Utopia and Terror in
the 20th Century
Part I
Professor Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius
Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius was born in Chicago, Illinois. He grew up on Chicago’s Southside in a Lithuanian-American neighborhood and spent some years attending school in Aarhus, Denmark, and Bonn, Germany. He received his B.A. from the University of Chicago. In 1989, he spent the summer in Moscow and Leningrad (today St. Petersburg) in intensive language study in Russian. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in European history in 1994, specializing in modern German history.

After receiving his doctorate, Professor Liulevicius spent a year as a postdoctoral research fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Peace, and Revolution at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Since 1995, he has been a history professor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He teaches courses on modern German history, Western civilization, Nazi Germany, World War I, war and culture, 20th-century Europe, nationalism, and utopian thought. In 2003, he received the University of Tennessee’s Excellence in Teaching award.

Professor Liulevicius’s research focuses on German relations with Eastern Europe in the modern period. His other interests include the utopian tradition and its impact on modern politics, images of the United States abroad, and the history of Lithuania and the Baltic region. He has published numerous articles and his first book, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in the First World War* (2000), published by Cambridge University Press, also appeared in German translation in 2002. His next project is a larger study of German stereotypes of Eastern Europeans and ideas of a special German cultural mission in the East over the last two centuries.

Professor Liulevicius lives in Knoxville, Tennessee, with his wife, Kathleen.
# Table of Contents

**Utopia and Terror in the 20th Century**  
Part I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Biography</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Scope</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture One</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Two</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Three</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Four</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Five</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Six</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Seven</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Eight</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Nine</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Ten</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Eleven</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Twelve</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Utopia and Terror in the 20th Century

Scope:

Our course examines a fundamental question of our times: Why was the 20th century so violent? This terrible century saw bloodletting on an unprecedented scale. Scholars estimate that around the globe, wars cost more than 40 million lives, while government-sponsored persecutions, mass murder, and genocide accounted for 170 million victims.

Viewing the past century as a whole, this course examines the ideologies that promised utopias and total solutions to social problems (Fascism, Nazism, Communism, and others), and relates the terrible human toll of attempts to realize these blueprints. Such ideologies functioned as political religions, commanding faith and fanatical adherence and promising salvation. At the same time, the ideological regimes were an emphatically modern phenomenon, using new technology, the capabilities of the modern state, and sophisticated methods of control. The four elements making up such a regime were masses, machines, mobsters, and master plans. Masses of people to organize and the machinery of social control were the means by which a movement came to prominence. Within the regime, a mobster elite of political criminals functioned as leaders, following a master plan laying out an ideological blueprint for the future. Terror would be used to shape the intractable human material to fit the ambitions of the ideological movement.

Our course discusses how these elements came together, taking different forms and variations over the course of the 20th century. To begin with, the revolutionary legacies of the 18th and 19th centuries are examined, showing the utopian hopes vested in technological and social progress. At the same time, political philosophies that saw conflict as the motor of progress are noted. World War I had a massive brutalizing effect, inaugurating the phenomenon of total war and militarizing and mobilizing entire societies. Civilians were increasingly the targets of this war, most cruelly in the first modern genocide, the Armenian massacres of 1915. Total war also led to total revolution, as radical Socialists directed by Lenin took power in Russia in 1917 and established a new Soviet regime, championing a global revolution. In the aftermath of World War I, aftershocks of the war continued in an unsettled political landscape. Millions of refugees were uprooted, civil wars raged in many countries, and the fortunes of democracy were battered.

In the Soviet Union, an elaborate Communist dictatorship emerged, built up by Josef Stalin, the “Man of Steel,” at a massive cost in lives, as in the Gulag state camp system. The utopian outlines of the new Soviet civilization are examined. In Italy, Fascists came to power under Benito Mussolini, proclaiming slogans of order, unity, and absolute state power. The decade of the 1930s saw gathering storm clouds in international politics, with the Japanese rampage in China, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War, and a growing pessimism in culture and thought. In Germany, the Nazi Party, led by Adolf Hitler, promised a racial utopia, reordering German society with brutal means and the persecution of a minority group, German Jews. Unleashed by Hitler with help from Stalin, World War II brought a further escalation of total war and violence directed against civilians. The Nazis’ program of racial murder of the Jews, the murderously efficient “final solution,” unfolded against the background of ambitious future plans for domination.

No sooner had World War II ended than a new global ideological confrontation emerged, the Cold War. In China, Chairman Mao’s Communists came to power and, over the next decades, launched campaigns to reconstruct Chinese society fundamentally, no matter the cost. An even more radical project was put into effect in nearby Cambodia, where the Khmer Rouge revolutionaries, under the elusive Pol Pot, abolished cities, eliminated perceived enemies among the ordinary people, and caused the death of a quarter of the population. During the Cold War, Communist regimes took differing forms; the cases of isolated North Korea, seemingly efficient East Germany, and the formidable Soviet Union are examined.

At the end of the 20th century, even with democratic revolutions taking place in Eastern Europe and Russia, darker trends also emerged. In Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic pressed “ethnic cleansing” as a way to achieve his goal of a “Greater Serbia.” In Africa, a renewed genocide occurred in Rwanda, as the Hutu government masterminded a carefully planned slaughter of the Tutsi minority. In the Middle East, Saddam Hussein’s regime championed the ideological precepts of Ba’thism and sought and used weapons of mass destruction, including chemical arms used against Iraq’s Kurdish minority.
At its conclusion, the course poses the question of the future of terror, assessing the role of terrorism in the world at present and what lessons have been learned by the hard experience of this past century. Throughout the narrative of these tragedies, the lectures also point out individuals who resisted these inhuman trends, acting as remarkable witnesses to the century, dissenting from its violent course, often at great personal cost. Their examples represent a hopeful conclusion.
Lecture One
Defining Utopia and Terror

Scope: This lecture outlines the destructive historical record of the 20th century, first laying out the statistics of the victims of government-sponsored terror and murder. A bitter contradiction is revealed between the age’s promises of progress and its bloody record. The twin concepts of utopia and terror are defined and their linkage is examined: The aim of achieving a perfect society was supposed to justify violent means. Utopia refers to the perennial human impulse to imagine a flawless society, free of contradictions and conflicts. Terror designates the deliberate and systematic use of fear and violence to achieve political ends. The 20th century saw the rise of dynamic and brutal ideological regimes that promised total solutions. The four key elements of such modern regimes are: (1) masses, (2) machines and mechanisms for control, (3) the seizure of the state by mobsters (political criminals), and (4) ideological master plans.

Outline

I. The violent 20th century.
   A. A central fact of the 20th century is its violent record. The main question this course aims to address is: Why and how has the 20th century been so violent?
   B. The question’s urgency.
      1. We pride ourselves on our progress and modernity, but the century’s violence represents a terrible contradiction.
      2. The past century has been marked by ferocious “total wars,” proliferation of concentration camps, industrialized mass murder, and ethnic cleansing.
      3. What if these things are not throwbacks but signs of things to come? What will the next century be like? Will it see the intensification or the abolition of such experiences?
   C. Scholars have tried to estimate the casualties of 20th-century wars, civil conflicts, government-sponsored persecutions, and mass murders.
      1. It is difficult to arrive at final statistical estimates of these tragedies. This in itself is a crucial and telling point, indicating the orders of magnitude involved.
      2. Political scientist R. J. Rummel of the University of Hawaii calculates that worldwide during the 20th century, wars and civil wars cost about 38 million lives, while government-sponsored persecutions, mass murder, and genocide accounted for about 169 million victims.
   D. The contradiction.
      1. These facts conflict with the 20th century’s great hopes and indisputable advances.
      2. Paradoxically, the very lure of progress was used to justify this century’s mass violence.
   E. A worldwide phenomenon.
      1. This order of violence has been seen worldwide.
      2. Our lectures will survey these sites of man’s organized inhumanity to man: the First World War’s muddy trenches; the banks of the Euphrates River, where deported Armenians died; the frozen wastes of Stalin’s Gulag at Magadan; the Nazi death camps of Hitler’s “final solution”; mass graves of Rwanda in Africa and Srebrenica in the Balkans; and Cambodia’s killing fields.

II. The explanatory framework.
   A. A clear connection exists between 20th-century plans for utopias and use of terror to bring them about, terms that need to be defined.
   B. First, utopia defines an imagined ideal society. The utopian tradition dates back to classical times; see, for example, the Republic of Plato (c. 429–347 B.C.).
      1. Most older conceptions of ideal societies were religious. With the growth of modern secular and scientific thought, however, new thought experiments could be undertaken: utopias intended for the here and now.

©2003 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership
2. The first was Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia* of 1516, describing a harmonious society of reason and equality. Yet More also gave his society a name soberly suggesting its impossibility (in Greek, *utopia* means “nowhere” or “no place”).

3. This contradiction endures in all thinking about utopias. Yet the word also retained positive connotations: the allure of a new earth and new human beings in perfect harmony.

4. When we speak of utopianism, then, we mean this abiding human trait of visualizing comprehensive social solutions.

C. We need next to define a seemingly unlikely pairing for *utopia*, the concept of *terror*.

1. In this usage, *terror* is a method in the pursuit and wielding of power, denoting organized use of violence for political ends. Terror seeks to instill fear and panic, aiming at forcing transformation.

2. *Terror* implies deliberate and organized targeting of civilians, noncombatants, innocents.

3. Here, too, there are ambiguities in the word’s connotations. Although earlier revolutionaries accepted the label of *terrorist*, it carries a stigma today.

