only 25 percent of the female population of India was literate.

## NEW FORMS OF SPIRITUALITY

In the late 20th century, new forms of spirituality developed, while other believers emphasized particular ideas within existing religions and applied them to modern-day problems. The new form of spirituality commonly referred to as **New Age religions** draw inspiration from both Eastern and Western traditions and combine them with influences from self-help psychology. **Liberation theology** developed within the Catholic Church in the 1950s and 1960s as a response to poverty in Latin America. It interprets the teachings of Jesus Christ as being a vehicle for liberation from unjust conditions.

## GLOBALIZATION

### REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The late 20th century brought about new patterns of economic and political organization that transcended national borders. **OPEC**, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, organized in 1960 in an effort to raise the price of oil through cooperation. The World Trade Organization (**WTO**) formed from the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (**GATT**) in 1995 to promote unrestricted global trade.

Regional organizations have also formed to protect more local interests. **ASEAN**, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, formed in 1967 to accelerate economic progress and promote political stability. The **EU**, European Union, formed from the European Community in 1993, in an effort to strengthen European economic trade relations and distance itself from the influence of the United States. **NAFTA**, North American Free Trade Agreement, involves the United States, Canada, and Mexico, working to remove trade barriers between these countries. Finally, nongovernmental organizations (**NGOs**) such as the Red Cross and Greenpeace work to tackle problems that reach beyond national boundaries and governments.

Human rights values have also attracted more attention from international organizations. In 1948, the newly formed United Nations issued a **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. The rights of women have also received greater attention from the UN and other international organizations. The Nobel Peace Prize has often been awarded to those who have struggled to expand human rights, such as Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma (1991) and Liu Xiaobo of China (2010).

The anti-globalization movement is critical of the spread of corporate capitalism and the expansion of free trade. Movement participants share an opposition to the power of large, multinational corporations which was gained through free trade agreements. These corporations are seen as trying to maximize profit at the expense of safe working conditions, fair pay for workers, and the health of the environment.

### INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CULTURE

As the world becomes more and more connected, cultural lines have become blurred. Some refer to this as **cultural imperialism**. As Western companies and entertainment (in particular movies and music) spread worldwide, Western cultural ideas spread along with them. American companies like McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and Kentucky Fried Chicken can be found in most parts of the world today. With the spread of these products and ideas, some believe a consumer culture has developed, focusing on materialism and the promotion of **cultural conformity**. Viewed in a more positive light, globalization has enabled cultural diffusion to take place. A good example of this phenomenon is **Bollywood** (Indian cinema), a form of entertainment whose popularity spread through global media.

The rise of the use of the English language is also an indication of a developing global culture. Transmitted through the Internet, movies, and music, the use of the English language has spread worldwide. Yet even with the prevalence of a Western-oriented consumer culture, traditional forces remain strong in many parts of the world. Islamic fundamentalism, for instance, is a traditional force that very much reacts against Western culture, and the two ideals often clash.

Sports have become more internationalized, with the Olympics and the World Cup Soccer competitions enjoying popularity in all regions of the world. Global influences in music and film, such as the international popularity of reggae and American-style action movies, are another sign of the globalization of the 21st century.

### MEGA-TRENDS

Since World War II and throughout the Cold War, the world saw certain mega-trends.

#### GLOBAL MEGA-TRENDS

- Rapid population growth: (world population in 1945: 2,350,000,000; in 2000: 6,100,000,000)
- Globalization in the form of multinational businesses such as Phillips, Bechtel, Microsoft, Ford Motors, and Sony
- Access to information through electronic/satellite transfer by phone, fax, and email
- Nationalism and the proliferation of nation-states
- Religious fundamentalism in many different varieties
- The rise of export economies