

A Timeline of Major Dates in World History since 1850

1800s "Popular" nation-states (built around the identity of a particular people) take shape – 3rd throwing into question the sovereignty of "Christian" kings and emperors

quarter Louis Napoleon creates the 2nd French Empire – and brings Paris to splendor (1850s/1860s)
The nation-state (but monarchy) of Italy is founded by Cavour, Mazzini + Garibaldi (1860)
A fierce conflict between Yankee and Southern nationalisms erupts in America (1860s)
The nation-state (but empire) of Germany is founded by Bismarck (1870)
Meanwhile the old order comes under even deeper intellectual-spiritual attack:
Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (vol. 1: 1867) demonstrate "scientifically" that a workers' revolution would inevitably bring about a state-less, property-less society, thus encouraging the industrial workers of the West to rise up against the factory and mine owners and their governments
The publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871) explains "evolution" not as an act of God but one of "natural selection" whereby the strong push aside the weak as the necessary price of progress, stirring up the idea of the necessity of the strong to rule over the weak – in the West and in the world

1800s The Age of Western imperial domination in the world

4th An imperialistic West moves to global dominance
quarter England and France (and, to a lesser extent, Germany) in Africa and Asia
The United States in Central America
A Western condominium ("Open Door" policy) in China
But Japan takes up Westernization for itself to become imperial power of its own in Asia
Meanwhile the industrial revolution and land pressure on the countryside is changing the West – as urban culture begins to replace rural culture as the norm for Western societies
The closing of the American frontier closes the escape hatch of the Western poor and puts a tightening economic hold on the working poor in the West (1880s/1890s)
But extreme nationalism seems to be deflecting much of the workers wrath into a readiness to have a war – not with the nation's industrial owners but with foreign nationals (1890s)
[The stage for the tragedy of World War One is thus set]

1900s The 20th Century starts off under the promise of unlimited prosperity (The "Gilded Age")

There seems to be no end to the inventiveness of Western civilization's human genius – and the material prosperity and political power it is able to generate
Super-rich American capitalists enjoy kingly wealth – despite the trust-busting of Roosevelt and Taft
American Progressivism and European Socialism attempt to help the working poor left behind in the race toward unlimited wealth
The West is pleased with its world empires – though Germany's Emperor Wilhelm is hungry for more
Nationalist egos however draw everyone deeper into a Darwinist competition among the Western nations – each anxious to prove themselves to be the most "advanced" of all peoples

1910s A small-level Balkan conflict (1914) quickly turns itself into a drawn-out nightmare (the "Great War" or World War One) because no side is willing to back down

A tragedy in Serbia (1914) sets off a military chain reaction of injured egos as Austria declares war on Serbia, Russia declares war on Austria, Germany on Russia, France on Germany, etc.
A stalemate quickly occurs on the Western Front which, despite the slaughter, lasts four years
Intense war-weariness finally collapses the Russian Imperial (Tsarist) Government ("February" 1917)
Kerensky declares Russia to now be a Constitutional Democracy – and declares that Russia henceforth fights on in the Great War on the side of "democracy"
America now joins in (April 1917) as Wilson too sees the Great War as a "Crusade for Democracy"
But continuing Russian war weariness quickly undermines Kerensky's new democracy – allowing Lenin to make his move ("October" 1917) to bring the Bolsheviks or Communists to power in Russia
Lenin pulls Russia out of the War (1917) in order to focus on building a new "workers' paradise"
But Russia now falls into a long and bitter civil war – which kills more Russians than the Great War
The Great War ends (late 1918) with no winners – only vengeful and exhausted losers (though the British + French believed themselves somehow to be the "winners")
A global Spanish flu epidemic kills more people in late 1918 than the Great War did in four years

1920s The War creates an even greater desire of rural Westerners to return to the Christian past and urban Westerners to get on toward a better secular future

The first years of the German Weimar Republic are times of civil strife and economic collapse
America retreats into a spirit of "isolationism," vowing never to get involved in a European war again
A deep economic "depression" hits the American farms – ten years ahead of the Great Depression