D. The linkage of utopia and terror: ideology.

1. Utopia and terror have been linked in the history of the 20th century because plans for perfection encountered either passive or active resistance.

2. If individuals and society would not willingly submit to being radically remade, compulsion would be used to enforce the planned perfection. Such terror would, in turn, be justified in reference to an ideology that legitimized the actions of the present by pointing to a bright future.

3. The modern age has seen a succession of ideologies, systems of thought describing how the world works (or how it should).

4. Because of their promises of ultimate meaning and a perfect future, many ideologies constituted political religions, commanding fanaticism, commitment, and sacrifice.

5. In return, such ideologies gave their followers enormous confidence, along with justification for realizing their beliefs by any means necessary, including escalating use of violence.

III. The rule of ideological regimes.

A. The key elements.

1. The 20th century saw the rise of ideological regimes using both utopia and terror. As a consequence, they were both dynamic and brutal.

2. Such regimes, pursuing criminal policies, had four key elements, constituting both the means and motives for their actions: masses, machines, mobsters, and master plans.

B. The means.

1. Masses of people were mobilized in the rise or consolidation of such regimes, exploiting societies in turmoil, full of uprooted and atomized individuals. Humans caught up in ideological movements were often uprooted, members of “lonely crowds,” seeking escape in promises of belonging, anonymity, and equality.

2. Machines used by mass movements were not only machines in the literal sense, but also the apparatus of modern technology, media for propaganda, and bureaucratic state organization, especially the police and secret services.

C. The motives.

1. Mobsters constituted the movement’s elite, gathered into organized conspiracies to achieve political power and often using criminal methods inspired by gangster bosses.

2. Master plans were ideologies championed by mass movements, total blueprints based on ideas, promising utopia as an outcome, with comprehensive visions of a future society. They were not necessarily inflexible and could be adapted to changing conditions, while still claiming to be infallible, but remained fixed on their vision of the imagined future.

D. Mass movements gave confidence to their followers and created an aura of dynamism.

E. Although tyrannies and dictatorships had certainly existed before the 20th century, these movements were distinctively new and modern, drawing on new technology and ideologies.

F. This does not mean that the mass movements we will discuss (such as Communism or Nazism) were identical. Rather, it is especially because of their different ideological goals that one is struck by congruences in their actions and structures.
IV. Confidence and resistance.
   A. Confidence, as well as fear, are important factors in politics, though difficult to measure precisely.
   B. Mass movements were able to exploit fears and mobilize confidence on a scale that enabled crimes of a magnitude never witnessed before.
   C. Yet such regimes are not the only story of the century. Resistance to such regimes (in many cases, leading to their overthrow) is also a crucial and inspiring story of the age.
      1. Resistance included both active opposition, as well as quieter witness against atrocities.
      2. A witness who was among the first to discern the century’s broader outlines was the controversial political philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), a German-Jewish scholar and refugee from Nazi Germany, who drew on personal observation to dissect traits of the century’s totalitarian movements.

V. The point of departure.
   A. The 20\textsuperscript{th} century was not only about violence, but saw unprecedented levels of it. We will seek to trace this blood-red thread running through the fabric of the times.
   B. Two opposed observations need to be kept in mind.
      1. The overthrow of many of the regimes under discussion testifies not only to the heroism of resisters and witnesses who opposed them but to an inner instability in the regimes themselves.
      2. Yet the repeated rise of such regimes also points to the recurring susceptibility of modern societies to such impulses, even today, suggesting some inner flaw in modern man.

Essential Reading:
Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.
Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*.
Ronald Schaar, Gregory Claeyts, and Lyman Tower Sargent, eds., *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*.

Supplementary Reading:
R. J. Rummel, *Death by Government*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What are the hallmarks of a political religion?
2. Why did the tradition of utopian thought come into being?
Lecture Two
The Legacy of Revolutions

Scope: The 19th century set much of the agenda for the 20th century, especially because of its legacy of revolutionary traditions and utopian thinking. This lecture evaluates those legacies, focusing on the crucial dual revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries: revolutions in politics and industry. In politics, the French Revolution (starting in 1789, then descending into a violent Reign of Terror) echoed through the next age and ushered in a new mass politics. Meanwhile, the industrial revolution created massive new productive power and endowed many with great confidence in science and material progress. Some bold thinkers aimed to fuse these revolutionary forces into a new program for the further evolution of society. Their utopian Socialism would be the point of departure for further revolutions.

Outline

I. The inheritance of 19th-century ideas.
   A. In considering the 20th century, we also need to look back to 19th-century ideas and frames of mind, because the ideas launched in that age worked themselves out in the following century.
   B. A dual revolution exploded in the late 18th century, then worked itself out through the 19th century, with consequences that are still with us today: an unfolding political revolution and continuing industrial revolution.
   C. Confidence engendered by these upheavals and all they promised gave support to the idea of progress, the onward march of constant and ultimately inevitable betterment.
   D. In politics, the American and French Revolutions launched new experiments in popular government, while advances in industry gave immense prestige to science. Together, they expanded the sense of what was possible for all human beings.

II. The political revolution of the masses.
   A. Enlightenment ideas.
      1. At the end of the 18th century, revolutions broke out: in 1776 in the American colonies and in 1789 in France. Though each had many disparate causes, new ideas of the Enlightenment informed the thinking of the revolutionaries.
      2. The Enlightenment was an 18th-century movement stressing values of reason: scientific inquiry, religious toleration, secularism, innovation, and reform. Such writers as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), in his Social Contract (1762), argued for popular sovereignty.
      3. Enlightenment optimism for progress, reform, and human perfectibility generated tremendous excitement and a sense of possibilities.
   B. Reactions to the American Revolution
      1. The American Revolution was hailed by observers in Europe as a chance to enact Enlightenment ideas. British political agitator Thomas Paine saw American independence as a new start for the world.
      2. Though there were similarities and intellectual links between the American and French Revolutions, they were also very different, especially because the French Revolution took a more violent, radical turn.
   C. The impact of the French Revolution.
      1. King Louis XVI gathered an Estates-General in 1789 to approve new taxation, but instead, it developed a momentum of its own, with representatives of the common orders gaining new confidence and making new demands.
      2. Representatives declared themselves a National Assembly and resolved to write a constitution. When the king tried to halt them, the Paris mob intervened by storming the Bastille fortress on July 14, 1789, bringing royal authority down with it.
      3. In August 1789, the National Assembly issued the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.
4. Facing opposition in Europe, the revolutionaries moved into a more radical phase. In 1792, they
declared a French Republic, abolishing monarchy. This was the advent of modern appeals to the
“masses.”
5. The revolutionaries’ slogan was “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.”
6. The emphasis on freedom and individual rights grew into the ideology of liberalism. Appeals to the
people and loyalty to the French fatherland, as in the 1793 universal mobilization of the nation,
showed the new power of nationalism. Both liberalism and nationalism played crucial roles in 19th-
century history.
7. There was also a strong element of utopianism in the French Revolution, especially at its most radical.
Ardent revolutionaries sought to de-Christianize France, replacing religion with a cult of reason.
8. A new revolutionary calendar expressed the epochal break revolutionaries sought.

D. The Reign of Terror.
1. Fearing for the revolution’s survival, in 1793, the revolutionaries executed the king and established a
Committee of Public Safety, which ushered in a policy known as the Terror (1793–1794). It was
dominated by Maximilien Robespierre (1758–1794), who advocated revolutionary terror, defined as
prompt, total justice, to produce a Republic of Virtue.
2. The guillotine and other persecutions took an estimated 50,000 lives.
3. Radicals, called Jacobins, proudly accepted the label of terrorists.
4. The Terror burned itself out, with Robespierre betrayed by associates and executed in 1794. The
revolution ended in the despotism of Napoleon Bonaparte's military dictatorship.
5. Revolutionary Saint-Just called revolution “a mother who devours her children.”

E. In spite of its failure and excesses, the French Revolution provided a powerful and attractive model for
those desiring change.
1. Setting the terms for the political conflicts of the 19th century, its challenge opened the modern
political age.
2. Politics would now increasingly have to appeal to the masses for legitimacy.

III. Industrial revolution of machines.
A. From the 18th century and accelerating in the 19th century, the industrial revolution had consequences as
profound as political revolutions.
1. In fact, the process involved not only growing industry and technology, but also new ways of
organizing work and disciplines most useful to the new factory environment.
2. Its effects were uneven, beginning first of all in northwestern Europe (Britain, France), spreading
through the European continent and to the United States, and moving on to the rest of the world, with
seemingly irresistible force.
B. Industrialization had important consequences for society and politics, remaking physical landscapes of
Europe and, later, other parts of the globe and disrupting traditional ways of life.
C. Engineers as heroes.
1. A cult of the heroic engineer rose up worldwide to celebrate their very visible accomplishments: the
Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, the American Transcontinental Railroad.
2. Henry Ford (1863–1947), a Michigan mechanic, became an emblem of trust in science and
technology. His Model T automobile, developed in 1909 and soon mass-produced with assembly-line
techniques, showed new possibilities of scientific management.
D. Social critics raised anxieties about the human effects of this mechanization, fearing it could alienate and
dehumanize workers. At the same time, paradoxically, great hopes were vested in the potential of vast
technological and industrial projects to solve human problems.

IV. Sciences of the masses.
A. Together, these two revolutions in politics and industry produced a new world oriented toward the masses.
1. The media (newspapers, movies, and later, radio and television) thrived on entertaining and informing
the masses.
2. In politics, parties had to appeal to mass constituencies to muster votes in parliamentary systems.
B. In Western societies of the 20th century, visions of what the future could bring for ordinary people expanded enormously. This led to a revolution in expectations that politics needed to address.

