

CHAPTER 29

TRANSITIONS TO
DEMOCRACY AND
THE COLLAPSE OF
COMMUNISM

After almost two decades of growing prosperity and relative political and social calm, domestic political conflict erupted in Europe—above all, in France—and the United States in 1968. The social, political, and cultural revolts that exploded that year seemed to pit young people, especially students, against those entrenched in power. Many “baby boomers” born after the war saw their revolt as one of an entire generation against its elders. They blamed them for a world that seemed unresponsive to demands for social justice and political change on behalf of the underprivileged and the oppressed. Many felt alienated (a word then much in vogue) from materialistic, industrial, bureaucratic society, and from the universities where they studied. Feminism, too, was a significant undercurrent during the protests of 1968, but it largely remained a movement of middle-class intellectuals and students.

Demonstrations and protest brought political reaction. The turmoil in France ended amid government repression and a conservative show of force. Demonstrations subsided elsewhere in Western Europe, although they continued in the United States against the war in Vietnam. In Western Europe, conservative or centrist parties dominated the governments of Britain, the German Federal Republic, and Italy for most of the 1970s and 1980s, while Socialists held power in France between 1981 and 1995. And, in southern Europe, democratic rule came to Portugal, Spain, and Greece.

A period of détente between the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1970s was followed by a chill that began as a result of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. Then in 1989, dramatic change occurred in

Eastern Europe. Mikhail Gorbachev (1931–), the leader of the Soviet Union, had undertaken a dramatic series of reforms in the mid-1980s that liberalized the economy and political life in the Communist state. His bold moves encouraged further demands for reform and stimulated nationalist movements in the Soviet Union's republics. The impact was soon felt in Eastern Europe. As campaigns for liberalization revived in Poland and Hungary, it became clear that the Soviet leadership would not intervene to crush movements for reform, as Gorbachev indicated that he viewed reform in Eastern Europe as desirable.

Throughout Eastern Europe, one Communist government after another fell. These revolutions ranged from the “velvet revolution” in Czechoslovakia to the violent overthrow of Nicolae Ceaușescu in Romania, until there were no Communist regimes left in Eastern Europe (although in Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania, former Communists retained power). Overall, the fall of communism was achieved through a remarkably peaceful process of change. However, in 1989, Yugoslavia began to break apart in a cacophony of ethnic hatred generated by the very question that the polyglot state's creation after World War I could not resolve: the national question. In Bosnia, civil war raged. The Soviet Union itself collapsed in 1991. The U.S. official George Kennan's prediction in 1947 that the Soviet system “bears within it the seeds of its own decay” turned out to be correct.

Adulation of Mikhail Gorbachev in Stuttgart, West Germany, for his bold moves toward reform and liberalization in the Soviet Union.



POLITICS IN A CHANGING WESTERN WORLD

During the late 1960s, a loosely connected movement for political and social change swept across university campuses in a number of Western countries. Youth increasingly trumpeted sexual freedom, aided by the availability of birth control (notably the pill, beginning in the 1960s and 1970s) and the legalization of abortion in some countries. Based largely but not exclusively in the surging generation of baby boomers born after World War II (in the United States, the student-age population increased from 16 million in 1960 to 26 million in 1970), the youth revolt challenged long-established hierarchies, party politics, and even consumerism. From Berkeley, California, to Paris, Berlin, and Amsterdam, students protested against American involvement in the Vietnamese civil war, where, despite government claims of a high-minded struggle against communism, the United States seemed to be supporting a corrupt political regime against determined nationalists, albeit Communists. In the United States, particularly, the movements of the 1960s were closely tied to the civil rights movement, as students protested against social injustice and racism. Long hair, sexual freedom, rock music, and marijuana seemed part of the idealistic youth rebellion against the state and capitalism. The British impact on popular culture was never greater than in the 1960s, when the Beatles, Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones, and the Who, among other rock groups, became phenomenally popular across much of the globe. In France, student demonstrations, insurgency, and strikes shook the country, challenging the government of President Charles de Gaulle. Demonstrations also rocked Italy, West Germany, and other Western European countries.

Western European states began to turn away from U.S. foreign policy domination. De Gaulle, who believed that France had a special historic mission and never doubted for a moment the part he was to play in it, feared the domination of Europe and France by Britain and the United States. He insisted that France maintain an independent nuclear capability; the country's first nuclear bomb was tested in 1960. Moreover, ending decades of animosity, the close partnership between Germany and France formed the cornerstone of the new Europe. However, de Gaulle refused to cooperate with the other Western powers. In 1966, France left NATO's military command, forcing it to transfer its headquarters from Paris to Brussels. U.S. Army and Air Force bases in France were closed. De Gaulle angered the U.S. government by refusing to support its policies in Vietnam. He also outraged many Canadians during a state visit in 1967 by shouting, "Long live Free Quebec!" (Quebec, predominantly French-speaking, has had considerable sentiment for independence.) Although de Gaulle remained vehemently anti-Communist, he wanted France to provide leadership as a third force that stood between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Other European governments also no longer automatically accepted U.S. Cold War rhetoric, which had encouraged the arms race. They reasoned

that if the two superpowers went to war, the battlefields (in conventional warfare) or the targets (in case of "limited" nuclear warfare) would be in Europe.

Student Protests Challenge Gaullist France

In the spring of 1968, demonstrators took to the streets of Paris, protesting the rigid, overcrowded, and under-funded French university system, which largely remained the preserve of the elite. Intellectual ferment was heightened by opposition to the war in Vietnam. In France, students rebelled against those in political power, inequality, and even modern technology, which seemed to them dehumanizing. Graffiti in the Latin Quarter (where students attended university) proclaimed, "Comrades, the Revolution is daily, it is a festival!"

Early in May 1968, a student radical was expelled from the University of Paris. In protest, students and some young faculty members occupied university buildings at the Sorbonne. After the police entered the university and began arresting students, the demonstrators fanned out and were joined by more students. Several students were killed and hundreds injured when police attacked hastily improvised barricades.

Unlike in the United States, where most workers found student demands too radical and many supported U.S. participation in the war in Vietnam, French workers took to the streets in support of the students. A general strike began on May 13 in protest against police brutality, the largest wave of French strikes since 1936. Strikers demanded raises, better working conditions, and rights of self-management. Union organizations and the Communist Party, which had considerable prestige among industrial workers, had little to do with the movement. The tail seemed to be wagging the dog. If anything, trade union and Communist leaders tried to bring the movement under their control in its first days. Gaullist Prime Minister Georges Pompidou (1911–1974) hurriedly returned from a state visit to Afghanistan to confront the growing crisis.

After a hurried flight to West Germany, presumably to assure himself of the loyalty of French army units stationed there, de Gaulle dissolved the National Assembly on May 30 and announced that new elections would be held on June 23. Gaullists organized counter-demonstrations in support of the government, capitalizing on the hostility of many middle-class citizens and peasants in traditionally conservative regions to the turmoil in Paris. The strike movement ebbed, in part because the government and many companies agreed to raise wages. This left the students standing alone.

After dismissing Pompidou as prime minister, de Gaulle won what amounted to a referendum on his rule. However, his towering presence seemed increasingly anachronistic. Speeches about national "grandeur" rang hollow as French influence in the world declined. De Gaulle's answer to a general crisis of confidence was to call for more "participation" in the



An outnumbered policeman during the massive protests in Paris in May 1968.

political process, as a way of expressing French “national ambition,” which he believed was slipping away. “The French think of nothing but increasing their standard of living,” he once complained. “Steak and French fries are fine. A family car is useful. But all that does not add up to national ambition.” In 1969, the president announced another referendum, this one on local administrative reform. This seemed an unlikely issue for de Gaulle, who believed in an efficiently centralized state and cared little about regional liberties (he once asked rhetorically how one could govern a country with several hundred different kinds of cheese). De Gaulle lost what turned into a plebiscite on his government and retired from political life.

The contentious year 1968 also brought student demonstrations and riots to Italy and West Germany, where Berlin was the center of the student movement. The University of Rome had been built to accommodate 5,000 students but that year enrolled 60,000 students. Thousands of university graduates were frustrated because they could not find jobs. But Italian students found no support from workers, and the movement quickly collapsed.

Shifts in Western European Politics after 1968

During the 1970s, European domestic politics underwent a shift from the right to centrist governments. This change was apparent not only in the German Federal Republic and Britain (where Labour was in power from 1974 to 1979) but also in France. In Italy, the strikes of 1968 and 1969 generated

further political instability, although the Christian Democrats, forming a series of center-left coalition governments, continued to dominate Italian politics. In West Germany, the Christian Democrats refused any negotiations of consequence with the German Democratic Republic or the Soviet Union. However, following waves of student protest, Social Democrats bucked the tide and came to power in 1969. They were helped by an alliance with the centrist Free Democrats, who abandoned their Christian Democrat allies. Willy Brandt (1913–1992), who had fled Nazi Germany and fought with the Norwegian resistance during the Second World War before becoming mayor of Berlin, took office as chancellor. In 1970, Brandt signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union, paving the way for the development of trade between the two states. He signed the Treaty of Warsaw, which recognized the frontier between Poland and East Germany as redrawn after the war. While echoing his predecessors’ commitment to NATO, Brandt improved relations with the German Democratic Republic, calling for an “opening toward the East.” Millions of people were allowed to cross the wall to visit the other side, overwhelmingly most were West Germans allowed to visit East Berlin.

Brandt resigned in 1974 following the discovery that one of his aides was a spy for East Germany. Helmut Schmidt (1918–), a more conservative Social Democrat, became chancellor. Schmidt weathered political storms, but drew the wrath of environmentalists and anti-nuclear groups in 1979 when he asked the United States to station medium-range nuclear missiles on West German soil to counter similar Soviet missiles. Schmidt and centrist French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing (1926–; president 1974–1981) believed that Germany and France had to become the center of Western Europe. However, economic recession, rising unemployment, and Schmidt’s refusal to reduce welfare payments led to the return to power in 1982 of the Christian Democrats. They were led by Helmut Kohl (1930–), who cut taxes and reduced government spending. However, in September 1998, elections swept the Social Democrat Gerhard Schröder into the chancellorship, based on a coalition between Social Democrats and the German ecological party, known as the Greens, replacing Kohl, who resigned two years later as chairman of the Christian Democratic Party in the wake of a financial scandal. In 2005, Angela Merkel (1954–), a Christian Democrat who had grown up in the Communist German Democratic Republic, became the first female chancellor of Germany.

In Britain, under the pressure of the oil crisis and following bitter mining strikes, the Conservative government fell in 1974. But the subsequent Labour governments of Harold Wilson (1916–1995) and James Callaghan (1912–2005) were buffeted by soaring inflation, which was exacerbated by a series of major union victories in prolonged strikes during the Callaghan government.

Upper- and middle-class Britons turned against Callaghan, claiming that the unions now held their country hostage. In 1979, Conservative leader

Margaret Thatcher (1925–), the daughter of a prosperous grocer from the English Midlands, became prime minister. She was the first woman to hold the position, although she vociferously repudiated feminism.