But in the American cities, a new offering of cars, radio, home appliances, etc. makes urban life dazzling
Urban American culture reflects both hedonism and existentialism arising from its materialist ideals
A rural-urban conflict erupts in America symbolized by the "Prohibition" against the drinking of alcohol –
and by the rapid growth of urban "speakeasies" where alcohol flows freely in defiance of the ban
The conflict is also symbolized by the Evolution issue (Scopes Monkey Trial – 1925)
In Europe the conflict is wrapped up in a rural fascination with a cultural traditionalism (Italy: Mussolini's
"Fascism") / an urban fascination with secular industrial socialism (Russia: Lenin's "Communism")
In Russia Stalin grabs total control over the Communist Party (late 1920s) – and then over the whole of
Russian society – through a regime of terror which he institutes in order to push the country to
Rapid industrialization (at the expense of the impoverished countryside)
Wildly speculative investments, farm failures, and saturation of consumer markets suddenly collapse
the American stock market (late 1929) undermining the foundations of Western capitalism

1930s The Great Depression undercuts "capitalist" democracy and brings support for active dictatorships which promise to move life ahead more effectively – and gloriously

The collapse of American capitalism plunges the industrial world into deep poverty and joblessness
Roosevelt attempts to put American jobless back to work with his "New Deal" – building national
highways, dams, parks, municipal buildings, etc.
Hitler exploits this spirit of traditionalism to bring his Nazis to power in Germany in 1933
and from there maneuvers himself into a position of total control over German society
In Spain, this cultural split precipitates an "international" bloody civil war
One side (Germany and Italy) supports Franco's Falangists (traditionalist Fascists) – the winners
The other side (England, France, Russia) supports the Republicanists – the losers
In Japan the militarist party ignores the pro-democracy party and suddenly attacks China (1937)
Stalin, not trusting the resolve of a greatly weakened England and France to stop Hitler, signs a treaty
(the Molotov-Ribbentrop Treaty) with Hitler dividing Poland between Germany and Russia, also
permitting Stalin to seize the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and to dominate Finland
But (to Hitler's shock) this move on Poland precipitates a French and English declaration of war against
Germany (September 1939); nothing however is done about Russia's part in this affair.

1940s World War Two brings out America as a Superpower (but also Russia/the Soviet Union)

After no action by England and France, Germany attacks and quickly defeats France (June 1940)
But Hitler cannot defeat England's air defenses (the "Battle of Britain" begun in the summer of 1940) –
and redirects his efforts against Russia (June 1941) – but also failing to force Russia to surrender
The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941) brings America into the war;
Hitler intensifies the situation by declaring war on America a few days later
Slowly (1942-1945) America, England and Russia squeeze Hitler into retreat
and America and England push Japan back in Asia and the Pacific
In 1945 both Germany (in May) and Japan (in August) are brought to crushing defeat
But "victors" England and France suffer from major post-war weariness
And the only victors still standing in any strength are America and Russia
who now face each other in deep distrust – producing a "Cold War" between them
Stalin takes full control (1945-1948) of "buffer state" governments of Eastern Europe
– and tries to force America out of Berlin (surrounded by Soviet-held territory)
The English Labour Party turns India over to Gandhi ... and to bloody chaos (1947)
Truman moves to protect Western European democracies against Russian-directed Communism
with economic assistance (Marshall Plan) and military assistance (Berlin and NATO)
But America stands by dumbfounded as Mao's Communists take over China (1949)
– a country which so recently Americans had fought hard to deliver from Japanese tyranny
The Soviets explode their first A-bomb (1949) ... way ahead of schedule. Spying from America?

1950s The Soviet-American Cold-War deepens

Communist North Korean invades "democratic" South Korea (June 1950) starting the Korean War
– and Truman responds with American military assistance to South Korea
– drawing the Chinese in on the side of North Korea (resulting in a bloody stalemate)
American fears of global Communist ambitions (early 1950s) are turned by Senator Joe McCarthy
into a witch hunt of virtually every American institution
American intellectuals are deeply offended by the McCarthy witch hunt – and develop a strong hostility
toward the American "Vet" middle class that seems to encourage his Anti-Communist activity
Vet parents teach their Boomer children to resist all appeals of authoritarian Communism by
challenging all authority and listening only to their own inner voices
But older American youth are more absorbed with music and acne than world events
A new international force to be dealt with is emerging: the "Third World" of Asian, African and Latin
American nations that are moving toward total independence from former colonial powers