C. The allure of science.
   1. The immense prestige of science in the 19th century, for some taking the place of traditional religious belief, suggested that science could also solve society’s contradictions.
   2. Evolutionary thought promised new understandings of progress. British scientist Charles Darwin (1809–1882) published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. Progressive adaptation of creatures to their environment’s challenges produced evolution, in a struggle for survival, leading from “lower animals” to higher, more complex forms.

D. Science applied to humans.
   1. Inevitably, these ideas in the natural sciences would be applied by some to humans and their societies, a trend called *Social Darwinism*.
   2. Social Darwinists and eugenicists approved the application of evolution to human society, to encourage the reproduction of the “fittest.”
   3. Such doctrines gave support to a modern variety of racism, a supposedly scientific racism, which sought to rank mankind into a hierarchy of unequal races. Traditional anti-Semitism (hatred of the Jews), earlier religious in motivation, was now also transmuted into a biological anti-Semitism.

E. Growth of the Socialist idea.
   1. A different imagined future was offered by Socialists, based on cooperation, rather than competition, in a society without private property.
   2. Some reformers, often called *utopian Socialists*, established settlements or communes to serve as models for harmonious society (for example, Robert Owen’s New Harmony in Indiana in the 1820s).
   3. French Socialist Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) foresaw elites, intellectual and technological, presiding over cooperative societies.
   4. French Socialist Charles Fourier (1772–1838) advocated cooperative model settlements, called *phalansteries*, and held fanciful notions about the eventual arrival of the Socialist millennium.
   5. Soon, however, a newer, more potent version of Socialist thought appeared: the *scientific Socialism* of Marx and Engels.

**Essential Reading:**

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. How could industrial progress be used to realize Socialist projects?
2. Did the industrial revolution expand the importance of the individual or decrease it?
Scope: As the 20th century began, marked by optimistic expectations of continued progress, darker omens also appeared, in the form of political philosophies that saw in conflict and violence the key to progress. They, too, were inheritances from the 19th century. The turn of the century saw the growing influence of Marxism, the scientific Socialism crafted by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which offered a comprehensive blueprint for social salvation, as well as a compelling moral message. Fears also grew of a wave of Anarchist terrorism and assassinations, intended as unsystematic “propaganda of the deed” to arouse the masses. Worldwide imperialism, peaking in the 1890s, made brutal rule of civilian populations seem normal, including the invention of concentration camps and the use of terror in colonial campaigns. In the background could be heard uncanny premonitions of a coming world war, a collision that would, in fact, be greeted by many.

Outline

I. The background of progress.
   A. Nineteenth-century thought often emphasized concepts of progress. Reasons for confidence in progress were the growing influence of liberal ideas, such as human rights, toleration, constitutional government, rule of law, and real and visible scientific advances.
   B. At the same time, there were countercurrents in Western culture that did not reject the notion of progress but explicitly saw conflict as the key to achieving advancement.

II. Marxism.
   A. This enormously influential set of ideas was developed by Karl Marx (1818–1883) and his associate, Friedrich Engels (1820–1895).
      1. Karl Marx was born in western Germany. A student of philosophy who was unable to find an academic position because of his atheism, he turned to journalism and political activism in exile.
      2. Marx first announced his doctrines in the 1848 Communist Manifesto. Later, he continued to work out his theories in Das Kapital.
   B. Marxism was presented as a science of revolution.
      1. Rejecting earlier thinkers as utopian Socialists, whose plans were not based on material realities, Marx’s doctrine was to be a scientific Socialism.
      2. Marxism brought together many contemporary concerns (evolution, science, mass politics) and exercised considerable appeal, promising keys to history and progress.
      3. Overturning the German philosopher Hegel’s idealism, Marx stated that ideas were not the basis of reality, but matter. Hence, his doctrine was based on historical (or dialectical) materialism, seeing human reality as, at base, economic.
   C. A vision of history.
      1. Marxism presented a tableau of human history, a dramatic narrative of progress, with starring roles played by toiling masses and machines. Individuals, by contrast, played a lesser role.
      2. All history was a history of class conflict. Through clashes (the dialectic process), society passed through phases of different modes of production.
      3. After slavery, then feudalism, mankind now reached the penultimate stage of history, capitalism. The working class (proletariat) confronted an owning class (bourgeoisie). The proletariat’s growing misery (emiserization) would drive it to revolution.
      4. After an international workers’ revolution, the end of history would ensue. Marx called this the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” in which the working class took over state power and abolished class distinctions.
      5. The state was to wither away, leaving a classless society free of private property, in which equal individuals would find fulfillment in work.
      6. The vague outlines of this future did not detract from its appeal.
   D. The Marxist movement.
1. Marx threw himself into political activism, supported by Engels. With himself in mind, he stated that certain exceptional individuals could rise above their class origins to survey and influence the historical process as a whole.

2. The most advanced activists were called Communists.

3. Marxists lived in expectation of the coming final struggle, summed up in the anthem of the movement, the “Internationale.” The certainty of having understood history’s evolution and ultimate goal gave immense confidence.

4. When Marx died in 1883, he was hailed as the Darwin of politics.

5. In spite of Marx’s prediction of revolution, Socialist parties in European countries tended to grow more moderate, especially on observing that workers’ conditions were not uniformly worsening, but could be improved by organization. Their rhetoric, however, remained revolutionary, alarming the ruling and middle classes.

6. The German Social Democratic Party, founded in 1875, became Germany’s largest party in 1912 and was admired worldwide.

7. Some more radical Socialists, however, rejected this trend toward moderation.

III. Anarchists and assassins.

A. From the 1880s to the early 20th century, an international wave of assassinations and terrorist acts stirred anxieties: the assassination of an Austrian empress; a Russian tsar; a U.S. president; kings of Italy, Serbia, and Portugal; prime ministers of Spain and Russia; and the president of France.

B. Many of these acts were committed by self-described Anarchists, opposed to organized government, but of the nihilistic rather than peaceful variety. Following a “philosophy of the bomb,” they hoped that terrorist actions, called “propaganda of the deed,” would stir the masses to revolution.

C. Though the attacks were not coordinated, they stirred anxieties and conspiracy theories among the propertied classes.

IV. Imperialism.

A. In the 1880s and 1890s, European powers scrambled to grab colonies in Africa and Asia in a new “High Imperialism,” different from earlier colonialism. In 1901, most of the world was in the control of Europeans, while non-European nations, such as Japan and the United States, also sought territories.

1. A key example of brutal colonial rule was found in the Belgian Congo, which from 1885, amounted to a slave state where Africans were worked to death in rubber plantations. This regime’s death toll is estimated at 10 million, roughly half the population.

2. In addition to violence against native peoples, imperialist competition made clashes between rival powers more likely.

B. Imperialism was cheered by its proponents as a progressive and modernizing force, called the “white man’s burden” (Kipling) or Mission civilizatrice.

1. Popular Social Darwinist thinking saw races as unequal, ranked in hierarchies. This made imperialism seem natural.

2. Imperialism had vigorous critics in Europe, but there was even more popular support for the drama of colonial conquest.

C. Tools of empire.

1. Technological superiority sped the imperialist drive. Tools of empire included gun boats, tropical medicines, the pith helmet, and machine guns used against natives.

2. The Battle of Omdurman in 1898, in which British troops mowed down a larger Sudanese army with Maxim guns, was a striking example of the devastating impact of this technology.

D. Colonial use of terror.

1. Colonial rulers purposefully used terror in punitive expeditions against native peoples, euphemistically called “pacification.” The natives’ assumed lower status was used to justify strategies of intense repression.

2. In the German campaign against the Herero in Southwest Africa in 1904, thousands were deliberately driven into the desert to die.

3. Concentration camps were another innovation of colonial conflicts, established in 1896 in the Spanish attempt to suppress revolt in Cuba by cutting guerillas off from support among civilians, who were
interred. The British also used concentration camps in the Boer War (1899–1902) against settlers of Dutch origin in South Africa, incurring many civilian deaths.

4. Such strategies from the colonial periphery could later be reimported back into Europe.

V. Premonitions of oncoming war.

A. The start of the century saw almost uncanny instances of premonitions of war, whether as something to be feared or welcomed.
   1. Keen observers of the American Civil War (1861–1865) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) had begun to understand the new destructive potential of modern industrial war.
   2. Paradoxically, the very destructiveness of modern war led some to argue that this made war less likely.

B. Some thinkers, including Friedrich Nietzsche, celebrated irrationality and unreason. The Italian Futurists, bored with peace and stability, praised speed, danger, and war in a 1910 manifesto.

C. Revolutionaries, including radical Socialist Vladimir Lenin, a Russian in exile in Switzerland, hoped that international conflict could be turned into class war and successful world revolution.

D. With growing international tension, many political leaders and thinkers began to assume that a “Great War” was likely in the near future, perhaps a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Essential Reading:
Walter Laqueur, A History of Terrorism, pp. 1–77.
Joshua Muravchik, Heaven On Earth: The Rise and Fall of Socialism, pp. 60–94.
George Mosse, Towards the Final Solution: A History of European Racism.

Supplementary Reading:
Adam Hochschild, King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa.
Sven Lindkvist, “Exterminate the Brutes”: One Man’s Odyssey into the Heart of Darkness and the Origins of European Genocide.
Francis Wheen, Karl Marx: A Life.