Thatcher was committed to putting into effect a tight monetary policy (“monetarism”). She promised to slash government expenses with cutbacks. Within three years, 1 million jobs in manufacturing had disappeared. The Conservative government eliminated some of the health and education measures Labour had implemented. “The Iron Lady” reduced inheritance and capital taxes and waged war against the trade unions. The government sold off some nationalized industries, notably the rail system, with disastrous results for service. Without government subsidies, many factories closed down and unemployment continued to rise. By 1983, Britain had 3 million unemployed workers (about 12 percent of the workforce). Cuts in housing subsidies left hundreds of thousands without adequate places to live. Thatcher had, after all, once advised Britons to “glory in inequality.”

In May 1982, the military government of Argentina, seeking to reverse a decline in its popularity at home, invaded the Falkland Islands. Although the British occupied the sparsely populated Falklands, which lie about 300 miles from the coast of Argentina in the Atlantic Ocean, Argentina had claimed them since the nineteenth century. British forces easily recaptured the islands. The short war boosted the prime minister’s standing at home. Furthermore, the British economy began to recover in the early 1980s and inflation slowed down. The Conservatives rolled to another impressive victory in the general elections of 1983 over the bitterly divided Labour Party. In 1985, she outlasted a long strike by coal miners. However, fearing the revival of the Labour Party, Conservative leaders unseated Thatcher in 1990, replacing her with the bland John Major (1943–), who became prime minister following elections two years later. Meanwhile, Tony Blair (1953–) moved the Labour Party toward the center—what he called “New Labour.” Turning away from the class politics of the old Labour Party, “New Labour” reached out to liberals and even moderate conservatives. Blair emphasized a commitment to economic progress and to practical policies in place of shrill rhetoric. In sharp contrast to most Conservatives, Blair made clear that he believed Britain’s future lay with Europe. The sweeping victory of “New Labour” in 1997 brought Blair to 10 Downing Street as prime minister, where he remained for ten years.

Blair’s policies increasingly could have been confused with those of his Conservative rivals. In 2001, Blair’s Labour Party swept to another easy victory in Britain, leaving Socialist or Social Democratic parties in power in nine of the fifteen member states of the European Union.

In the meantime, the death of Princess Diana (1961–1997) in a high-speed car crash in a Paris tunnel on August 31, 1997, plunged Britain into mourning. This was just the latest of a series of reverses for the British monarchy, including Diana’s separation and then divorce from Prince

Charles in 1996. Despite the attachment of many people to the monarchy as an institution and the fascination with the royal family perpetuated by coverage in tabloid newspapers, to some British subjects, the monarchy seemed an expensive and irrelevant atavism. Yet, to fervent British royalists, Prince William (heir to the throne after his father, Charles) and his younger brother, Harry, offered hope for the future. Increasingly unpopular because of Britain’s involvement in the Iraq War (see Chapter 30), Tony Blair resigned in 2007, succeeded by Gordon Brown, under whose leadership the Labor Party’s popularity in Britain plunged to an all-time low.

In France, the economic slump that began with the oil crisis of 1973 and financial scandals undercut the presidency of the centrist Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, a technocrat committed to economic modernization. In 1981, the pragmatic Socialist François Mitterrand (1916–1996) won election as president. Social Democratic parties maintained power in Scandinavia. Andreas Papandreu (1919–1996), became Greece’s first Socialist premier in 1981. Italy and Spain also had moderately left-wing governments. As in Britain, Socialist and other leftist governments in France and other countries governed with moderation, abandoning traditional agendas of the left in the interest of practical politics. In the meantime, the influence of unions declined along with the number of industrial workers. Abandoned factories in the German Ruhr region, northeastern France, northern England, and the Czech Republic stood as rusty symbols of an industrial world that was disappearing.

By nationalizing large corporations and more banks and initiating ambitious social reforms, French President Mitterrand confronted determined opposition from the business community. The French franc plunged on the international currency market; people of wealth began to remove their assets from France. A year after taking office, the Socialist government was forced to devalue the franc and freeze prices and wages. Pressure from the right mounted from the Gaullists and their ambitious leader, Jacques Chirac (1932–), the mayor of Paris. The inability of the Socialist government to revive the economy undercut its popularity.

In the 1986 elections for the Chamber of Deputies, the right triumphed, leading to an awkward period of government known as “cohabitation.” Mitterrand selected a rightist premier, Chirac, with ministers drawn from the right and center. The new government sold off some nationalized banks and businesses and ended wage and price controls.

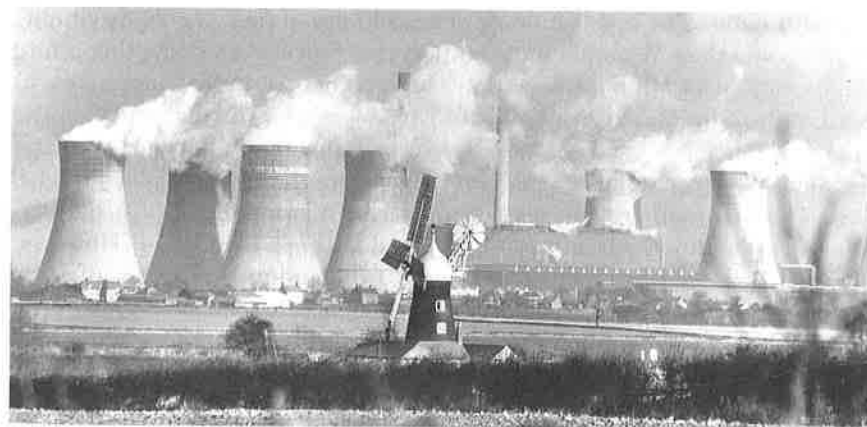
Given a slight majority in the elections for the National Assembly in 1988, Mitterrand appointed Socialist prime ministers, but the right swept into power in 1993. When his second term ended in 1995, Mitterrand had become the longest serving head of state in France since Napoleon III (emperor 1852–1870). Chirac was elected president in 1995. He began his presidency by authorizing the resumption of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific, leading to considerable international opposition, particularly

in Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. Facing a high unemployment rate and a growing economic deficit, reductions in health, retirement, and other benefits followed. Strikes forced the government to make some concessions. In 1997, however, Chirac called elections a year early in hopes of receiving a sweeping mandate. Socialists dominated the elections, forcing Chirac to name the Socialist Lionel Jospin as prime minister, bringing another uncomfortable period of "cohabitation" with a conservative president and a Socialist prime minister.

In Italy, instability and corruption continued to characterize political life. Despite a general increase in prosperity, inflation and high unemployment left many Italians still dissatisfied with all political parties. The government of Bettino Craxi (1934–2000) from 1983 to 1986 was the longest and in many ways the most stable of the post-war period. Socialists replaced the Communists as Italy's second largest party, forcing the Christian Democrats to accept them as coalition partners in 1986. Craxi himself was convicted of corruption, however, and fled in 1993 to Tunisia. Giulio Andreotti (1919–), Christian Democrat prime minister on six different occasions, stood accused not only of corruption, but was eventually found guilty of arranging the murder of a journalist who had uncovered evidence of wrongdoing. More than 2,500 Italian politicians and businessmen were arrested for corruption over an eighteen-month period. Campaigns against the Mafia have been periodic (most energetically following the assassination in 1992 of a public prosecutor who had devoted himself to the difficult legal war against the Mafia). In the 1994 elections, conservative financier and media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi (1936–) became prime minister of Italy. His new right-wing party, Forza Italia, came out of the elections as Italy's most successful party, with two parties of the extreme right as allies, both denouncing the increase in the immigrant population: the Northern League, which campaigned on a program of independence for northern Italy, provocatively describing the south as a weight around the neck of the north, and the neo-fascist National Alliance. Cynicism and mistrust of politicians became even more prevalent in Italy.

In every Western country, a new political force began to be felt. "Green" parties, political groups of militant environmentalists angered by the deterioration of the environment, emerged in Western Europe during the 1980s. In the German Federal Republic, the Greens, Europe's largest environmental party, were alarmed by industrial pollution, which was slowly killing their country's forests. Environmental parties stridently opposed nuclear power, even before a deadly Soviet nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in Ukraine in 1986. Greens helped push for agreements that have led to some cleaning up of the Rhine River and Mediterranean beaches.

Finally, in almost all Western states, economic slumps have accentuated complaints that state-subsidized programs are too expensive. In Sweden and Denmark, Social Democratic parties were ousted after decades of rule by conservatives calling for sharp reductions in the tax rates that financed



A nuclear power plant dwarfs a more traditional source of power.

cradle-to-grave social programs. With the recession of the early 1990s reducing tax revenue, Western European governments reduced social benefits, such as unemployment payments.

The Transition to Democracy in Southern Europe

During the 1970s, three southern European dictatorships became democracies: Greece, Portugal, and Spain. Greece, the cradle of democracy, had been controlled by a series of right-wing governments since its civil war in the late 1940s. In 1967, military officers overthrew Greece's first post-war government of the left, ruthlessly crushed dissent, and imprisoned, and tortured political opponents. The military dictators planned to seize the island of Cyprus, which lies off the coast of Turkey and which both Greece and Turkey had claimed for centuries. Relations between Greece and Turkey had often been extremely tense. Now bitter disagreements over the form of a new constitution in Cyprus led to fighting between Greeks and Turks. The Greek Cypriot National Guard overthrew the government of Cyprus. At the same time, the Cypriot Turks defeated the Greeks and declared the northeastern, predominantly Turkish part of the island to be independent. Further fighting ended in a cease-fire. Meanwhile, in Greece, the power of the generals, who had not sent help to the Greek Cypriot insurgents, collapsed in 1974. Greece became a republic in which conservative and Socialist parties took turns in power.

In Portugal, authoritarian leaders, notably Antonio Salazar, dictator from 1932 to 1968, struggled inefficiently with economic backwardness. Thousands of Portuguese went abroad as seasonal workers each year or emigrated permanently to other countries in Western Europe or in the Western Hemisphere. At the same time, the dictatorship, determined to hold on to Portugal's African colonies at all costs, became entangled in a long, bitter

war with nationalist rebels in its African colonies of first Angola, beginning in 1961, and then Mozambique, conflicts that Portugal could neither afford (at the annual cost of half the nation's budget) nor win (see Chapter 28). In April 1974, a group of liberal army officers overthrew the dictatorship. The Socialist Party emerged victorious in elections the following year and Angola and Mozambique became independent, lapsing into bloody civil wars. Despite another coup two years later by a group of officers, the Portuguese transition to democracy occurred without bloodshed. However, political turmoil forced the government to abandon a program of state nationalizations and some agricultural collectivization in 1976. That year, Mário Soares (1924–) took office as the first democratically elected prime minister in Portugal in fifty years, and he dominated Portuguese political life into the 1990s.

In Spain, General Francisco Franco survived as dictator long after his friends Hitler and Mussolini had gone to their graves. After World War II, the United States prevented the United Nations from imposing economic sanctions against Spain because of Franco's support of the Axis powers. Franco maintained Spain's authoritarian political structure. While repudiating secular values, he accepted economic modernization, with the help of the United States.