In an international economic-cultural showdown with "Godless Russian Communism," America smugly showcases before the world the material blessings of 'Christian-Capitalist-Democracy' Meanwhile Americans watch helplessly as the Soviets crush freedom uprisings in Germany (1953) + Hungary (1956) – but act decisively in forcing French and English "imperialists" out of Egypt (the "Suez Crisis" – also in 1956, at exactly the same time as the Hungarian uprising) America is stunned by the Soviet announcement that they have successfully launched a satellite into space (1957) – indicating that they are now ahead in the space race. Mao introduces his "Great Leap Forward" (1958) ... starving millions in turning farmers into iron workers A confident Soviet premier Khrushchev holds out to President Eisenhower the possibility of a "thaw" in the Cold War ... then backs down when the American response is too enthusiastic

1960s An elite-directed State begins to replace the American citizen republic

President Eisenhower finishes out his 8-year term (Jan. 1961) warning the nation about the dangers of the growing economic and political influence of a huge "military-industrial complex" A youthful President Kennedy inspires a political-cultural idealism in America and abroad American youth join his Peace Corps to help bring the world to American-style democracy Seeing blemishes at home, ML King, Kennedy and Johnson back a Civil Rights movement Betty Friedan publishes (1963) *The Feminine Mystique* – characterizing family life as personally oppressive for a woman; the book is a best-seller among rising Boomer females To America's great horror, Kennedy is assassinated – bringing Johnson to the Presidency (Nov. 1963) Johnson, not trusting the citizens to self-correct America's social blemishes, devises a mass of government programs, under the title "Great Society," to reform America "from above" Southeast Asia (particularly Vietnam) appears to be about to fall to Communism and Johnson decides to send thousands of troops to Vietnam to protect Vietnamese "democracy" But then the war in Vietnam drags on endlessly – and the civil rights movement at home turns nasty Mao tries again ... bringing "Cultural Revolution" to China – disrupting society completely in the process Boomers, now come of age as teenagers, protest that mankind's real enemy is the "god" of their parents: "the Establishment" (American Government, Corporate Industry, Mainline Religion) A nasty generational battle ensues (starting in late 1967) in which the Boomers challenge their parents with a revolution in psychedelic music, Eastern mysticism, drugs and sex – mimicked in Europe by a rebellion of European youth against their own "Establishments" 1968 is a year of shock: the "Tet" communist uprising in Vietnam, Johnson's announcement of his resignation, the assassination of ML. King, the assassination of Democratic Party leader Bobby Kennedy, and the yippie / police battle during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago Nixon, a voice of the "Establishment," is elected president in 1968 – horrifying Boomers and intellectuals The world is thrilled as America lands a man on the moon (1969)

1970s A bitter liberal-conservative rivalry embroils America's national and international politics

Nixon backs America away from its Cold War stance (*Détente* or a "backing-down")
 1) opening commercial relations with China,
 2) working out nuclear arms limitations treaties (SALT) with the Soviets and
 3) bringing almost all our troops home from Vietnam
 But this fails to satisfy the hostility of the Boomers – who still see "Establishment" enemies everywhere – especially in the White House
 Another Establishment symbol, Christianity, comes under attack – and (with the help of a very Liberal US Supreme Court) is banished from its traditional position as the moral-intellectual foundation of American culture; "Secularism" is instead moved into that foundational position (1971 decision)
 Nixon is uncovered by the press as a conspiring power-hungry evil genius (the 1974 Watergate scandal)
 This offers Boomers and leftist national press the opportunity to depose Nixon and secure ultimate victory over the "Establishment"
 This leaves the Ford White House powerless and Congress on a quest for "new democracy" playing into the hedonistic instincts of a rapidly strengthening American Liberal Left
 A "Power-is-evil" mentality in Congress undercuts all further support of the South Vietnam Government which soon falls to the North Vietnamese Communists (1975)
 This then drags down neighboring Cambodia into a orgy of Communist slaughter (the Killing Fields) in which hundreds of thousands of Cambodians are slaughtered for not being sufficiently revolutionary
 This same power-is-evil mentality enables Carter to gain the White House (1977) with a "new morality": America active in the world not on the basis of its power, but instead on the basis of its moral or "democratic" high-mindedness!
 Actually, Carter uses standard political pressure to get Egypt and Israel to come to some kind of a diplomatic agreement
 But Carter's "new morality" undermines the troubled regime of America's major ally in the Muslim world, The Shah of Iran, and helps bring to power in Iran a bitterly anti-US Shi'ite theocracy which in turn seeks to topple other secular, proto-Western Middle Eastern governments