Questions to Consider:
1. In what ways did Marxism claim to be superior to earlier utopian Socialism?
2. What were the main reasons for the appeal of imperialism among Europeans?
Lecture Four
World War I

Scope: In 1914, a global war exploded, unleashed by an act of terrorism, the assassination of an Austrian archduke, a representative of the old regime. The next four years of modern industrial war caused an immense brutalization of Western civilization and a succession of ominous innovations: the first use of poison gas, bombing from the air, and the deliberate targeting of an entire people. The war began with great enthusiasm, which soon gave way to horrific trench warfare, pitting men against machines, as in the epic battles of Verdun and the Somme. Although some men crumbled under the impact of shell shock, other elite soldiers, called storm troopers, reveled in the combat, claiming a new model of heroism. The fighting powers now moved toward a new, more encompassing kind of struggle, total war. This experience helped shape the rest of the century, setting it on its violent course.

Outline

I. The advent of war.
   A. The war was unleashed by an act of terrorism in 1914 but had many other causes, including the readiness of Europe’s great powers to go to war.
   B. The First World War had important consequences for the world in the century to come because of the massive brutalization it brought.
      1. American diplomat and historian George Kennan called it the “seminal catastrophe” of the 20th century.
      2. It saw the first use of poison gas, bombing from the air of civilian centers, and the first genocide. Many of the horrors yet to unfold in the century had their origins here.
   C. The coming of the war was not inevitable but was made likelier by misapprehensions, mutual fears, and instability in Europe.
      1. Instability was especially strong in the Balkans, where the Ottoman Turkish Empire was perceived as being on the decline, called the “sick man of Europe.” In spite of attempts by the Young Turk movement to reform and modernize after coming to power in 1908, Turkey suffered in the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913.
      2. Serbian Nationalists turned on the other empire in the region, Austria-Hungary, which ruled over minority Serb populations. Serbian Nationalists aimed to unite them into a “Greater Serbia.”
   D. On June 28, 1914, members of a Serbian secret society, the Black Hand (officially entitled “Union or Death”), assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Habsburg throne, in Sarajevo.
      1. Austria-Hungary, urged on by its ally, Germany, choreographed a showdown with the small kingdom of Serbia.
      2. What had begun as a localized conflict spread, as alliances between the great powers clicked into place. Even voices urging peace were drowned out by the imperatives of military plans for mobilization.
   E. August madness.
      1. In August 1914, news of war was met in European capitals with waves of enthusiasm.
      2. Although this enthusiasm was not universal, the spontaneous mobilization of the countries was great, reflected in impromptu propaganda and celebration.
      3. Even Socialist parties in the European countries supported war efforts of their respective homelands, rather than refusing to participate. Radical Socialists, such as Lenin, were disgusted at the collapse of international Socialist solidarity.

II. The world of the trenches.
   A. Although masses of young men enlisted in expectation of heroism, chivalry, and a quick war, the reality of the trench warfare awaiting them was entirely different.
      1. Plans for swift victory, such as Germany’s Schlieffen Plan, failed, and the opposing sides dug in for a long, drawn-out war along the Western Front, about 475 miles.
2. Trench warfare took place in a blasted landscape of mud, barbed wire, and no-man’s land. Heavy artillery and machine guns dominated the battlefield, obliterating frontal attacks.
3. Poison gas was a horrific addition to the new killing technology.
4. Soldiers themselves became increasingly anonymous, as individual heroism seemed obsolete in industrial war. This trend was illustrated in the replacement of plumed hats with stark metal helmets.
5. Nearly half of all the bodies of the dead in the war were never recovered and identified.

B. The titanic battle between the Germans and French at Verdun in 1916 illustrated the futility and destructive power of this new war (a lesson repeated at the Somme soon afterwards).
   1. German plans for the battle aimed to “bleed white” the French army.
   2. On the first day, February 21, 1916, a million shells were fired.
   3. In 10 months of inconclusive combat, 700,000 French and Germans were killed for a few miles.

C. On the Eastern Front, the German armies scored successes against the Russians, but definitive victory eluded them and the experience of that front was brutalizing in ways different from the Western.

D. The psychological toll of the fighting and the trenches often showed up as shell shock, wearing down soldiers in spirit.

III. The brutalizing effect of war: storm troopers.
   A. Another psychological consequence of war was that of the brutalization of participants in trench warfare. New elite forces were created to break the stalemate of the trenches.
      1. The Italian elite fighters were called Arditi, “the bold ones.”
      2. The German units were called Sturmtruppen, “storm troopers.” One of them, Ernst Jünger, recorded the spirit of these units in his memoir, The Storm of Steel.
   B. Such units were celebrated as a new breed of heroes, but young men who had come of age in the trenches would find it hard to adjust to peacetime.

IV. Total war as a phenomenon.
   A. Total war was the term coined to sum up the all-encompassing nature of this modern industrial war.
      1. This conflict demanded total mobilization of mass armies, economies, societies, and the hearts and minds of people in the countries at war.
      2. The stakes of war were total, as well: Victory or sheer defeat would be the final outcome, not compromise. The winner would be the last one standing after the drawn-out process of attrition.
   B. Total war had important implications.
      1. Because civilians were mobilized to work for their country’s victory, civilians would increasingly be the targets of violence, as well.
      2. The strains of total war tore at societies. A gap could grow between the soldiers in the trenches and the civilians on the home front, with social tension leading to the search for scapegoats in one’s own midst.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Ernst Jünger, The Storm of Steel.

Questions to Consider:
1. How did technology help turn World War I into a total war?
2. What motivated the soldiers of the Great War to keep on fighting, in spite of the horrors they experienced?
Lecture Five
Total War—Mobilization and Mass Death

Scope: After 1914, it still took contemporaries a long while to truly understand the full extent of the horrors of modern industrial war and to recognize the phenomenon of total war. This lecture examines the implications of the slide into this more radical form of struggle, which demanded the mobilization of entire populations, economies, cultures, and hearts and minds on the home front, as well as soldiers in the trenches. We consider the linked phenomena of growing violence against civilians, the expansion of strong central states, propaganda as a tool of persuasion, deepening social strains, and the first modern genocide, the massacre of a million Armenians in the Ottoman Turkish Empire in 1915, under cover of war.

Outline

I. The phenomenon of total war.
   A. A new kind of war.
      1. Total war was a new kind of industrial war mobilizing not only soldiers, but entire populations and economies. The nature of this all-encompassing conflict had repercussions for all spheres of life.
      2. Total war merits close examination as a phenomenon because of its future implications: increased targeting of civilians for organized violence, the growth of the centralized state, the erosion of the private sphere, the lessened status of the individual—all trends that would continue in the century.
      3. By its nature, total war’s aim is total victory; as a result, World War I became a war not of decisive engagement, but of attrition.
   B. Mobilizing entire societies.
      1. Mass armies were mobilized, with an estimated 70 million soldiers participating in the war worldwide, of whom 10 million would be killed.
      2. Industry was put into high gear to produce armaments and munitions, dislocating civilian economies.
      3. Women were to pick up the slack on the home front, working in the factories (often at dangerous jobs) and taking over occupations formerly reserved for males, yet also caring for their families. Women’s social roles would be affected by how they rose to these challenges.
      4. Children on the home front were also drawn into the war effort: in schools, where instruction was notably militarized, and in collection drives to gather raw materials for the war economy.
   C. Violence against civilians.
      1. In spite of prewar treaties, civilians were targeted by all sides in increasing measure, because the home front was an integral part of the war effort.
      2. In the initial invasion of Belgium and northern France in 1914, recent research shows, German troops killed more than 6,000 civilians, suspecting snipers or taking reprisals. The effect on public opinion was highly damaging to Germany.
      3. British naval power was used to blockade Germany, waging economic war to choke off the country. After 1915, the economic balance of power shifted to the Allies. Substitutes were sought for raw materials and for food; in the Turnip Winter of 1916–1917, the failure of the potato harvest left civilians in dire straits.
      4. Although its actual human impact is still debated, civilian mortality rose dramatically in Germany.
      5. The Germans responded with submarine warfare, at first restrained, but then unrestricted, claiming this as a form of economic war similar to the blockade.
      6. However, the sinking of civilian ships, such as the Lusitania in May 1915, caused friction with the United States, bringing it into the war in April 1917.

II. Growth of the war state.
   A. Governments expanded to deal with the complicated bureaucratic tasks of mobilization and economic control for the war effort.
   B. The patriotic German-Jewish industrialist Walther Rathenau (1867–1922) was a visionary planner who helped retool Germany’s civilian economy for war.
   C. In the United States, after 1917, Herbert Hoover (1874–1964), an engineer, served as Food Administrator.
D. From 1916, Germany was dominated by a dynamic duo of military dictators, relegating the emperor to the shadows. Generals Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff sought to coordinate the German economy and to mobilize labor in a way that came to be called War Socialism, hijacking Socialist ideas of government control of the economy.

E. The growing role of the government and demands on the state to take action led to a trust in “Caesars,” a cult of the leader in whom one could place trust. In Germany, an enormous wooden idol of Hindenburg was erected in Berlin as a symbol of national unity.