In the late 1960s, opposition to Franco's regime mounted in Catalonia and the Basque country, Spain's most industrial regions, each with an entrenched separatist movement. Franco struck hard against Basque and Catalan separatists; the Catalan language, for example, remained illegal in print. But Franco retained popularity in traditionally religious regions, such as Navarre and his native Galicia.

Franco agreed that Juan Carlos (1938–), the son of the heir to the throne before the civil war, would succeed him as head of state and that Spain would remain an authoritarian state. Within the Spanish government, however, many officials already believed political reform inevitable, even desirable. Socialist and Communist parties existed, although they were illegal. Government censorship itself became more lax in the 1970s.

Upon Franco's death, Juan Carlos became king in 1975. He accepted the transformation of Spain into a constitutional monarchy with a democratic political structure. Spain emerged from authoritarian rule and international isolation. Spectacular economic growth and increasing prosperity helped the centrist Adolfo Suarez (1932–) keep a series of governments afloat through skillful political negotiation, even without a parliamentary majority. The charismatic Felipe González and the Socialists swept Suarez aside in the 1980s. In 1996, José Maria Aznar became Spain's first conservative prime minister since the time of Franco.

RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC CONFLICTS

Compared to the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, religious conflicts have diminished in modern Europe, with several notable exceptions. In Northern Ireland, the bitter centuries-old rivalry between Catholics and Protestants brought violence. Although the Catholic Republic of Ireland obtained independence in 1922, Northern Ireland is primarily Protestant (two-thirds of the population) and remains part of Britain. The Irish Republican Army (IRA), claiming to represent Ulster Catholics, struck at the British army and Protestants alike. Several weeks of disturbances in 1969 unleashed decades of violence, "the troubles" that took at least 3,500 lives. Secret Protestant paramilitary organizations, claiming that the British army inadequately protected Protestants, struck back against Catholics. Ian Paisley (1926–), a Protestant clergyman, heightened tension by speaking out provocatively against any compromise. On January 30, 1972—"Bloody Sunday"—British troops killed thirteen demonstrators in the Northern Irish town of Londonderry.

The economic crisis of the 1970s compounded Northern Ireland's problems, making Catholics even more disadvantaged compared to Protestants. The IRA, buying guns on the world weapons market with money stolen from banks or contributed by sympathetic Irish Americans, struck not only in Northern Ireland but also in England. Cease-fires in 1994 and 1996 could not still the violence that continued periodically, particularly during the

The aftermath of a bomb planted by the Irish Republican Army in Belfast, Northern Ireland, 1972.



period of the traditional Protestant summer marches. On April 10, 1998, Protestant and Catholic representatives signed the Belfast Agreement (or Good Friday Agreement), which provided for a National Assembly for Northern Ireland in which both religions would be represented. The people of Northern Ireland and of the Irish Republic overwhelmingly approved the Belfast Agreement. In December 1999, the British Parliament granted substantial power to the Northern Ireland Assembly, with a Catholic moderate as deputy first minister and David Trimble, a Protestant, as first minister. However, in February 2000, the British government suspended the Catholic and Protestant power-sharing government of Northern Ireland when the IRA refused to establish a timetable for the disarmament of its members.

The situation then began to improve dramatically. The IRA gradually abandoned the tactics of violence, and the Catholic political organization Sein Fein emerged as a force for conciliation. The expanding economy in Northern Ireland, as in the Republic, gave more people a stake in peace. Even Paisley now accepted compromise, becoming first minister of Northern Ireland in 2007.

Demands by ethnic minorities for independence surfaced in several countries. In Spain, Basque separatists (the ETA), sometimes hiding in the French Basque country, have moved across what they considered an arbitrary frontier to attack Spanish government, army, and police installations and to carry out assassinations. Popular support for the separatists in the Spanish Basque region waned in the 1980s, after the constitution of 1978 recognized "autonomous communities" within Spain. However, the violent ETA campaign has continued off and on. On the Mediterranean island of Corsica, violent groups opposed to French rule have planted bombs and carried out occasional assassinations, even as they feuded among themselves.

THE FALL OF COMMUNISM

In 1975, the leaders of European states gathered in Helsinki, Finland, to sign the Helsinki Accords, which concluded the first Conference on Security and Cooperation. All European states, with the exception of Albania, signed the accords, which recognized as valid the national borders drawn up after World War II. The thirty-five signatories also pledged to respect human rights and to cooperate in economic and scientific matters. To some critics, the Helsinki Accords seemed to recognize Soviet domination of Eastern Europe since the war. To other observers, they were a significant step forward because the heads of Communist states agreed in principle to respect human rights. The accords seemed a healthy pause in the renewed tension between East and West.

Hardly anyone at the time could have anticipated the fact that, fourteen years later, communism would collapse in Eastern Europe, bringing about an end to the Warsaw Pact two years later, or that the Soviet Union would

MAP 29.1 THE FALL OF COMMUNISM IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION, 1989–1991 With the fall of communism came the reunification of Germany and the breakup of the Soviet Union.



break up in 1991, leaving communism behind. However, the euphoria that arose from the realization that the Cold War had suddenly ended proved to be brief. New challenges and problems, among them those that had beset Europe for centuries, presented themselves. Decades of Communist rule had prevented the emergence of parliamentary political structures. Civic society in most Communist countries remained seriously undeveloped. Changing from planned economies with varying degrees of collectivization to free-market economies would prove extremely difficult. In Yugoslavia, ethnic conflicts exploded, and ethnic divisions also complicated the fall of communism in Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria.

Resistance to Soviet Domination

Calls for change echoed loudly in Communist Czechoslovakia in 1968. Intellectuals and writers accused the leadership of the Communist Party of clinging to Stalinism. The party leadership also acknowledged the need for change. In January 1968, party leaders named Alexander Dubček (1921–1992), a liberal Slovak, to be first secretary of the Communist Party, and thus head of state. During the “Prague Spring,” Dubček tried to implement “socialism with a human face” by instituting reforms, but as he did so he glanced anxiously over his shoulder toward Leonid Brezhnev’s Soviet Union. Crucial to these reforms was a democratization of decision making and greater freedom of expression. But, as in the case of Hungary in 1956, the Soviet leadership feared that, despite Dubček’s assurances to the contrary, Czechoslovakia might attempt to move away from the Warsaw Pact. On August 21, 1968, Soviet tanks and troops moved rapidly across the border and rolled into Prague, ending the Prague Spring.

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia initiated another chill in Soviet-Western relations. Moreover, the Communist parties of Italy and France denounced the invasion. In the mid-1970s, Western Communist leaders, particularly in Spain and Italy, began to call themselves “Euro-Communists.” They stressed their independence—for example, by collaborating with Socialists and other left-wing parties. However, Euro-Communism proved unable to slow the decline in membership in the Communist parties of Western Europe.

Under the “Brezhnev Doctrine,” the Soviet leadership tried to justify the invasion of Czechoslovakia and left open the possibility of future intervention in any of the satellite states of Eastern Europe. With the exception of Albania, which remained closed to virtually all foreign contact during the rigid dictatorship of Enver Hoxha, only Yugoslavia retained real independence. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia disenchanted liberal Communists in Eastern European countries. Many no longer believed that communism could be reformed.

Opposition to Communist rule and Russian influence grew in all of the Eastern European states during the 1980s. The overwhelming economic



(Left) Communist leaders meet shortly before the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. Participants include Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker of East Germany (first two on the left), and Soviet Communist Party chief Leonid Brezhnev conferring with Premier Alexei Kosygin (on the right). (Right) Soviet armies occupy Prague, 1968.

failures of the Communist regimes grew ever more apparent. Television and radio carried images of the consumer culture of the more prosperous people in the West. In the meantime, Eastern European Communist states continued to borrow massively from the West, which merely patched over huge problems without bringing economic reform. Debt owed by Eastern European countries in hard currency rose from 6 billion dollars in 1971 to 66 billion dollars in 1980 and more than 95 billion dollars in 1988. Well-developed social services could not compensate for economic inefficiency and massive demoralization. Membership in the Communist Party declined, particularly among young people, while the age of the leadership increased dramatically.

Within the Soviet Bloc, resistance was most developed in Poland. In 1976 a variety of opposition groups unified, publishing underground books and newspapers and organizing strikes and demonstrations. Massive unrest led to strikes in Poland in 1970 and the organization of a Committee for the Defense of Workers. Edward Gierek (1913–2001), who had become head of the Polish United Workers’ (Communist) Party in 1970, made some concessions while attempting to stimulate economic growth. However, despite massive foreign loans and credits, by 1976 Poland again had lapsed into economic stagnation, and another wave of strikes followed. In the meantime, the Catholic Church, which retained considerable influence (unlike in Czechoslovakia) helped mobilize opposition to the Communist government, particularly after the election in 1978 of Polish Pope John Paul II and his visit to his homeland in 1979. Strikes began in July 1980, and the following month Solidarity, a new illegal organization of trade unions, organized. Led

by Lech Walesa (1943–), an electrician from Gdańsk, Solidarity put forward twenty-one demands for reform. Much more than a trade union, Solidarity's membership reached 10 million and came to represent opposition to communism. In the meantime, underground publishing had since the late 1970s emerged as a huge dissident industry undertaken by Polish intellectuals, who published more than 2,000 titles. In 1980, strikes and riots in protest of living conditions spread rapidly in industrial areas, particularly in the vast shipyards of Gdańsk. The Polish government agreed to tolerate the creation of new unions as long as they did not engage in political activity. Solidarity represented the first major challenge to the Communist system since the "Prague Spring" of 1968.

In September 1980, the Communist Central Committee responded to the ongoing crisis by forcing Gierek to resign as head of state. Two months later, the government officially recognized Solidarity's existence. However, accommodation between the government and the non-Communist trade unions did not last long, particularly after Solidarity members called for free elections. In December 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski (1923–), the new head of state, imposed martial law and replaced key Communist Party officials in government with military officers. He suspended Solidarity and put hundreds of leading dissidents under arrest, including Walesa. Troops brutally crushed strikes that broke out in response to the repression. In 1982, the government declared Solidarity illegal again. Although martial law ended a year later, the murder of a militant priest by policemen in 1984 generated enormous popular anger and protest.

In the meantime, East Germany, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia were the Eastern European nations that were most loyal to the Soviet Union. The German Democratic Republic's chief, Erich Honecker (1912–1994), who came to power in 1971, proved absolutely intransigent to reform. The Stasi, the East German secret police, employed 90,000 people and had about twice that number as informers. The Lutheran Church provided a center for some dissidents, organizing weekly "prayers for peace" in Leipzig. In Czechoslovakia, the state campaign against dissidents was more intense. In 1977, about 1,200 writers, philosophers, intellectuals, and musicians signed a protest against government limitation of freedoms in an attempt to force the government to respect the Helsinki human-rights convention it had signed. Despite the fact that this was anything but a revolutionary document (those who signed pledged not to engage in political activity), members of the "Charter 77" group suffered repression.