1980s The "Reagan Era" marks a decade of a return to more traditional values

Federal Reserve Chairman Volcker's taking the federal interest rate to 20% cripples deeply the American economy – and kills the Carter presidency – opening the way for a strong-willed Reagan (of the old "Vet" generation) to enter the White House (1981)

Reagan pursues American foreign relations negotiating from strength (not "moral purity")

Russia tries to keep up – but begins to break down from built-in economic inefficiency

Gorbachev tries to reform the Russian Communist system – but merely collapses it instead not only in Russia but in all the former Stalin-dominated countries of East Europe (1989)

An effort of Democrats to bring down another Republican presidency around the "Iran-Contra" scandal fails to win the support of Americans who do not want to see Reagan "Watergated"

Meanwhile in America the new personal computer initiates a veritable communications revolution

With the Boomers now in positions of social influence, a cultural revolution takes place along a number of fronts – united by a vision of the enemy: the "privileged" White, Anglo, Christian, "straight" male

Traditional (Christian) America fights back, with the issues of abortion, prayer in public life, Christian schooling and the homosexual life-style the major hot buttons

1990s The sole Superpower enjoys a decade of incredible material prosperity – and hedonism

Bush (Senior)'s victory (1991) against Iraq in the Gulf War puts Vietnam defeatism behind America restoring a sense of America's rightful place as a sole superpower leading the world

But economic difficulties oust Bush and bring in the Boomer Clinton to the White House (1993)

Clinton undertakes reforms (a national health plan and homosexuality in the military) which explode in his face and which he is forced to abandon.

Congressional Republican leader Gingrich, with his "Contract for America," channels traditionalist outrage into a Republican takeover of Congress (1994) – moving a "politically flexible" Clinton to take up much of Gingrich's program himself – and thus steal Gingrich's political thunder

"Ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and Kosovo (former Yugoslavia) demonstrates that Clinton understands the importance of political "Realism" ... as America assumes the role as the world's policeman

The world watches as Yeltsin's Russia struggles with corruption to find stability as a "democracy"

A "morally flexible" Clinton gets caught in a sex scandal – but manages to survive politically (1999)

An ongoing computer revolution continues to bring unprecedented prosperity to many Americans

2000s Muslim terrorist destruction of the World Trade Center focuses Bush Jr.'s presidency - producing military/diplomatic resolve to "remake" Afghanistan and Iraq politically and culturally - also helping to plunge the American government into deep indebtedness

Putin comes to power in Russia (2000) to put the country back on a more traditional authoritarian political course – to the distress of America

Bush (Junior)'s diplomatic and military response to al-Qaeda terrorism (9-11) inspires world sympathy, confidence and support (2001)

But the strong push of his Neo-Conservative advisors Cheney and Rumsfeld for "democratic nation-building" in Afghanistan and Iraq undermines that same global support, especially with Bush's decision to invade Iraq in order to topple the Saddam Hussein Government (2003)

Bush tries to turn the running of an agonizingly long war over to the Iraqis – but Arab Sunni and Shi'ite hatreds and Kurdish independent-mindedness produce such deep political schisms that "democratic" self-government does not automatically spring forth in Iraq; America is now stuck there trying to hold the country together

China's economy continues to boom, presenting a challenge for the world's resources + America's economic dominance in the world

A ballooning American government deficit takes on monumental proportions

(growing from \$5 trillion to well over \$10 trillion in the 8 years of the Bush presidency)

A near financial meltdown of a number of major American banks pushes the international financial world to the brink of collapse (2008); but a US government "bailout" in the last days of the Bush presidency provides an expensive rescue of the banks.