III. Propaganda as a phenomenon.
   A. Censorship was an important wartime measure, but beyond that, propaganda sought to “positively” influence hearts and minds to motivate for the effort of total war.
      1. In earlier centuries, the word propaganda had a religious meaning, as in “propagating the faith,” but now, it was turned to secular purposes.
      2. Some of the most effective propaganda was unsolicited and voluntary; for instance, more than one million war poems were written in the first months of the war in Germany.
      3. Propaganda also sought to hide from view the real fortunes of the war, and in the German case, defeat in 1918 was hard to believe for many when previous reports had been positive.
   B. Propaganda also dehumanized enemies, sharpening negative stereotypes and urging animosity, as in the German “Hymn of Hate,” by Ernst Lissauer.
   C. Government propaganda offices were innovative in their tactics, as in the American journalist George Creel’s Committee on Public Information, with thousands of instant orators to fire the masses.
   D. Some propaganda yielded bizarre and false rumors, such as the 1917 myth of the “corpse factory.”
      1. Over time, skepticism grew toward propaganda.
      2. In a bitter irony, reports of Nazi atrocities and racial murder in World War II would be at first discounted by contemporaries because of this skepticism.
   E. Propaganda also aimed to undermine the enemy’s war effort. Taking direct action, the German generals sent the Russian revolutionary Lenin across Germany from Switzerland to Russia in April 1917 to spread revolution.

IV. Social strains and the search for culprits.
   A. The immense ordeal of total war eroded the enthusiasm many felt in 1914 and opened up social divides between classes and different political orientations. In the Socialist movement, the radical wing associated with Lenin gained credibility.
   B. Some sought scapegoats for the suffering of the war; in Germany, this led to a singling out of German Jews in the army in the notorious “Jewish Census” of 1916.
   C. Even before the war ended, in the soon-to-be-defeated Germany, the ingredients were present for a conspiracy theory explaining the lost war, called the “stab-in-the-back legend,” which blamed minorities on the home front in Germany for allegedly sabotaging the armies in the trenches.

V. Genocide: Armenian massacres.
   A. In 1915, between half a million and a million Armenians were killed in the Turkish Ottoman Empire.
      1. State officials feared that this Christian minority would collaborate with the Russian enemy to achieve independence and ordered their deportation.
      2. The ruling elite, the Young Turks, growing out of the secret Committee for Union and Progress, founded in 1900, encouraged these measures, though many historians believe that no one single order was issued for the killings.
   B. Total war makes genocidal conditions possible, because mass violence becomes “normal.”
      1. In April 1915, Turkish authorities moved against the leaders of Armenian communities, and several hundred were arrested and shot. Over the next two years, they deported two to three million Armenians from eastern Anatolia toward Syria and Mesopotamia.
      2. By some estimates, a third of these people were massacred, a third perished on the way, and a third survived the death marches. Half a million to one million died, massacred or from exposure in the desert.
C. In part because of international inaction in response to the news of these killings, they became a precedent followed later.

1. The pleas of the American ambassador and German missionaries for international intervention were drowned out by world events.

2. An example of the phenomenon of genocide, this was not the same as the Nazis’ industrialized murder of Jews, but a step on the way to it.

3. Justifying his plans, Hitler is said to have later declared that no one remembered the Armenians.

4. To this day, the Turkish government denies the tragedy.

Essential Reading:

Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*.


Supplementary Reading:


Samantha Power, “*A Problem from Hell*: America and the Age of Genocide”, pp. 1–29.

Questions to Consider:

1. What (if anything) could have been done to effectively restrain the escalation of total war?

2. What reasons lay behind the muted international reaction to the Armenian massacres?
Lecture Six
Total Revolution in Russia

Scope: Total war led to a new kind of political upheaval, an attempt at total revolution, claiming to usher in a new era in human history. This lecture examines how radical Socialists seized power in Russia, the first great empire to collapse as a result of the titanic strains of World War I. Led by the single-minded Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the Bolsheviks seized control of the Russian state in 1917 and began a vast revolutionary experiment, consciously aiming at a worldwide overthrow of existing societies, economies, and political systems. The year 1917 proved to be a great dividing line in modern world history, establishing ideological conflicts that continued to work themselves out through the century ahead.

Outline

I. Russia in World War I.
   A. The Russian Empire was battered by total war, as military disaster led to social disintegration.
      1. In spite of the onset of modernization in previous decades, Russia was unprepared for the rigors of total war.
      2. To contemporaries, Russia’s agrarian autocracy seemed fatally backward in economics and politics.
   B. Social and ethnic fractures expanded during the war.
      1. At first, intellectuals and the political parties supported the war. The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin from exile, however, opposed it.
      2. Military failure and scandal undermined the court, especially after the tsar took command of the armies in 1915.
   C. On February 23, 1917 (March 8, by the Western calendar), the February Revolution broke out in Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg).
      1. A new, democratically oriented provisional government took power. The tsar and his family were arrested.
      2. The Petrograd Soviet was another rival center of authority, claiming to speak for the other soviets (“grassroots councils”) established by soldiers, sailors, and workers throughout the country.
   D. Russia remained in the war and instability continued, which the Bolsheviks exploited.
      1. Lenin returned by special train from his Swiss exile, facilitated by the German High Command’s plan to destabilize Russia. Though not a German spy, as some charged, Lenin was happy to oblige.
      2. On arrival in Petrograd, Lenin announced the April Theses of no support for the provisional government, all power to the Soviets, and the appealing slogan of “Bread, Peace, and Land.”
      3. Lenin was supported by a fervent revolutionary, Leon Trotsky, recently returned from New York on news of the revolution, who joined the Bolsheviks in the summer of 1917.

II. Lenin and the Vanguard Party.
   A. Lenin’s background.
      1. Lenin was born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870–1924); his father was a school inspector of the lower nobility. His youth was shaped by his brother’s 1887 execution as a terrorist. He rejected traditional religion, denounced liberalism, and turned toward radical, revolutionary politics with remarkable single-mindedness.
      2. Living as a revolutionary and taking the name Lenin, he was arrested in 1896 and exiled to Siberia. From 1900 to 1917, he lived and worked outside Russia.
      3. He set about organizing a secret society of professional revolutionaries committed to Marxist Socialism, marked by a distinctive structure of underground cells, internal discipline, and democratic centralism, an elite party.
      4. In the name of that party, Lenin forced a split within the Marxist Social Democrats in 1903, leading his Bolshevik (majority) faction away from the moderate Menshevik (minority) faction.
   B. Lenin’s Russian challenge.
      1. The central problem was Russia’s unsuitability for revolution according to classical Marxist criteria.
2. Lenin responded (in the 1916 book *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of World Capitalism*) by theorizing that Russia was the weakest link in a capitalist world system. In a world crisis, war could be turned into civil war between classes. Russian revolution was not an end in itself, but needed to be “internationalized” and spread.

3. The key to success was Lenin’s concept of a “new type of party” as “vanguard” of the masses, leading them. Without one, Lenin warned, workers thought like trade unionists, seeking only short-term gains.

4. These concepts justified seizure of power in the name of the masses. After a failed coup attempt in July 1917, the Bolsheviks prepared for revolt in the fall of 1917, after taking leading positions in the soviets and preaching “revolutionary defeatism” in the war effort.

III. Bolshevik power.

A. The Bolsheviks took power in “Red October” of 1917 (on November 7 by the new Western calendar).
   1. Trotsky coordinated the operation, because Lenin was in hiding.
   2. Small numbers of Red Guard forces stormed the lightly defended Winter Palace, arrested most members of the government, and took over the capital, Petrograd, with remarkable ease.
   3. Nonetheless, Bolsheviks later mythologized the “Great October Revolution,” making it appear a mass event in art and film.
   4. They announced that they were taking power in the name of the soviets.

B. Measures on taking power.
   1. A Council of People’s Commissars (SOVNARKOM) was established, made up of members of the Bolshevik Party (including Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin), supported by left Socialist revolutionaries.
   2. The Bolsheviks eliminated other parties, shut down newspapers, and dismissed the new, democratically elected Constituent Assembly. By summer 1918, the only legal party was the Communist Party, as the Bolsheviks had renamed themselves in March 1918.
   3. The market was shut down, replaced with state control of internal trade, factories, and land, drawing on Lenin’s admiration for Germany’s War Socialism.
   4. The Cheka secret police was established on December 17, 1917 (later celebrated as the “Day of the Chekists”). *Cheka* was an acronym for the “Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage.” The members of the police were charged with “Red Terror” against counterrevolutionaries and class enemies.
   5. The beginnings of a concentration camp system were established. Revolutionary tribunals replaced the courts.
   6. Using the railroad system, Bolshevik units fanned out across the country to take control.

C. These measures were in line with Lenin’s ideas on dictatorship, which he defined as “authority untrammelled by any laws, absolutely unrestricted by any rules whatever, and based directly on force.”

IV. Hopes and expectations.

A. Expectations for the spread of revolution.
   1. The Bolsheviks expected their action to unleash a worldwide cascade of proletarian revolutions.
   2. To win time for “internationalization” of the revolution, Lenin delivered on promises of peace and land.
   3. The Bolsheviks began peace negotiations with Germany.
   4. Lenin encouraged peasants to take over estates, though simultaneously passing a law nationalizing all land.

B. Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
   1. After a truce in December 1917, the Bolsheviks and German military met to negotiate a peace treaty but had opposing aims. The Germans sought territory, while the Bolsheviks aimed to use negotiations as a global propaganda event.
   2. To sway world public opinion, the Bolsheviks revealed diplomatic secrets found in the safes of the Russian foreign ministry.
   3. When negotiations stalled, Trotsky announced a new tactic of “neither peace nor war” and walked out.
   4. The German army resumed its advance, speeding forward by train to occupy larger parts of Russia.
5. To save the revolution, Lenin convinced the Bolsheviks to return to the negotiations. On March 3, 1918, they signed the harsh Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which stripped vast territories from the former Russian Empire.