Gradual economic liberalization helped make Hungary the second (after the German Democratic Republic) most prosperous of the Eastern bloc countries. The gradual development of a market economy and a private agricultural sector helped stabilize the Communist regime, with the help of Soviet subsidies. In 1985 Hungary became the first Communist state to declare political pluralism to be an ideal. However, Hungary had no organized and tested opposition force such as Solidarity.

In sharp contrast, no liberalization of any kind took place in Romania. Nicolae Ceaușescu (1918–1989), head of the Romanian Communist Party, had brazenly adopted a position of relative independence, or "national communism," with respect to the Soviet Union, criticizing the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, remaining neutral in the Sino-Soviet conflict, and refusing to participate in Warsaw Pact military maneuvers. Ceaușescu forged ahead with grandiose plans to generate industrial development. The results were disastrous. Romania became, after Albania, the poorest country in Europe while caught in the increasingly mad grip of Ceaușescu's "cult of personality." The dictator ordered 1,500 villages in Transylvania razed to the ground. These were largely in areas where many Hungarians resided, whom he targeted while trying to garner support from Romanians with nationalist appeals. He also ordered some of old Bucharest torn down to forge enormous boulevards that would lead to his reviewing stand.

The Gorbachev Era

In the Soviet Union, in the meantime, Leonid Brezhnev reinforced the powers of the oppressive Soviet bureaucracy and the prestige of the army and the KGB (the secret police). Reflecting the chill in relations with the United States, the Soviet Union, like its rival, poured more money into the manufacture of arms. After Brezhnev died in 1982, he was succeeded by Yuri Andropov (1914–1984), who, despite his long years in the KGB, was somewhat more liberal than Brezhnev. Andropov acknowledged that there was widespread inefficiency and corruption in Soviet economic planning and government. He called for greater popular participation in economic decision making and purged incompetent party hacks from important positions. Following Andropov's death in 1984, his successor, Konstantine Chernenko (1911–1985) was quite ill when he came to power, and both he and the Soviet state treaded water until his death the following year.

Mikhail Gorbachev (1931–) became general secretary of the Communist Party and thus head of the Soviet Union in 1985. Gorbachev had worked his way up in the party youth organization and studied law at the University of Moscow. Both his grandfathers had been arrested on false charges during the Stalin era. Gorbachev assumed responsibility for Soviet agriculture. Less instinctively xenophobic than other Soviet leaders, he was the first Soviet leader since Lenin to have a university degree. Relatively young, charming, flexible, and determined, Gorbachev was a master of Communist Party machinations.

Gorbachev began by exorcizing some ghosts from the Stalinist past. Like a number of optimistic party officials and intellectuals, Gorbachev believed that the Prague Spring could come to Moscow, but that the Communist Party should continue to dominate political life in the Soviet Union. He embraced a policy known in Russian as *glasnost*: openness in government combined with a greater degree of free expression. He put some liberals in

positions of responsibility and ordered the relaxation of censorship. Artists and writers brought forth new work, including strident criticisms of the Soviet regime.

Gorbachev insisted that "we need a revolution of the mind." He espoused *perestroika*: a restructuring of the Soviet system to make it more efficient and responsive to the needs of Soviet citizens. The Soviet leader spoke openly about the failure of economic planning without sufficient material incentives for workers. Centralized state agricultural planning would have to be scrapped in favor of a free-market economy. He summarily cashiered some corrupt or incompetent local party officials and launched a full-fledged campaign against alcoholism, which had taken on epidemic proportions in the demoralized Soviet Union. But Gorbachev remained convinced that communism could be rescued by necessary reforms once the inefficiency and brutality of Stalinism had been completely eliminated. His model may well have been Lenin's implementation of the New Economic Policy in 1921 (see Chapter 23), which had revived the Soviet economy without sacrificing Communist authority.

In 1987, he reduced the role state corporations played in the Soviet economy, paving the way for increasing economic privatization. The state accepted private cooperatives and permitted state companies to sell their products on the open market (which encouraged luxury goods more than daily necessities). Furthermore, Gorbachev sought foreign investment in the Soviet Union. However, decades of economic inefficiency would clearly have to be overcome. Black marketeering remained a way of life for millions of people. The enormous costs of social programs weighed heavily on the sagging economy. The Communist countries of Eastern Europe, which had been exploited to economic advantage during the immediate post-war period, now represented an expensive drain on Soviet finances because of subsidy commitments and the cost of maintaining Soviet bases there.

In 1988, Gorbachev began to sponsor a series of remarkable political reforms. Dissidents within the Communist Party or even non-Communists could now be elected to the Congress of People's Deputies. He expressed determination to renew the "thaw" with the West that had ended during the Brezhnev era.

Three factors converged in the late 1980s to prepare the fall of communism and the end of the Soviet Union. First, nationalist movements gained momentum within the Soviet Union, particularly in the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, and in Moldavia, Armenia, and Georgia, where in 1989 soldiers bludgeoned to death nineteen demonstrators demanding independence. Nationalists in Ukraine celebrated their culture by passing manuscripts written in Ukrainian from hand to hand. These movements, encouraged by the growing vulnerability of the Soviet state to a weak economy, were not placated by the belated toleration of greater cultural autonomy. In some of the republics, long-festered conflicts between nationalities began to surface violently, further undermining Soviet author-

ity, for example, in Azerbaijan between Muslim Azerbaijanis and Christian Armenians.

Second, in 1989, a forceful democratic opposition emerged, led in Russia by the Nobel Prize-winning Russian physicist Andrey Sakharov (1921–1989), who had helped develop the hydrogen bomb. Gorbachev's encouragement of participation in public life increased the ranks of Soviet citizens demanding reform. For many people, brutal tales of the Gulag became increasingly compelling, having been brought to light by works of the Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918–2008), first in his novel *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch* (1962) and then in *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). Moreover, the campaign for human rights, led by Sakharov, discredited the regime, even if the Gulag itself no longer existed. The Helsinki Accords, signed by the Soviet Union as well as by the Western powers in 1975, encouraged dissidents. Increasingly, the Russian opposition reached a large audience through the circulation of handwritten, typed, or clandestinely printed manuscripts, as well as through the medium of Western radio broadcasts.

Third, the aggravation of the economic crisis beginning in 1988 increased the number of Soviet citizens convinced that a Communist government simply could not bring about a meaningful improvement in the quality of their lives. At the same time, television broadcasts from Finland day after day showed the advantages of a free-market economy. Gorbachev vacillated between free-market policies and traditional Communist state controls. The result was a further weakening of the economy, replete with shortages and undermined by enormous military spending.

Gorbachev determined that the Soviet Union could not afford to continue the arms race with the United States. He therefore moved to improve relations with the U.S. government. In the early 1980s, Soviet-U.S. relations had continued to sour dangerously. Following the U.S. ban on the export of oil and gas to the Soviet Union after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the U.S. government had tried to prevent the Soviet Union from constructing a long pipeline that would bring Siberian natural gas to Central Europe by threatening sanctions against any state or company that assisted the endeavor. Then U.S. President Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) backed a plan to construct a space-based missile-defense shield, dubbed "Star Wars" (Strategic Defense Initiative), provoking an outcry by the Soviet Union and by some U.S. allies as well. In 1983, a Russian fighter shot down a South Korean passenger plane that had entered Soviet air space, killing 169 people, including Americans. The Soviet Union boycotted the 1984 Olympics, which were held in Los Angeles, as the United States had done four years earlier in Moscow.

Gorbachev now resumed arms-limitation negotiations with the United States, but he refused to sign an agreement because Reagan would not include the "Star Wars" experiments in the negotiations. Highly successful visits to Washington, D.C., and New York in 1987 gave the Soviet leader

considerable global television exposure, leading to enormous personal popularity. That year the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to reduce the number of medium-range missiles, and two years later they signed another arms-control agreement. In 1988, the Soviet Union recalled troops from Afghanistan after nine years of bloody fighting against rebels there. For the first time in anyone's memory, government publications admitted the severe economic and social problems that troubled the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union began to allow Soviet Jews to emigrate abroad in greater numbers than ever before. In 1989, almost 70,000 Jews left, most for Israel or the United States.

In 1986, the most serious nuclear accident in history occurred in Ukraine, when a nuclear reactor exploded at Chernobyl, near Kiev, sending radioactive material pouring into the atmosphere. Thousands of people in the vicinity were killed or suffered grave illnesses. A nuclear cloud passed over Ukraine, Russia, and the Scandinavian states, among other countries. Following an initial official attempt to deny the seriousness of the disaster, Gorbachev discussed the situation with unexpected openness.

Early in 1989, some reform-minded government officials joined opposition leaders in Poland and Hungary in the belief that economic and political liberalization was urgent. Communist rule slowly floundered under the weight of economic decline and popular dissatisfaction. In Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania, Communist leaders sought desperately to hold on to power. The East German and Czech governments reverted to force in an attempt to halt popular movements for change.

A crucial factor made the outcome of this wave of demands for reform in Eastern Europe in 1989 different from those occurring earlier (in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968): the Soviet government no longer was determined to preserve its empire. Indeed, the shout "Gorbi, Gorbi, Gorbi!" rang out from the ranks of Eastern European protesters. Even if the Communist leadership in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania, particularly, were determined to overwhelm dissent, Soviet tanks would no longer back them up. In a speech to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in July 1989, Gorbachev made clear that he rejected the "Brezhnev Doctrine" that had brought Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Soviet leader called events in Eastern Europe "inspiring," adding, "What the Poles and Hungarians decide is their affair, but we will respect their decision whatever it is."

Transition to Parliamentary Government in Poland and Hungary

Poland became the first test case for the new Soviet relationship with its former satellites. Since its creation in 1980, the trade union organization Solidarity had virtually achieved the status of an unofficial opposition party. The Catholic Church remained a source of organized opposition to communism. But although these organizations exerted some pressure on the gov-

ernment, it was the continued pitiful performance of the economy that fatally undermined communism. In 1987, the government held a referendum, asking Poles to support price increases. When they were overwhelmingly voted down, the government imposed them anyway. Demonstrations and strikes followed, and renewed calls to legalize Solidarity were made, amid widespread shortages and a grotesquely inflated currency. The government could no longer meet the interest payments on its massive debt to Western banks. General Jaruzelski had no choice but to accept some reforms. In August 1988, the government invited Solidarity to negotiate. The opposition agreed to participate in exchange for government recognition of the legal status of Solidarity as the legitimate representative of Poles opposed to Communist rule. Negotiations between Solidarity representatives and the government in 1989 led to the creation of a senate and the position of president of Poland. In the first relatively free elections in Poland since the immediate post-war period, Solidarity candidates swept to victory in the Senate. In the lower chamber, negotiations had led to 65 percent of the seats being reserved for Communists and 35 percent for the candidates of Solidarity. Still, General Jaruzelski confidently believed he could orchestrate liberalization on his own terms.