Obama, a curiously inexperienced political celebrity, takes over the White House (early 2009)

Obama delivers a speech in Egypt affirming America's new support for the Islamic world (Jun 2009)

Brazil, Russia, India and China hold a summit conference agreeing to bring their economies together in closer cooperation (June 2009) ... designed to make them less dependent on the West's economy;

South Africa will join the next year – now constituting an organization known by the initials BRICS

The American economy does not recover from the financial crisis, despite vast amounts of Bush and Obama government funding to "stimulate" the economy; this increases greatly the national debt

A Democrat-controlled Congress pushes through Obama's national health program (Nov-Dec 2009)

... which Obama signs into law (Mar 2010)

2010s America struggles to locate its national identity at home and to find its way abroad in a multipolar political, economic and cultural universe

During the "Arab Spring" (2011) the Middle East is shaken by the rise of Muslim rebel groups
Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi is overthrown in Libya by rebels ... with NATO air cover support (Feb) ... merely throwing Libya into a state of civil war
Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak resigns in the face of growing civil rights protests (Feb)
Anti-Western Muslim fundamentalist Morsi is narrowly elected President ... throwing Egypt into turmoil ... resulting in the military takeover of Gen. Sisi (and Obama's irritation!)
But efforts to overthrow Bashar al-Assad in Syria fail ... and throw Syria into a cruel civil war
Osama bin Laden is finally killed by Navy SEALs in Pakistan (May 2011)
Obama threatens Assad with US counteraction if he does not stop his repression (2012) ... but fails to deliver, helping to add to the Syrian confusion ... and driving Assad to Putin's Russia for support
Obama is re-elected in a race with the Republican Romney (November 2012)
Masked Russian troops seize Crimea from Ukraine (Feb 2014)
Jihadists announce the creation of an Islamic state/caliphate in Iraq and Syria - ISIS (Jun 2014)
The Supreme Court decides 5-4 that "marriage" must also include homosexual unions (Jun 2015)
China claims ownership of the South China Sea by building naval air bases on dredged islands (2015-6)
Europe is faced with a massive refugee problem coming from Syria and Africa (2015-2016)
Economic sanctions are lifted against Iran ... having ended nuclear weapons development (Jan 2016)
By a narrow majority, the British vote (Jun 2016) to leave the European Union (the "Brexit")
The American federal debt reaches nearly \$20 trillion by the end of the Obama Presidency
Businessman and TV celebrity Donald Trump is elected U.S. President (Nov 2016)
Democrats proceed immediately to look for ways to impeach Trump and drive him from the Presidency
ISIS is crushed when its capital at Raqqa is taken by pro-American forces (2017) ... but its forces are merely scattered and spread into the surrounding areas of the Middle East
Horrible living conditions in Central America send hundreds of thousands of Latinos north to America ...
But House Democrats block efforts of Trump to erect a wall to stop this invasion (2018/19)
Confirmation hearings of Supreme Court appointee Kavanaugh turn ugly as Democrats bring out claims of a misogynist event during his high school years ... stirring "Me Too" feminist wrath when he is confirmed
Democrats' efforts to find impeachable "collusion" in the 2016 election between Trump and Russia are hurt by the Mueller inquiry ... which finds no basis to bring criminal charges against Trump (2019)
A global pandemic originates at the end of 2019 in China (Covid-19)

2020s The political-moral problems challenging the Western world continue to mount

Covid-19 then hits the world hard in 2020 ... shutting down the national economies around the world for months ... and disrupting life in general
A very elderly professional politician (almost a half-century working in Washington) Biden gains the White House in 2020; Trump protests that the election was not fair ... and encourages protesters to march on the Capitol Building the day Congress is affirming the vote (January 6, 2021); a violent disaster results; numerous court cases are filed against Trump
Biden issues Executive Order after Executive Order ... in order to bring the country more fully under the "progressive" control of the "Administrative State" (the Washington bureaucracy) ... in every possible realm of life
The massive invasion by "illegals" crossing into America from Mexico continues to go largely unblocked
Biden completes Trump's plan for an American withdrawal from Afghanistan ... but the actual operation (August 2021) proves to be merely a disastrous abandonment of American assets and allies there
Putin mistakenly believes that he is going to achieve easily some kind of political coup in suddenly – and massively – attacking Ukraine (February 2022) ... but finds a Ukraine under strong leadership (Zelenskyy) and with a resolute Ukrainian army unwilling to bend to Putin's aggression
America and Europe swing to strong support of Ukraine ... in a war which drags on and on
Other countries join BRICS ... and begin to move against the American dollar's place of prominence
In the world's economy
Trump is re-elected as president (2024) – even in the face of sexual charges brought against him by his opponents