C. In spite of these reverses and brewing civil war, Lenin continued to expect international revolution. Demonstrating that there was no way back to the old regime, the Bolsheviks executed the imprisoned tsar and his family, shooting them in a cellar in Ekaterinburg on July 16, 1918.

V. Influence.

A. Direct influence.
   1. The Bolsheviks saw Red October as the first part of a worldwide process and now sought to export revolution.
   2. The organization devoted to this task was the Comintern, the “Communist (or Third) International,” superseding previous world Socialist organizations and founded in Moscow in March 1919.
   3. Trotsky referred to it as the “General Staff of the World Revolution.” It organized Communist parties in other countries following the Bolshevik example, seeking a worldwide International Republic of Soviets.

B. Indirect influence.
   1. Especially after the First World War’s devastation, the Bolshevik revolution gained admirers, who saw it as a beacon of hope and social change, as well as opponents, who regarded it as a danger.
   2. The year 1917 was a great dividing line in modern history. From now on, there existed in the international system a state dedicated to the overthrow of all others.
   3. The Bolshevik seizure of power was a pivotal event of the century. The challenge of Communism shaped the ideological discourse of the age; all political leaders and governments would have to respond to it.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
John Reed, Ten Days That Shook the World.

Questions to Consider:
1. How might the Russian Empire have evolved if spared the strains of total war?
2. What means did the Bolsheviks use to argue for the popularity and legitimacy of their seizure of power?
Lecture Seven
War’s Aftermath—The Hinge of Violence

Scope: Though the war formally ended in 1918, the conflict’s aftershocks continued. Indeed, far from ensuring lasting tranquility, the peace treaty of Versailles in fact set the terms for new conflicts that inevitably arose. This lecture examines the latent state of strife that followed the Great War. We consider the little-known movements of millions of refugees displaced by the war’s aftermath, in part through the (today largely unknown) Treaty of Lausanne between Greece and Turkey, later a model for massive “population transfers,” setting a dire precedent. In a few short years, intense hopes for democracy worldwide evaporated, replaced by the surge of radical revolutionaries and reactions to their revolts in the form of paramilitary groups and veterans who called for a trenchocracy, to reorganize society along military lines. The recently ended war had militarized much of political life; this model of politics as war would mark the brief interwar period.

Outline

I. Results of World War I.
   A. The war officially ended on November 11, 1918, but its aftershocks continued for years.
      1. The war left 10 million dead and double that number wounded.
      2. Monuments to the “Unknown Soldier” fittingly symbolized anonymous mass death.
   B. The war’s intellectual and cultural impact.
      1. The war brutalized European societies, producing militarized politics.
      2. Wartime expansion of government power damaged liberal ideals of limited states and individual rights.
      3. A “Lost Generation” of scarred survivors disavowed faith in ideals. Robert Graves’s Goodbye to All That summed up their disenchantment.
      4. Some ex-soldiers called for a new trenchocracy to steer politics.
   C. Europe on the move.
      1. With Germany’s collapse and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian empires, borders were redrawn, and new independent states were formed.
      2. Refugees fled continuing conflict, especially from the former Russian Empire.
      3. Stateless people were castaways without clearly defined rights. Arendt argued that this was the century of the refugee or displaced person.
      4. With new frontiers, 20 million people found themselves ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe.
   D. “Population transfer.”
      1. In the war’s aftermath, a new war between Greece and Turkey, largely forgotten today in the West, turned into an important precedent for later radical measures by states, euphemistically called “population transfer.”
      2. Turkish Nationalists reacted fiercely to the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres imposed by the Allies. They resisted Allied occupation, led by Mustafa Kemal (1880–1938), later known as Atatürk, “Father of the Turks,” for his establishment of a new Turkish national republic.
      3. In 1918, Greek armies invaded Turkey to fulfill the “Megali idea” of a Greater Greece taking in the lands around the eastern Mediterranean. By 1921, the campaign turned into a disaster.
      4. In the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, Greece and Turkey agreed on compulsory “exchange” of populations.
      5. Some 400,000 Muslims were moved from Macedonia, and 1.3 million Greek Christians from Turkey were sent to Greece. The operation took place under international supervision but included massacres and ethnic cleansing.
      6. In spite of this, the population transfer was later hailed by European politicians as a successful model of problem solving, with ominous results.

II. The democratic tide.
   A. Woodrow Wilson.
1. America’s entry into the war in April 1917 helped overwhelm Germany’s fading war effort and led to pleas for peace.

2. American President Woodrow Wilson announced a democratic agenda in his Fourteen Points (January 1918). This was to be a “war to end all wars” to “make the world safe for democracy.”


B. At the very end of the war, democratic states were declared in Central and Eastern Europe, replacing the former empires.
   1. From the Russian Empire’s wreckage emerged Finland, the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), and Poland.
   2. Austria-Hungary broke apart into Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Austria.

C. German revolution and the Weimar Republic.
   1. With the war lost, on November 9, 1918, a German democracy was declared, the Weimar Republic.
   2. The government was led by moderate Socialists, challenged by a simultaneous declaration of a Communist Germany by radical Socialists.
   3. Events of the Russian Revolution of 1917 seemed to be repeating themselves in Germany.

D. Hopes in the League of Nations.
   1. Woodrow Wilson’s plans for a world League of Nations, to ensure permanent peace, created optimism.
   2. Non-European representatives to the negotiations hoped for independence.

E. Americanization and Taylorism.
   1. A hopeful model for social organization that became popular in Europe was the imitation of American economic productivity and organization.
   2. Taylorism referred to “scientific management” theories promoted by American Frederick Winslow Taylor through time-motion studies of work and adopted by Ford’s moving assembly lines in 1914. Man and machine were to work together, speeding up production.
   3. Industrial planning solutions to human problems seemed attractive to many, while others worried over the potential dehumanization of workers in such systems.
   4. Fritz Lang’s classic film of technological utopia, Metropolis (1927), summed up divided views of Taylorism.

III. The Treaty of Versailles.
   A. At 1919 negotiations in Paris, a severe peace treaty with Germany was drafted.
      1. Though they had assumed that they would be included in deliberations, on the basis of Wilson’s democratic ideas, Germans were excluded.
      2. The treaty stripped German territories and colonies, placed strict limits on armed forces, required reparations, and forced Germans to accept responsibility for causing the war (the “War Guilt Clause”).
      3. The blockade on Germany would remain in place until Germany signed.
   B. News of the terms was a crushing blow to Germans.
      1. In fact, it was milder than the Brest-Litovsk Treaty Germany had imposed on Russia.
      2. A fundamental problem was that many Germans did not fully believe they had been defeated.
      3. Spreading the “stab-in-the-back legend,” German Nationalists claimed that the army had been betrayed by traitorous elements on the home front, blaming Democrats, Socialists, Communists, and Jews.
      4. In spite of protest, German representatives signed the Versailles Treaty on June 28, 1919.
   C. The treaty had deep problems.
      1. The U.S. Senate rejected the treaty and did not join the League of Nations.
      2. Soviet Russia, as a revolutionary state, also was not a member.
      3. While defeated powers resented the settlement, Italy, one of the winners of the war, walked out because its territorial demands were not met.
      4. Representatives of non-Western peoples gathered (including Vietnamese activist Ho Chi Minh) but received no hearing.

IV. Surge of radical revolution.
   A. Revolts.
1. Fired by the Soviet example, and sometimes encouraged by the Comintern, revolts broke out in Europe.
2. Red and White forces battled in Finland’s civil war in 1918, ending with Communist defeat.
3. In Berlin, in January 1919, the Communist Spartakus organization attempted an uprising. This failed, and the leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, were murdered by government forces. A second uprising in March 1919 also failed.
4. In November 1918, Kurt Eisner declared a Socialist Bavaria. After his assassination, his associates declared a Communist republic in April, which was suppressed in May 1919.
5. In Hungary, Bela Kun proclaimed a Soviet state in March 1919. It lasted until August 1919, when he was deposed.
6. Such revolts, though unsuccessful, stirred fears among Europe’s middle classes.

B. Influence.
1. Communist parties were founded worldwide, with the Comintern’s encouragement, whose policy it was to cooperate with Nationalist groups in fighting against imperialist powers.
2. The French Communist Party was founded in 1920. Among the founders was Ho Chi Minh.
3. In Shanghai, the Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1921, with Mao among the delegates.

V. Freikorps and White Terror.
A. Germany’s government felt forced to employ Freikorps (“free corps”) mercenaries to suppress challenges from radical Socialists and guard the borders.
1. The brutality of the Freikorps constituted a White Terror in Germany’s virtual civil war.
2. They were not loyal to the democratic government and later turned against it.
3. In 1919, some Freikorps journeyed to the Baltic region, continuing the war there.
B. Freikorps joined the failed Kapp putsch in 1920 and later organized murder squads to kill democratic politicians.
C. The Weimar Republic’s politics were marked by political violence and repeated uprisings.

VI. Fragile stability.
A. With growing economic recovery, Europe experienced stabilization from 1924–1929, but it rested on fragile foundations.
B. Soon after the initial democratic wave, democratic ideas were on the defensive or in retreat. The spread of the worldwide Great Depression from 1929 offered opportunities for extreme movements.

Essential Reading:
Richard Bessel, Germany after the First World War.

Supplementary Reading:
Peter Fritzsche, Germans into Nazis.
Marguerite Yourcenar, Coup de Grace.