Solidarity's candidates swept to victory. The extent of Communist humiliation was such that candidates supported by Solidarity (with the support of the Catholic Church) won all 161 of these parliamentary seats. Moreover, Communist candidates won only two of thirty-five seats in elections in which they ran unopposed. When the United Peasant Party began talks with Solidarity and left the government coalition, the Communist majority collapsed. The Communists could not put together a government acceptable to Solidarity. When parliament elected Solidarity leader Tadeusz Mazowiecki (1927–) Poland had the first non-Communist government in Eastern Europe since 1948, although Communists retained several important ministries. However, Solidarity leaders, still wary that popular momentum once again could lead to heavy-handed repression, supported the election by the Polish parliament of General Jaruzelski as president.

In 1990, the Communist era ended in Poland when the Polish Communist Party changed its name and espoused pluralist politics. In the wake of a split within Solidarity between the followers of Mazowiecki and those of Lech Walesa, the latter was elected president in December 1990. The Democratic Union, a party formed by Mazowiecki's followers within Solidarity, won the largest number of seats in the lower house and the senate. Economic reforms, aimed at introducing a full-fledged free-market economy, were slow to take effect, however. Poland began a long struggle for economic stability with mounting unemployment and a dramatically increased crime rate.

In Hungary, the Hungarian Democratic Forum and several smaller opposition groups began to emerge in 1988 out of café and living-room gatherings of longtime dissidents. Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union



Border guards cut down the Hungarian "Iron Curtain."

greatly encouraged opposition groups. But with the economy floundering under declining productivity and rampaging inflation, liberal Communists ousted longtime leader János Kádár from power, intent on reforming Hungary. Opposition groups, with the memory of Soviet intervention in 1956 still looming large, hesitated to call the legitimacy of the Communist regime into question.

In the summer of 1989, the Hungarian opposition formed an "Opposition Round Table" and negotiated with the government. Candidates of the Democratic Forum won free elections. Faced with continuing popular mobilization, the Communist leadership decided to try to outbid the Hungarian liberals by initiating reforms. In May 1989, the government ordered the removal of barbed wire that defined the border with Austria. In June, the Communist Party itself admitted that the 1956 trial and execution of reform leaders had been illegal. The former premier Imre Nagy, who had been executed after the 1956 insurrection, was reburied with national honors. The Hungarian Communist Party changed its name to the Hungarian Socialist Party. It espoused democratic principles and encouraged the development of opposition parties, accepting a new constitution proclaimed later that year. The transition from communism to multiparty parliamentary rule in Hungary was therefore peaceful, with the Hungarian Democratic Forum leading a subsequent coalition government.

The Collapse of the Berlin Wall and of East German Communism

As pressure for change mounted in Poland and Hungary, East Germans fled the German Democratic Republic in record numbers. Many traveled to the German Federal Republic via Czechoslovakia and then Hungary, whose government in May 1989 had opened its border with Austria. About 150,000 East Germans reached the West during the first nine months of 1989. However, eschewing the reforms undertaken by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, East German Communist leader Honecker in June 1989 praised the Chinese army and police for crushing the pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. While other Communist governments negotiated with determined reformers, the East German leadership stood firm until it was too late. Honecker demanded that Hungary return fleeing East Germans to their country, as specified in an old treaty between the two Communist states. The Hungarian government refused to do so. When the East German government gave permission to East Germans on a train passing through Dresden and Leipzig to emigrate to West Germany, other East Germans frantically tried to climb aboard the train. About 1.5 million East Germans now applied for exit visas.

When Gorbachev visited East Berlin early in October 1989, demonstrators chanted his name, which had become synonymous with opposition to the East German regime. When demonstrations spread to other major cities, Honecker ordered the police to attack demonstrators, but Egon Krenz, responsible for state security, refused to do so. On October 18, 1989, Honecker, old, ill, and ignored, was forced out in favor of Krenz, more moderate, but no reformer. In Leipzig, anxious opposition leaders and fearful Communist officials had met and resolved that peace must be maintained at all costs.

On October 23, 1989, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze (1928–) declared that each country in Eastern Europe "has the right to an absolute, absolute freedom of choice." Such words further encouraged demonstrations and meetings in East Germany. On November 4, Krenz announced that East Germans were free to leave for West Germany via Czechoslovakia. A wholesale exodus began. On November 9, Krenz capitulated to the inevitable, announcing a sweeping change in government and promising to initiate legislation that would grant East Germans the right to travel where and when they wanted. He ordered that the Berlin Wall, which had divided East Berlin from West Berlin since August 1961, be torn down. Around 3 million East Germans (out of a population of 16 million) poured over the demolished wall, or crossed into West Germany at once-forbidden checkpoints. An East German poet remarked, "I must weep for joy that it happened so quickly and simply. And I must weep for wrath that it took so abysmally long."



When Egon Krenz announced that East Germans could travel where and when they wanted, people gathered at the Berlin Wall to forge openings with whatever tools they had.

Krenz still hoped that his promise to hold free elections would keep the Communists in power. But lacking popular support, Krenz's government fell on December 3 and was succeeded by a series of committees until elections were held in March 1990. Conservatives favoring German reunification (led by the equivalent of the West German Christian Democrats) won an easy victory over Social Democrats and the remnants of the (now renamed) Communist Party. A number of East German leaders already expressed eagerness for German reunification. Here, again, there would be no Russian opposition to what had seemed for decades to be unthinkable because of Russian fear that one day a united Germany might again threaten the peace. In the meantime, the German Democratic Republic began selling off state-owned companies and the West German mark became the currency of both Germanys. In September, Britain, France, and the United States, viewing reunification as inevitable, renounced their rights in Berlin. Unification took effect on October 3, 1990. In December, the first elections in the newly unified Germany returned the Christian Democrats to power. The former German Federal Republic would for years have to allocate a substantial part of its budget to modernize the former Communist state and to provide public services to new citizens (including unemployment benefits in the wake of the collapse of state-run industries). In 1999, Berlin again became the capital of Germany.

The "Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia

In Czechoslovakia, where the Communist leadership resisted the forces for change as vehemently as their counterparts in East Germany, the regime was swept aside in ten days. As news arrived of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the number of determined dissidents rapidly swelled. Czechs and Slovaks alike signed petitions calling for reform. On November 17, 1989, students staged a demonstration in honor of a student executed by the Nazis fifty years earlier. But speakers quickly ignored the program censors had approved and began to call for academic freedom and respect for human rights. Then the crowd started to march toward the giant St. Wenceslas Square in the center of Prague. A squad of riot police moved in, throwing canisters of tear gas and beating students with clubs.

The next day, a crowd assembled on the spot where police had beaten protesters. Students called for a general strike to begin ten days later. As the demonstrations continued to grow, the minister of defense announced that the army was "ready to defend the achievements of socialism." Yet, without the support of the Soviet Union, the Czechoslovak Communist government took no steps to repress the movement for freedom. On November 19, 1989, the entire Politburo resigned. A group of leading dissidents formed the "Civic Forum," calling on the government to negotiate with them over four demands: the resignation of two Communist officials blamed for the police attack two days earlier, the establishment of a commission to investigate the police attack, the release of political prisoners, and the resignation of Communist leaders responsible for the Soviet invasion in 1968. Civic Forum was led by Václav Havel (1936–), a popular Czech playwright whose plays had been banned by the government but circulated in manuscript) and a veteran of "Charter 77." Havel had been imprisoned several times for dissent, once nearly dying from mistreatment.

On November 21, 1989, the elderly Alexander Dubček, the Slovak reformer who led the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia during the 1968 events, addressed a throng assembled in St. Wenceslas Square. The crowds, however, did not want any kind of socialism. Students went to factories in search of support from workers. Crowds poured into the streets almost every day, waving national flags and calling for freedom of speech, the release of political prisoners, and the end of communism. They lay wreaths on the spot where a Czech student burned himself to death in 1968 in protest of the Soviet invasion. On November 24, 1989, the Communist Central Committee narrowly voted against using the army to put an end to demonstrations. In Slovakia, intellectuals formed an organization called "Public Against Violence," the Slovak equivalent of the Czech Civic Forum.

The Communist government now had no choice but to negotiate with its opponents who demanded free elections. Yet, unlike Poland and Hungary, where political opposition was well developed within the constraints of the system, there were virtually no reform-minded Communists in

Czechoslovakia. From Moscow, Gorbachev advised the Czechoslovak leaders not to use force. Negotiations between the government and Havel and other representatives of Civic Forum began on November 26. That day, more than half of the top leadership within the party was purged. Two days later, Civic Forum demanded the formation of a new government.

The Communist-dominated Federal Assembly voted to end the party's domination of political life. On December 10, the first cabinet in Czechoslovakia since 1948 not dominated by Communists was sworn in. The general strike ended, and more than a third of the members of the Communist Party resigned during the first two weeks of December. The Federal Assembly unanimously elected Havel president of Czechoslovakia. What Havel called a "velvet revolution" had succeeded, led by writers, actors, and students. Free elections gave Civic Forum and its allies a majority of seats. Price controls ended. Havel quickly announced that Czechoslovakia "must return to Europe," suggesting that its future lay with the West.

The new government of Czechoslovakia immediately faced not only the problem of creating viable democratic institutions and establishing a market economy, but also of tensions between Czechs and Slovaks. Although the two peoples shared seventy years of common political history, much separated them. The Czech part of the state was more urban, prosperous, and Protestant than Slovakia, which was more rural and Catholic. Slovak nationalists, particularly on the right, called for the creation of an inde-

Václav Havel, leader of the Civic Forum and first president elected under free elections in Czechoslovakia after the fall of the Communists in 1989, reads the names of members of Czechoslovakia's first non-Communist government since 1948.



pendent Slovakia. On January 1, 1993, the "velvet divorce" took place: the Czech Republic and Slovakia became separate states.

Revolutions in Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania

Communist regimes also fell in Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania, the three Eastern European states without significant reform movements. In Bulgaria, long-suppressed unrest began to emerge in response to pressure for reform in other Eastern European countries. Todor Zhivkov (1911–1998), the first secretary of the Communist Party of Bulgaria since 1954 and the head of state since 1971, could boast a record of modest economic growth until the late 1970s. He also had orchestrated several cover-ups of the misdeeds of his family members (including the implication of his hard-drinking and -gambling son in the death of a television announcer). When a Bulgarian airliner crashed at the Sofia airport, killing most passengers, Zhivkov ordered that his jet leave at once for his Black Sea vacation, flying over the burning plane. Furthermore, the Bulgarian secret police had achieved international notoriety, blamed by some for an attempt to assassinate Pope John Paul II in Rome in 1981, as well as for a James Bond–like murder of a Bulgarian dissident killed by the deadly jab of a poison-tipped umbrella in London. The Bulgarian economy faltered badly in the late 1980s. Bulgarian exports (principally agricultural produce and light manufactured goods) had difficulty finding markets, particularly as the economic crisis deepened in the Soviet Union. Rural migrants poured into Sofia and other Bulgarian cities in search of work.