Questions to Consider:
1. What effect did the First World War and its conclusion have on the thinking of non-Western societies?
2. Given that many Germans were not reconciled to defeat, would a milder Versailles Treaty have averted new conflict or brought it on sooner?
Lecture Eight

Communism

Scope: The expectations of the Russian Bolshevik revolutionaries were disappointed in the years after the war, once it became clear that a worldwide workers’ revolution was not imminent but seemingly would be delayed in coming. In the interim, the imperative for Lenin and his comrades now was to secure their power in the new Soviet Russia, while fighting a ferocious civil war against the White forces. Against the backdrop of the civil war, this lecture traces the outlines of Soviet power, the establishment of the formidable Cheka secret police organization and the Red Army, propaganda campaigns, and the repression of internal dissent. On Lenin’s death, a new leader emerged victorious in the power struggle for succession, Josef Stalin, who would put his stamp on the new system.

Outline

I. Civil war.
   A. Lenin’s expectations of imminent worldwide revolution were disappointed.
      1. Instead, from the summer of 1918, a complicated civil war broke out involving domestic opponents and outside forces.
      2. In this civil war of incredible ferocity and atrocities on all sides, 7 to 10 million died, five times as many as in the empire’s role in the world war. Some estimates for all Russian deaths by violence, hunger, and disease for 1918–1922 run to 20 million.
   B. Whites.
      1. Anti-Bolshevik forces of different political orientations were called Whites, as opposed to Communist Red forces.
      2. Whites included social revolutionaries across Russia, General Denikin’s southern army, Admiral Alexander Kolchak in Siberia, General Wrangel in the Caucasus, and General Yudenich in the Baltic region.
      3. Ultimately, White forces lacked coordination and mutual agreement about strategy or political aims.
   C. Allied intervention.
      1. A Czech legion of 40,000 former prisoners of war, seeking to return west, took over the Trans-Siberian Railroad and opposed the Bolsheviks.
      2. To protect military supplies and support the Whites, Allied forces landed on the empire’s edges: British, French, American, and Japanese.
      3. Another war flared up with the Poles, who moved into Ukraine in the spring of 1920. Soviet counterattacks by General Mikhail Tukhachevsky aiming at a “Red Bridge” to Europe were halted outside Warsaw (“miracle on the Vistula”), and peace was signed in 1921.
   D. By late 1920, civil war was largely ended, and the Allies withdrew. The Soviet regime had survived.
   E. Reasons for Red victory.
      1. The Bolsheviks were better organized and more disciplined than their scattered opponents.
      2. They increasingly centralized government, the beginnings of a total state.
      3. The economic policy of War Communism subjected the entire economy to relentless centralization and nationalization, or government control of factories, banks, and land, reflecting Lenin’s admiration for German War Socialism during World War I.
      4. The Red Army was created by decree on January 28, 1918. As war commissar from March 1918, Trotsky organized the “Workers and Peasants’ Red Army” from his armored train. Former imperial officers were drafted and served under supervision of political commissars.
      5. In areas of Bolshevik control, the Cheka secret police, in trademark long leather coats, used terror as an accepted weapon following the September 5, 1918, decree on Red Terror.

II. The Soviet Union.
   A. After the civil war, the Bolsheviks inherited a country in ruins, with depopulated cities, the economy reduced to barter, and crop failures leading to famine in 1921–1922.
1. Bolshevik leaders recognized that the failure of immediate international revolution and the civil war’s devastation made it necessary to organize for the long haul.
2. Some historians argue that civil war brutalized and militarized the Bolsheviks, shaping later policies.

B. By late 1922, the Bolsheviks had reconquered most territories of the empire (except for Poland, Finland, and the Baltic States). These became republics in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) in December 1922.

C. The challenge of construction.
   1. Controlling a sixth of the world’s land area, this was a potentially mighty state.
   2. More than mere reconstruction was needed; the project was to build a future society of Socialism.
   3. Lenin expected that international aid might be possible, joking that capitalists would be willing to sell the rope with which they would be hanged.

D. Outlines of Soviet power.
   1. The regime’s plans were propagated with innovative use of media: posters, cinema, and Agitprop trains with films sent out into the country. Avant-garde artists enthusiastically participated in these campaigns in an initial period of experimentation.
   2. Electrification was a key symbolic goal. Lenin announced, “Communism is electrification plus the power of the Soviets!”
   3. In February 1921, the GOSPLAN, or State Planning Commission, was established to set goals for a planned economy.
   4. The Cheka continued to operate, headed by Felix Dzerzhinsky, a former Polish aristocrat. Under a succession of later names (GPU, OGPU, NKVD, KGB), the secret police remained a fixture of Soviet life.
   5. Through the 1920s, an estimated 100,000 prisoners were held in concentration camps.
   6. A dualism of power was standard throughout the structures of the Soviet Union, with the state apparatus paralleled by party structures holding the true power of direction.

III. Kronstadt revolt.
   A. A major shock to the Soviet regime was the revolt of sailors at Kronstadt naval base, across from Petrograd, on March 1921.
      1. Earlier supporters of the Bolsheviks, the sailors grew to resent their harsh discipline and political repression.
      2. They demanded economic reforms, true soviets free of Bolshevik control, free speech, and an end to political dictatorship.
   B. Trotsky and General Tukhachevsky brutally suppressed the revolt.
      1. Kronstadt was a serious ideological blow to the regime, which claimed to speak for the masses but had crushed a challenge “from below.”
      2. The crisis helped move Bolshevik leaders toward a change in course in some policies, especially in economics.

IV. New Economic Policy (NEP).
   A. The New Economic Policy (NEP), announced in March 1921, reintroduced elements of a market economy.
      1. The previous policy of War Communism had proved a failure, and the civil war left the country ravaged.
      2. Agriculture, smaller shops, and factories were to be allowed to produce for the market, for profit, after meeting tax obligations to the state.
   B. The government retains control.
      1. Lenin saw NEP as a temporary tactical retreat or economic concession, not a permanent measure.
      2. The “commanding heights” were kept under state control: large industry, major factories, mines, transportation, and banks.
      3. Within the party, the rule against factions aimed to eliminate dissent in the party ranks.
      4. The government attacked organized religion and churches, especially the Russian Orthodox Church and Jewish religious institutions.
V. The rise of Stalin.
   A. The struggle to succeed Lenin.
      1. In May 1922, a stroke largely incapacitated Lenin, who died on January 21, 1924.
      2. Leading contenders for the top position were Leon Trotsky and Josef Stalin.
      3. Trotsky’s assets were personal charisma, intelligence, fiery oratory, and his active role in the revolution. He championed “permanent revolution” as a key concept for the future of the Soviet Union and world revolution.
      4. Stalin, by contrast, had a lackluster personality, but his bureaucratic and organizational activity meant that, as General Secretary of the Party since 1922, he had many supporters in key party positions. Stalin advanced the slogan “Socialism in One Country,” urging consolidation and strengthening of the state as a first priority.
   B. The outcome.
      1. Through astute maneuver, Stalin engineered Trotsky’s expulsion from the party in 1927. Exiled to Central Asia in 1928, he was then expelled from the country (and, later, assassinated in Mexico by a Stalinist agent).
      2. Stalin shifted his position repeatedly, allying himself in turn with Zinoviev and Kamenev’s left wing and with Bukharin’s right wing, then turning on them.
      3. By 1927, Stalin was in a dominant position in the Soviet government and party apparatus.
      4. In the following years, he would reshape the regime and society in his own image.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Richard Pipes, ed., *The Unknown Lenin*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What effect did the experience of the civil war have on the Bolshevik regime?
2. What factors were most important in Stalin’s rise to power?
Lecture Nine

Stalin

Scope: As the leader of the Soviet Union and successor to Lenin, Josef Stalin, the “Man of Steel,” made himself synonymous with the state. This lecture examines his obscure beginnings in Georgia, in the southern borderlands of the Russian Empire, and charts his rise to power in the Bolshevik movement, with a special focus on the growing cult of personality deliberately crafted around his person as the Vozhd, the “great leader” of the Soviet state. He set about “Stalinizing” the society, at an immense cost in human life. We examine the Great Purges of the 1930s, the artificial Terror Famine in Ukraine, the massive industrial construction campaigns launched by the regime, and the expansion of the state labor camp system, the Gulag, for those millions whom Stalin labeled “enemies of the people.”

Outline

I. From Dzhugashvili to Stalin.
   A. Youth.
      1. The future dictator was born as Iosef Dzhugashvili in Gori, Georgia, in 1879. Abandoned by his drunken shoemaker father, he was doted on by his mother.
      2. He was expelled from Orthodox seminary in Tbilisi in 1899, after devoting himself to studying Marxism. In spite of this, religious liturgical forms tinged his psychology.
   B. Role in the Bolsheviks.
      1. Taking the pseudonym Koba, after a Georgian folk hero, he joined the Bolsheviks in 1903, becoming a bank robber to “expropriate” money for the movement.
      2. As Stalin, “Man of Steel,” from 1912, he spent time in Siberian exile, gaining a reputation for crudeness, raw manners, and cruelty.
      3. A capable bureaucratic organizer as party general secretary, he was nicknamed “Comrade Card-Index.”