As the economy deteriorated, Zhivkov and the Communist leadership sought to displace popular anger in the direction of the country's large and rapidly growing Turkish minority. From time to time during the past several decades, the Turks had been the target of discriminatory government measures, including a law in 1984 requiring them to adopt Bulgarian names and forbidding the practice of Islam (the religion of most Turks). Just what the Bulgarian government hoped to achieve by such measures remains unclear (although this was hardly the first time in the often violent history of the region that an ethnic group had been targeted for discrimination in the hope of deflecting public opinion). After launching a harsh campaign against Turkish customs, Zhivkov's government encouraged the ethnic Turks to emigrate to Turkey, which further destabilized the Bulgarian economy. More than 300,000 of them left for Turkey within three months in 1989. Many soon returned, however, disappointed that conditions of life in Turkey seemed even worse than in Bulgaria.

With news of dramatic political changes occurring in the other Eastern European states, the Bulgarian Politburo surprised Zhivkov by suddenly demanding his resignation in November, the day after the Berlin Wall had fallen. The ease with which this was accomplished suggests that some party bureaucrats, army officers, and even members of the notorious government

security force now believed change to be inevitable. The new government purged Stalinists and welcomed back Turks, contributing to a nationalist backlash among many Bulgarians. Zhivkov was tried for misuse of government funds and sentenced to prison.

In January 1990, the Communist monopoly on political power ended, and the Bulgarian Communist Party changed its name to the Bulgarian Socialist Party. However, in June, the former Communists, capitalizing on resurgent ethnic rivalries and fear of change in the countryside, won a majority of seats in the New National Assembly. A new constitution followed in October 1991. The Bulgarian Socialist Party and the Union of Democratic Forces remained the two largest parties, confronting a poor economy and the lack of foreign investment, although loans from the World Bank then helped stabilize the Bulgarian economy.

In Romania, the fall of the Ceaușescu clan and communism was anything but bloodless. Ceaușescu, who had enriched his family (at least thirty of whom held high office), vowed that reform would come to Romania "when pears grow on poplar trees." He awarded himself titles such as "Genius of the Carpathians" and the "Danube of Thought." His wife, Elena, fraudulently claimed to be a brilliant chemist, presenting papers at academic conferences that had been prepared by Romanian scientists, and then refusing to answer questions about them. On the occasion of a state visit to Britain, when the Queen of England for whatever reason knighted the Romanian leader, Ceaușescu and his wife virtually pillaged a suite at London's Buckingham Palace, carting away everything of value they could. In order to begin paying back \$10 billion in foreign loans, Ceaușescu cut back food imports, increased food exports, rationed electricity, and banned the sale of contraceptives in the hope of increasing the Romanian population.

Ceaușescu's downfall began in 1989 in the Transylvanian town of Timisoara, where ethnic Hungarians resented second-class status. Ceaușescu had ordered the razing of 8,000 largely Hungarian villages and the relocation of their residents. Crowds rioted, smashing store windows and burning Ceaușescu's portraits. Romanians joined Hungarians in the protests. Army units refused to fire on demonstrators. The feared security forces (the Securitate, 180,000 strong) stepped in, shooting three army officers for disobeying orders and firing on crowds.

Discontent spread rapidly. As another cold Romanian winter approached along with the usual severe food and fuel shortages, Hungarian and Yugoslav television showed events rapidly transpiring in other Eastern European countries. Demonstrations now spread to other towns. In December, Ceaușescu called for a massive demonstration of support in Bucharest. Orchestrated cheers from the crowd soon became jeers, drowning out the dictator's pathetic speech blaming riots on Hungarian nationalists. From the safety of his palace, Ceaușescu ordered troops to fire on the crowds below. But most units refused to obey and, as a result, the minister of defense was executed on Ceaușescu's orders. The hated secret police eagerly fired on the assembled

crowds, and tanks crushed protesters in a scene hauntingly reminiscent of Beijing's Tiananmen Square earlier that year. After soldiers battled the security forces outside the presidential palace, hundreds of bodies lay in the streets.

Several of the dictator's top officials now decided that Ceaușescu's days of iron rule were numbered. Ceaușescu and his wife left their stately residence on December 22, 1989, through secret tunnels, and then commandeered a helicopter. They were captured and immediately charged with murder and embezzlement of government funds. On Christmas Day, they were tried by a hastily convoked tribunal—which, in fact, had no legal authority—and condemned to death. They were then taken behind the building and shot, their bloody bodies left lying stiffly in the snow for a worldwide television audience to see. More than 1,000 people died during the revolution that overthrew Ceaușescu and ended communism in Romania.

Communism was swept away even in Albania, which had remained largely isolated from change in Eastern Europe by sealed borders. In Europe's poorest country, where food shortages had generated sullen anger, the fall of Ceaușescu in December 1989 emboldened dissidents. As a crisis mounted, President Ramiz Alia (1925–) announced greater openness in the selection of government leaders and a larger role for workers in choosing managers. Agricultural cooperatives would be allowed to sell surplus produce. Alia then announced the right to travel abroad and the abrogation of the long-standing ban on "religious propaganda." A group of Albanian intellectuals demanded the end of the Communist monopoly on power and students went on strike. Like other Communist leaders, Alia believed that he could maintain control by placating Albanians with minor reforms.

Confronted by demonstrations that began in December 1990, Alia announced that henceforth the Communist Party would cease to be the only approved political party. The Democratic Party quickly constituted itself, and opposition newspapers began to publish, although the Communist Party of Labor retained control of radio and television. In February 1991, a crowd of 100,000 demonstrated in Tirana, pulling down a large statue of former strongman Hoxha, who had died in 1985. In early March, 20,000 Albanians tried to force their way onto boats departing for Italy. This event, which focused international attention on Albania, produced a



A Romanian prays for countrymen executed on the orders of dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu in Timisoara, Romania.

Communist backlash, particularly in the countryside, where Hoxha had been a cult figure. In elections, the Communists won 68 percent of the vote. Despite this victory, the handwriting was on the wall. In June 1991, the Communist government resigned. For the first time since 1944, a coalition government came to power. Elections in 1992 gave the Democratic Party a majority of the seats in the National Assembly, and Alia resigned as Albania's president. For the next decade, the Democratic Party and the Socialist Party battled it out against the background of economic hardship, the arrival of tens of thousands of refugees from Kosovo, political corruption and assassination, and the bizarre events of 1997 when a series of pyramid investment schemes collapsed on naive purchasers, leading to riots and a period of total chaos. Greek troops had to intervene to maintain peace. Despite some periods of relative political stability, Albania has changed very little in some ways: between 1991—the fall of Communism—and 2008, more than 9,000 people had been killed as a result of blood feuds between families.

The Collapse of the Soviet Union

As one by one the former Eastern European satellites of the Soviet Union abandoned communism, unhappiness with the system became more vocal within the Soviet Union itself. In March 1990, the Communist government voted to permit non-Communist parties in the Soviet Union, and created the office of president. State restrictions on religious practice ended. That month, the Congress of People's Deputies elected Mikhail Gorbachev president of the Soviet Union, a significant change, since previously the head of the Communist Party was the titular head of state.

Pressure for the breakup of the Soviet Union mounted from the republics. In Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, a human chain of more than 1 million people formed to support the independence of their nations. In June 1990, the Russian Republic declared that laws passed by its legislature could override those of the Soviet Union. The other republics followed suit with similar legislation. Gorbachev's attempt to enhance government decentralization fell short of what nationalists in the republics sought. In June 1990, Lithuania unilaterally declared its independence from the Soviet Union; Gorbachev responded by ordering an embargo on Soviet oil and gas shipped to the Baltic state.

Gorbachev still wanted to maintain a role for the Communist Party in the new era, and he wanted to ensure the existence of the Soviet Union itself. Moreover, he probably still believed that Soviet influence over its former satellites in Central and Eastern Europe could continue even after the fall of communism in those states. In 1990, he appointed several hard-line government officials and ordered a crackdown on nationalist movements in the Baltic states. This led to the dramatic resignation of Shevardnadze, the popular foreign minister.

In Russia, the charismatic, hard-drinking, impulsive Boris Yeltsin (1931–2007) had risen to positions of authority in the Communist Party as an efficient and honest administrator. Claiming that Gorbachev was not truly committed to reform, he challenged the latter's authority and the legitimacy of the Soviet state. As chair of the Supreme Soviet, the state's highest legislative body, he announced that henceforth Russia would be a sovereign, independent state. Yeltsin had no illusions about the survival of communism and had grave doubts that the Soviet Union itself would survive. He was willing to ally with the other republics against Gorbachev. When reactionary Communists attempted to unseat Yeltsin as chairman in the Russian Parliament, several hundred thousand Moscovites turned out to express their support for him.

Gorbachev now seemed to move away from reform, possibly encouraging right-wing officials within the Communist Party, army, and KGB, who believed their positions were threatened by a reduction in hostility with the United States. The hard-line group had begun putting pressure on Gorbachev in September 1990, and the army began mysterious maneuvers around Moscow.

In January 1991, Gorbachev may have approved an attempt to overthrow the democratically elected government of Lithuania, which began with an attack on a television installation in the capital of Vilnius. The clumsy plot, which involved army and KGB agents pretending they were a Lithuanian dissident group, failed miserably. A month later, in a referendum deemed by the Soviet government to be illegal, 90 percent of those voting in Lithuania expressed their support for independence, as did 77 percent of those voting in both Estonia and Latvia—the difference explained by the fact that more Russians lived in Estonia and Latvia.

In a nationally televised speech in February 1991, Yeltsin called for Gorbachev to resign. Gorbachev, in turn, ordered troops to surround the Kremlin in a show of force. However, Yeltsin had begun to undermine the army and security forces, where he had followers. Gorbachev's turn toward conservatives cost him supporters.

Gorbachev's conservative retrenchment proved short-lived. In April, he abandoned his commitment to preserving the Soviet Union at all costs and accepted the idea of autonomy for the republics. In June 1991, Yeltsin was elected



Atop a tank in front of the Russian Parliament building, Boris Yeltsin urges the Russian people to resist the coup d'état of August 1991.

president of the "Russian Federation," another sign of how quickly the Soviet Union was changing. The Communists now had little support in Russia, by far the Soviet Union's largest republic. Gorbachev announced a new Communist Party platform, which eliminated Marxism and Leninism in favor of "humane and democratic socialism." He then left for an August vacation in Crimea.

Intransigent Communists were now firmly convinced that Gorbachev's policies threatened the existence of the Soviet Union. In August 1991, hard-liners within the Communist Party, army, KGB, and some members of Gorbachev's own cabinet placed the Soviet leader under house arrest in his Crimean residence in an attempted coup d'état that looked more like a comic opera. Setting up an "Emergency Committee," the conspirators apparently hoped that they could convince or force Gorbachev to use his prestige against reform by declaring a state of emergency. Gorbachev agreed to do so, but only if such a move were approved "constitutionally" by the Supreme Soviet. The conspirators then publicly declared the president to be "incapacitated."

In Moscow, Yeltsin stood on a tank outside the Russian Parliament and encouraged resistance. The coup fell apart, its leaders having underestimated the strength of both Yeltsin's and Gorbachev's popular support. The Soviet army remained loyal to Gorbachev. Yeltsin mobilized people in Moscow by calling for resistance and the restoration of Gorbachev as the legitimate Soviet leader. This appeal to constitutionality revealed how much had changed in a very short time.

In August, Gorbachev returned to Moscow a hero, and again took a more reformist stance. Even as Gorbachev continued to defend the Communist Party before the Supreme Soviet, Yeltsin suspended the Communist Party and its newspaper *Pravda*. These bold moves amounted to the dismantling of communism in Russia.

The failed coup accelerated the collapse of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev appointed new people to key ministries. Some KGB officers were pensioned off, and television and radio were freed from the constraints of censorship. The Soviet government recognized the independence of the Baltic republics, just months after Gorbachev had insisted on retaining the structure of the Soviet Union. In late August 1991, the Supreme Soviet voted to put an end to the extraordinary powers previously accorded Gorbachev and to suspend the Communist Party in the entire Soviet Union. Yeltsin quickly moved to initiate a market economy in Russia.

One by one, the republics left the Soviet Union, where Russians had constituted only about half of the population. Moldavia, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan declared their independence. In December 1991, Ukraine followed, after 90 percent of the population voted to leave the Soviet Union. By the end of the year, thirteen of the fifteen Soviet republics had declared their independence. The Soviet Empire was no more. Yeltsin and the presidents of Belarus and Ukraine declared the Soviet Union dissolved. Gor-

bachev, too, acknowledged that the Soviet Union no longer existed. Symbolically, Leningrad again assumed its old name of Saint Petersburg. On December 25, 1991, Gorbachev resigned, closing one of the most remarkable political eras in modern European history.

The end of communism in Europe did not guarantee an easy transition to parliamentary democratic rule. The lack of democratic traditions, the economic turmoil, and the deep ethnic rivalries posed daunting challenges. Nowhere are the stakes higher for a peaceful transition to democracy than in Russia. The president of Ukraine put it this way: "When there's frost in Russia on Thursday, by Friday there's frost in Kiev." In 1993, Yeltsin declared a "special presidential regime," dissolving the legislature and overriding opposition to his reform program. Yeltsin insisted that the Russian presidency should have considerable authority, whereas the Congress of People's Deputies feared too much presidential power, remembering well the dictatorship of the Communist Party. In 1996, Yeltsin became the first democratically elected president of Russia. In ill health, his resignation at the end of 1999 led to the election of Vladimir Putin (1952–), a former KGB officer, as president of Russia. Putin provided some badly needed stability to Russia after considerable turmoil during the 1990s.

The Disintegration of Yugoslavia

The story of the disintegration of Yugoslavia most tragically illustrates the complexity of national identity, the impact of ethnic politics on the post-Communist era in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and the challenges and hopes for the future. Marshal Josip Broz ("Tito"), a Croat, believed that communism in Yugoslavia could end ethnic rivalries and Serb domination. Yugoslavs lived in relative harmony, and following Tito's death in 1980, a collective presidency that rotated every year among the republics governed Yugoslavia. But tensions persisted between Serbs and Croats, the country's two largest ethnic groups. They shared a common spoken language (though Serbs use the Russian Cyrillic alphabet and Croats use the Latin alphabet). Yugoslavia's capital, Belgrade, was also that of Serbia. Serbs enjoyed disproportionate representation in the Communist state bureaucracy.

Regional disparities in economic development and prosperity compounded ethnic divisions. In the north, the republic of Slovenia, which was by far the most ethnically homogeneous of Yugoslavia's republics, enjoyed a standard of living not far below that of its neighbors, Austria and Italy. In the south, Macedonia and Bosnia remained backward and relatively impoverished. Within Bosnia, 85 percent of the population of the territory of Kosovo was Albanian and Muslim. Yet the minority Serbs—only about 10 percent of the population—viewed Kosovo as sacred Serb soil, because the Ottoman Turks had defeated them there in 1389 and Kosovo had become part of Serbia

during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913). In the meantime, ethnic Albanians claimed the right to be the seventh Yugoslav republic.

In the mid-1980s, the Serb-run Yugoslav government launched a brutal repression of Albanians living in Kosovo, claiming that Albanian nationalism posed a threat to communism. In April 1987, Slobodan Milošević (1941–2006), the leader of the Serb Communist Party, provocatively told Serbs and Montenegrins that Kosovo was theirs and that they should remain at all costs.

Milošević turned the Communist Party and state apparatus into instruments serving Serb nationalist interests. He undertook what amounted to a military occupation of Kosovo, ending its administrative autonomy. In 1989, fighting broke out in Kosovo between ethnic Albanians and Serbs and Montenegrins, inflaming Serb nationalism.

Yugoslavia quickly disintegrated (see Map 29.2). The movement for political reform began in January 1990 in Slovenia. New parties formed in each of the six republics, including Serbia, where Communist leaders still opposed reform. Non-Communists won a majority of the parliamentary seats in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia. The Communist Party changed its name to the Socialist Party and won a majority in Milošević's Serbia and in Montenegro, Serbia's ally.

In December 1990, Slovenes voted overwhelmingly for independence. In Croatia, the nationalist Franjo Tuđman (1922–1999), won a clear electoral victory, accentuating tensions between Croatia and the Yugoslav state. Milošević loudly espoused the creation of a Greater Serbia that would include all territories populated by Serbs. In May 1991, Serbia prevented the succession of a Croat to the rotating presidency of Yugoslavia. In Slovenia, intervention by the Yugoslav army was met by determined resistance and was short-lived. But when Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia in June 1991, as did Slovenia, violent conflicts between Croats and Serbs intensified. Serb militias, supported and armed by Yugoslav army units, began occupying large chunks of Croatia that had sizable Serb populations. Within several months they held about one-third of Croatian territory, driving Croats from their villages and killing thousands of people. From the heights above, Serbs shelled the walled Croatian city of Dubrovnik on the Adriatic coast, severely damaging one of Europe's most beautiful cities. Croatia became independent in January 1992, although parts of Croatia remained under Serb control.

Macedonia declared its independence in September 1991. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, ethnic rivalries also brought violence. The Yugoslav army occupied parts of Bosnia, allegedly to protect Serbs. In March 1992, a majority of Bosnian Muslims and ethnic Croats voted for the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, Bosnian Serbs refused to recognize the legality of the plebiscite. They declared their own independence. A bloody civil war broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnian Serbs carried out "ethnic cleansing," a term they invented. Serbs forced at least 170,000 non-



MAP 29.2 THE DISINTEGRATION OF YUGOSLAVIA, 1995 The fall of the Communists in Yugoslavia led to the breakup of the Yugoslav federation and to civil war between Croats, Serbs, and Bosnian Muslims. This map reflects the settlement reached in the Dayton Peace Accords, signed in November 1995.

Serbs from their homes and drove them away or imprisoned them. Bosnian Serb militias perpetuated atrocities against Bosnian Muslims, including rapes and mass executions. They massacred 8,000 men and boys in fields outside the town of Srebrenica. In the meantime, in predominantly Croat parts of Bosnia, Croats also carried out brutal measures against Muslims, some of whom reciprocated against Serbs and Croats.

Milošević, presiding over what remained of Yugoslavia (now including only Serbia and Montenegro), eliminated constitutional guarantees given by the old Yugoslav republic to the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina (a region of northern Serbia). Although Yugoslav armies withdrew, fearing international intervention, Bosnian Serb forces, supplied by the Yugoslav army, surrounded Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, lobbing mortar and cannon shells from the heights above and killing civilians. In response to assistance given



(Left) A Kosovo Albanian refugee released from the custody of the Yugoslav army collapses. (Right). Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević brandishes a mace, a gift from his supporters.



the Bosnian Serbs by Milošević's government, the United Nations placed an economic embargo on what was left of the Yugoslav state. However, the NATO alliance failed to act, thus allowing Serb nationalists to conquer more than 70 percent of Bosnia-Herzegovina. "Europe is dying in Sarajevo," warned a poster in Germany. To make things even worse, Croats and Muslims in Bosnia now began to fight each other.

The Bosnian conflict took a terrible toll, creating hundreds of thousands of refugees. Croatia also entered the conflict with an eye toward taking Bosnian territory that nationalists considered Croatian. Another full-scale Balkan war loomed.

Early in 1994, a cease-fire agreement took hold. Bosnian Muslim and Croatian leaders met in Washington, D.C., forming a Muslim-Croat Federation within Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the Bosnian Serbs refused to respect either the cease-fire or an international plan for peace. The arrival of blue-helmeted UN peacekeepers in the first international attempt ever to stop ethnic cleansing at first made little difference. NATO launched air strikes against Serb targets in Bosnia. In August 1995, the Croats recaptured Krajina, contested territory bordering on Bosnia that Croatian Serbs had declared to be independent in 1991. Now tens of thousands of Serbs from Krajina took to the roads as refugees, heading toward Serb strongholds in Bosnia.

By the Dayton Peace Accords orchestrated in 1995 by the U.S. government, Bosnia was to be a single state that included a Bosnian-Croat feder-

ation and a Serb republic. This agreement would be supervised by a NATO peacekeeping force, including U.S. troops. However, Bosnian Serbs overran free zones that NATO forces had established to protect Bosnian Muslims. Mass murders perpetrated against Muslims in 1995 (including thousands in a so-called UN-protected safe zone) led to the indictment of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić (1945–) by the International Criminal Tribunal, a UN tribunal that was established in The Hague (in the Netherlands) to judge those accused of crimes against humanity and genocide. (Karadžić was finally captured in Belgrade in 2008 and put on trial.) Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II went on. Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, overwhelmingly by Serbs, took more than 200,000 Bosnian lives, and by the end of the war about 2.1 million Bosnians were without homes.

In Kosovo, Albanians had formed the Kosovo Liberation Army with the goal of obtaining freedom from Yugoslavia. In 1998 and 1999, Milošević unleashed Serb forces against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. A cease-fire arranged by the United States in October 1998 quickly collapsed and Milošević refused to allow NATO peacekeepers into the province. Serb troops began ethnic cleansing, killing thousands of Muslims, and drove 860,000 Albanians into Albania and Macedonia. When Serb forces did not withdraw from Kosovo, NATO forces in March 1999 began attacking military targets in Serbia from the air. The bombing campaign forced Serb forces to withdraw from Kosovo and to allow 50,000 NATO peacekeepers into Kosovo. They oversaw the return of about 720,000 ethnic Albanian refugees to Kosovo. In the meantime, 50,000 Serbs now fled possible reprisals.

Milošević's government in Yugoslavia collapsed in October 2000 in the face of mass demonstrations. The Serb leader was arrested six months later to face charges of crimes against humanity and genocide at the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. He died unrepentant in 2006 during his trial. In the meantime, the new Yugoslav government worked quickly to end the international isolation brought about by Milošević's policies. The United States and other states ended economic sanctions against Yugoslavia. In 2003, the remnants of Yugoslavia became Serbia-Montenegro, the only two of the six republics of Yugoslavia that remained together. The assassination in March 2003 of the prime minister of Serbia, Zoran Djindjić (1952–2003), who had been one of the forces behind the ouster of Milošević in 2000, attested to the continuing volatility of Serbia. In 2008, Kosovo proclaimed its outright independence from Serbia, a move that Serbia and Russia refused to recognize.

Challenges in the Post-Communist World

While the West breathed a sigh of relief after the collapse of communism in Europe, the existence of nuclear weapons in several of the former states of the Soviet Union became a considerable concern. The 1986 Chernobyl disaster clearly demonstrated the vulnerability of the rest of Europe to

nuclear disasters. Ukraine's nuclear arsenal and its claim to the remnants of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet docked in Crimea raised tension between Russia and Ukraine. In 1992, Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan all agreed that nuclear weapons stored on their territory would either be destroyed or turned over to Russia. In 1996, nuclear warheads were shipped to Russia for destruction. However, the problem of preventing the theft and sale of nuclear materials, particularly to potential terrorists, remains one of the most important concerns for the future.

The end of communism has left other problems. The rapid industrialization in East Germany, Romania, and Czechoslovakia under communism left horrendous pollution from coal-burning furnaces and virtually unregulated factories. Acid rain destroyed forests, killed rivers, and compromised public health.

Suddenly freed from Soviet domination, the newly independent states faced the challenge of putting their own foreign relations on a firm footing. For many of the former Soviet republics, relations with Russia are complicated by centuries of animosity, nowhere more so than in Ukraine and Georgia. Soviet rule had favored Russian interests, and in the Baltic states, for example, brought the settlement of large Russian populations, as well as troops (250,000 Soviet troops were stationed in Soviet republics other than Russia at the time of the Soviet Union's dissolution).

Like the Soviet Union, the Eastern European Communist states were largely atomized societies of one-party rule without political infrastruc-

tures, traditions of political parties, civic cultures, or adequately developed voluntary associations. Only in Poland and Hungary had non-Communist political leadership gradually emerged in the 1980s, providing the basis for the emergence of party politics following the dismantling of one-party rule. In 1989, Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia served the same function, and in Hungary a series of right-center and left-center coalitions implemented far-reaching economic reforms. In some former Communist countries, the problem of creating political institutions in which basically only party members had experience in public life was daunting.

In the first free elections held in Eastern Europe since the late 1940s, two distinct trends were seen in the 1990s. Nationalist right-center parties emerged victorious in eastern Germany, Poland, and Hungary, where the parties of the left, including those formed by former Communists (some of them, to be sure, converted reformers), fared badly. In Poland, Solidarity was defeated in 1991 in the first free elections held since 1926, leading to the arrival in power of several center-right coalitions. On the other hand, in Bulgaria and Romania, former Communist parties (hurriedly renamed and claiming the mantle of reform) came out better than any other parties. They did particularly well in the countryside, where reform movements had been largely absent and Communist officials maintained considerable prestige, as they were identified with the modest increase in living standards that had occurred during the decades since the war. In late 1995, the Communist Party emerged as the biggest winner in the legislative elections in Russia. Six years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, and Poland, where Lech Walesa was turned out of office in 1995, were now led by former Communists. Many of them benefited from being familiar faces able to draw on old political networks and from protest votes from people exasperated by growing economic disparities.

The former Communist states moved to create modern economic systems based on private enterprise. Western economic advisers provided some of the expertise as the nationalized sector of Eastern European economies was drastically reduced. This process proved easier in the more northern countries than in the Balkans, where elected leaders in the 1990s tended toward authoritarian rule amid continuing corruption. With the exceptions of Poland and Hungary, economic privatization was not easy in post-Soviet Central and Eastern Europe and particularly in the Balkans. As in the former Soviet Union, weak economies and a relatively low standard of living continued to generate political instability. Policy changes came with numbing speed. The utilization of free-market "shock therapy," including the end of price controls on most consumer goods, at first brought economic chaos to Russia and Poland, where Communists were returned to power in 1993. In the region as a whole, industrial production fell by between 20 and 40 percent. Widespread unemployment and the sudden end of the massive welfare system under which entire populations had grown up left hardship, bewilderment, and anger. The distribution

A factory in Poland polluting the atmosphere.



of state-owned property engendered problems. In Hungary, foreign conglomerates bought up property that had been held by the Communist state. Former owners of property collectivized by Communist regimes demanded their lands back. Yet, at the same time, in the former Soviet satellite states, the attraction of joining the European Union itself encouraged economic and political reform. In some countries, members of the former Communist elite managed to get hold of valuable assets. The end of authoritarian rule led to major increases in violent crime, above all in Russia and Bulgaria, where organized crime has become powerful as one unstable government has followed another (including, remarkably enough, the period of 2001–2005 when the man who had in 1946 briefly taken the title of “tsar” of Bulgaria became prime minister). Belarus remained a virtual dictatorship, a throwback to another time.

Foreign investment was far from adequate. In the short term, galloping inflation (up to 20 percent a month in Russia and 40 percent in Ukraine) engendered bitterness. Despite the fact that its Western creditors in March 1991 canceled half of the debts owed by Poland, the economic outlook in that country seemed bleak. The Russian economy virtually collapsed in the 1990s, and by the end of the decade about 30 percent of the population of Russia was classified as impoverished. With taxpayers simply not paying up, Russia barely avoided bankruptcy in 1998 by postponing paying off \$43 billion in short-term loans. Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania, in particular, were confronted by the ravages of decades of Communist economic policies, leaving a ruinous emphasis on heavy industry, compounded by old technology, combined with an inefficient agricultural sector. However, in 1997, the new Romanian government undertook major economic reforms with the help of loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These included the reduction of state subsidies to companies and the privatization of many state-run businesses.

Nation-states, which many liberals long assumed were necessary before constitutional rights and equality could be assured, have not always turned out to be liberal and tolerant. Even if bilateral treaties officially ended long-simmering disputes over some territorial boundaries, such as those between Germany and Poland, Hungary and Romania, and Hungary and Slovakia, tensions still remain between Turks and Bulgarians in Bulgaria, Hungarians and Romanians in Romania, Slovaks and Hungarians in Slovakia, and Albanians and Macedonians in Macedonia. In the Czech Republic, the Republican Party denounced in shrill nationalist tones Germans and, above all, the minority population of gypsies (Roma) until the party was dissolved in 2001. In Hungary and Romania, too, right-wing racism has focused on Roma, as well as Jews. The potential for ethnic violence in Russia and the other former Soviet republics also remained. Twenty-five million Russians lived in other republics within the Soviet Union at the time of the latter's disintegration, 17 million of whom were in Ukraine. It was telling that in Estonia, no sooner had Communist rule ended than new

governments established language tests to determine who was a “real” Estonian. The newly independent Baltic republics established laws that classified Russians as foreigners. In Russia, the extreme right-wing Liberal Democratic Party won almost a quarter of the vote in parliamentary elections in 1993. Aggressive nationalism and xenophobia have become more in evidence in Russia. Azerbaijanis and Armenians battled in the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in the early 1990s. Since 1994, Russian troops have battled nationalist Muslim insurgents in Chechnya (which lies north of Georgia and west of the Caspian Sea). The revolt, which has taken the lives of thousands of civilians, has generated harsh Russian repression while generating terrorist attacks orchestrated by rebels inside Chechnya and inside Russia. The Russian government proposed greater Chechen autonomy, but not independence. Russian troops captured Grozny, the capital of the breakaway republic, in February 2000. Chechen rebels on several occasions took hundreds of hostages, many of whom were killed when Russian troops stormed a theater and a school. Russian troops responded with frequent brutality.

Elected to a second term in 2004, Putin oversaw a vigorous resurgence of Russian presence and assertiveness on the international scene. In Ukraine, tensions between those who wanted close relations with Russia and those who did not destabilized the government. The status of Crimea, which became part of Ukraine during the Soviet break-up, remains highly contentious because the Russian government still considers Crimea to be Russian and also because of the importance of Sebastopol as a Black Sea naval port. In 2007, Russia ended its participation in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, which had been signed in 1990 at the very end of the Cold War. In 2008, Putin's chosen successor, Dimitri Medvedev, was elected president. He quickly named Putin prime minister, leaving the latter's enormous influence in Russia virtually intact and keeping open the possibility that Putin might one day again be president.

Resurgent Russian nationalism was apparent in August 2008. Amid rising tensions between Georgia and separatists in two autonomous regions of the country, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, that were seeking to break away, Russian forces invaded, allegedly to protect the minorities, some of whom had been provided with Russian passports. The Russians pushed into Georgia itself before a cease-fire was signed. Russia declared that its troops would remain as “peacekeepers” in the contested zones. A sign of modern times, the offensive against Georgia included cybernet attacks intended to destabilize Georgian web sites. Russian actions drew virtually unanimous international condemnation, chilling relations, in particular, between Russia and the United States, which counted the pro-American Georgian government as an ally and had encouraged Georgian defiance. Russian military action and the subsequent official recognition of both enclaves as independent states reflected Russian anger at the recognition of the independence of Kosovo by the United States and other Western

states, as well as Russian apprehension that Georgia, as well as Ukraine, both bordering states, might be invited to join NATO.

In January 2009, benefiting from considerable riches in energy, Russia seemed to flex its muscles by cutting off the supply of natural gas to Ukraine after a bitter dispute over prices. The shutdown had the immediate effect of leaving many countries in eastern and southern Europe without much heat during a very cold winter until the dispute was resolved.

CONCLUSION

The Western European nations failed to act effectively to resolve the Bosnian crisis, but the cooperation between states in the former Soviet bloc and the West is reassuring. Russia and the United States signed an arms treaty in 2002 and have cooperated in space ventures, notably a space station.

Freed from Communist rule, some of the Eastern European states lobbied to join NATO. In 1997, NATO announced that it would expand its membership to include eventually Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, hoping that the adherence of former Communist states would help consolidate democracy. Furthermore, it was also announced that a Permanent Joint Council in Brussels would bring together NATO members and Russia to consider joint actions, including arms control and peacekeeping. This is a remarkable turnabout, as NATO, which now includes twenty-six nations, had been originally established with the goal of containing the Soviet Union. This, too, has been a sign of new times.

CHAPTER 30

GLOBAL CHALLENGES: "FORTRESS EUROPE," EUROPEAN COOPERATION, AND THE UNCERTAINTIES OF A NEW AGE



The remarkable increase in the movement of peoples from one part of the world to another has been a dramatic dimension of globalization. After centuries of sending millions of European emigrants to other continents, the trend was reversed. Beginning in the 1960s, Asians and Africans seeking a better life began to arrive in unprecedented numbers in Western Europe. Moreover, with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, tens of thousands of immigrants began arriving in Western Europe. Yet while immigrants have contributed enormously to the economies of many European states, their presence and the cultural differences they bring with them have generated xenophobia in many states and an increase in the political influence of nationalist parties of the extreme right. Immigration thus poses a challenge to the new Europe, raising difficult issues of identity and the very question of what it means to be European.

Globalization has brought other difficult challenges as well. For example, the financial crisis—indeed the near collapse of the financial sector—that began in 2008, the worst international economic crisis since the Great Depression, itself reflected dimensions of globalization. First, the rapid