II. Cult of personality.
   A. Problems.
      1. As Stalin’s power grew, he and his followers deliberately cultivated a personality cult around him.
      2. Yet, given his attributes, Stalin was an unlikely idol. He was short and had a face scarred by smallpox, along with a squeaky voice with a strong Georgian accent.
      3. His involvement in the 1917 October Revolution was minor, nor was he known as an important speaker or thinker.
   B. Stalin as Lenin’s heir.
      1. Posthumous glorification of Lenin was a first step toward a leadership cult. Petrograd was renamed Leningrad.
      2. In 1930, a granite mausoleum was built for Lenin’s mummified body.
      3. Lenin’s late criticisms of Stalin were suppressed.
   C. Forms.
      1. Photographs were retouched and paintings made of fabricated scenes to show Stalin’s supposed centrality to the October Revolution and closeness to Lenin.
      2. Stalin was depicted in idealized terms in countless omnipresent portraits and statues.
      3. Long ovations after Stalin’s speeches became usual, because no one wanted to be seen as the first to stop.
      4. Like many dictators, Stalin had a fascination with film and watched films about himself.
   D. Effectiveness.
      1. Newer party members who owed their positions to Stalin were loyal. His removal of Old Bolsheviks opened up career paths.
      2. The remote dictator became an object of ritual adoration, receiving 7,000 letters monthly from ordinary citizens.
III. Stalinizing society.

A. The system Stalin established has been called totalitarian because of its ambitions of total control.
   1. After coming to power, Stalin turned on earlier allies and, by 1929, was supreme.
   2. A series of campaigns to transform the Soviet Union’s structure involved mobilization of the masses, construction of new machinery, and use of police terror.

B. Collectivization and the Terror Famine.
   1. To gain firm control of the food supply, beginning in 1928, Stalin called for collectivization of agriculture.
   2. In place of independent farms, agriculture was to be organized into large state-owned collective farms, where peasants worked like factory laborers.
   3. In November 1929, Stalin demanded forced collectivization. More prosperous peasants, labeled kulaks, were to be eliminated as a class, and hundreds of thousands were arrested and deported.
   4. Agricultural production plummeted because of peasant resistance.
   5. In March 1930, Stalin called a halt, but by year’s end, resumed the drive.
   6. Food became state property, and a 1932 law provided the death penalty for theft of food.
   7. Peasants were allowed to retain small private garden plots.
   8. In Ukraine, collectivization policies caused the Terror Famine of 1932–1933. Troops seized grain from areas where hunger already threatened and closed off territories where resistance arose.
   9. Estimates suggest that five to seven million people starved in Ukraine (famine also struck elsewhere). The Soviet government denied reports of the event. Later, Stalin is said to have admitted that 10 million died.
   10. With introduction of internal passports in 1932, movement was restricted.

C. The Five-Year Plan.
   1. The First Five-Year Plan was put into effect in October 1928. Emphasizing heavy industry, it aimed to move the country’s development forward at a radical pace, forcing progress. The agrarian country was to become an industrial powerhouse in one great leap.
   2. The plan’s emphasis on the power of will to overcome physical obstacles, as embodied by leader and party, diverged from classical Marxism.
   3. Industry expanded at a phenomenal rate, with new plants, mines, and industrial cities shooting up, such as Magnitogorsk. Specific targets, quotas, or norms were demanded for production increases.
   5. There were serious internal contradictions, however, in a planned economy and overproduction, hinting at the irrationality of this “scientific” project. Shortcomings were blamed on spies and sabotage.
   6. The First Five-Year Plan was completed in 1932, ahead of schedule.
   7. A Second Five-Year Plan (1933–1937) was also completed early.

IV. Purges: the Great Terror.

A. From behind his desk, Stalin oversaw elimination of suspected or even potential resistance in a massive campaign of terror.
   1. The secret police and camp system were established under Lenin. Stalin oversaw their massive expansion. In 1934, the secret police was renamed the NKVD.
   2. Historians estimate that for the entire Stalinist era (1929–1953), the number of those dead is in the millions.
   3. It is estimated that during the Great Purge of 1936–1938, some 600,000 were executed.

B. The beginning.
   1. The mysterious murder of Stalin’s potential rival, Sergei Kirov, in December 1934 was used to launch the purges.
   2. Massive arrests followed, including arrests of party officials, Old Bolsheviks, and ordinary citizens.

C. Moscow show trials.
   1. In three successive public trials, in 1936, 1937, and 1938, prominent Communists were accused of plotting against Stalin.
2. After improbable confessions, they were convicted and executed. Among them was Yagoda, former secret police chief.

D. Army purges.
1. In the summer of 1937, Stalin had tens of thousands of officers purged. Nine of ten generals were eliminated, including General Tukhachevsky.
2. The military staff was ravaged, leaving the Soviet Union ill-prepared for World War II.

E. The secret police structure.
1. Quotas of numbers of people to be arrested were sent out to police in separate regions. Family members were also arrested as “enemies of the people.” Denunciations were often fatal.
2. The NKVD maintained a social science research unit to study the population’s state of mind.

F. Causes and effects.
1. Debate continues on the phenomenon of the Great Terror. Explanations variously stress Stalin’s paranoia, eagerness of functionaries to rise through the ranks newly opened by purges, and the psychology of the accused, which inhibited resistance to the party.
2. Stalin used terror to effect massive social change within the party and the country as a whole.
3. The party’s structure was transformed. By the 1939 Party Congress, most delegates to the 1934 Congress had been purged.

V. The Gulag.

A. An extensive prison and labor camp system (GULAG—Main Camp Administration) was established, and prisoner labor became an important part of the planned economy.
1. Many hundreds of camps were located throughout the country, including Magadan, Vorkuta, Norilsk, Kolyma, Chelyabinsk, Karaganda, and many others.
2. Recent archival evidence suggests that by the end of the 1930s, there were 1.5 million prisoners in the Gulag and, by the late 1940s and early 1950s, 2 to 2.5 million prisoners.
3. The Gulag accounted for about 12 to 15 percent of the economy in the late 1930s.
4. The Gulag was part of a larger spectrum of forms of forced labor.

B. According to propaganda, camps were to rehabilitate prisoners through corrective labor, but in fact, mortality and mistreatment were endemic.
1. Significant numbers of inmates died each year.
2. The camp experience was recorded and analyzed by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Miron Dolot, *Execution by Hunger*.

Questions to Consider:
1. If Stalin’s own person and appearance presented serious challenges to a cult of personality, how did propaganda overcome them?
2. Did the purges serve any rational purpose or were they only Stalin’s paranoid reactions?
Lecture Ten
Soviet Civilization

Scope: The new society of the U.S.S.R. was self-consciously revolutionary and modern, heralding the Soviet construction of a “new man” and “new woman.” This lecture focuses on significant and surprising artifacts of that new civilization. In the arts, the government-ordered style of Socialist Realism was to render a utopian image of society not as it was at present, but rather what it was evolving toward. Stalin urged artists to be “engineers of human souls.” Social life was radically restructured, featuring the Young Pioneers youth movement, communal apartments, and mass nurseries. The advances of the new civilization were put on display in vivid monuments: the industrial powerhouse city of Magnitogorsk, the showpiece underground railway of Moscow, and the plans for a huge Palace of the Soviets, dwarfing American skyscrapers. Foreign visitors enthusiastically hailed what they saw as a vision of the “future that works,” while Zamyatin’s classic anti-utopian novel, We, satirized these plans from within.

Outline

I. “Engineers of human souls.”
   A. Stalin told writer Maxim Gorky that Soviet artists should become “engineers of human souls.”
      1. The Soviet system was to produce a “new man” and “new woman” in a society organized on radically new grounds.
      2. The proletariat movement urged new forms of art, produced collectively by workers from proletarian experience and totally distinct from earlier bourgeois art.
   B. Socialist Realism.
      1. In 1932, the doctrine of Socialist Realism became official orthodoxy in art.
      2. According to this formula, art should depict reality as it was in the process of becoming under Socialism.
      3. Art had political purposes in motivating masses. It had to be simple, easily accessible, and full of praise for party, state, and Stalin. Art turned away from experimental forms.
      4. The result was art of astonishing banality, falsifying the present in the name of a utopia soon to arrive.
      5. Penalties for forbidden art or speech were severe. The poet Osip Mandelstam, later sent to prison (where he died) for verse criticizing Stalin, quipped that only in the Soviet Union was poetry a matter of life and death.

II. Social organization.
   A. In a trend of gigantism, planning emphasized enormous scale and mass participation.
      1. As women were urged to enter factories and professions, the family was to be reconstituted along new collective lines. Mass nurseries were established, as well as orphanages for the many orphans of the civil war (a source of party cadres).
      2. Soviet youth were enrolled in the Young Pioneers organization. Public mass exercises were propaganda events, as well as instilling a sense of collectivity.
   B. Discipline.
      1. Party cells in workplaces or collective farms steered and supervised coworkers, while informers infiltrated throughout society to keep individual life under surveillance.
      2. Propaganda campaigns celebrated models of good Communist behavior, especially the boy martyr Pavlik Morozov. This 14-year-old Young Pioneer from Gerasimovka in the Urals denounced his own father for hoarding and was stabbed to death by his family. Statues were erected to him, urging youth to put loyalty to the state first.
   C. Official atheism.
      1. The Soviet Union enforced militant atheism, destroying churches, monasteries, and synagogues.
      2. Tens of thousands of clergy members were arrested and executed in the 1930s.
   D. Official history.
      1. The party held power over the past, as well as present and future. Those purged were also obliterated from the historical record, becoming “non-persons,” most prominently in Trotsky’s case.
2. This purging was obligatory and served as a warning to others as a demonstration of the state’s power, making resistance seem truly meaningless.

III. Monuments of the regime.
   A. The regime’s claim to monumentality and modernity was demonstrated by enormous projects.
   B. Magnitogorsk.
      1. The metallurgical factory city of Magnitogorsk, “Magnetic Mountain,” the world’s largest plant, was deliberately intended to surpass its American model, Gary, Indiana.
      2. From 1929, international invitations went out to engineers to participate in this massive construction.
      3. The city was built by both ideological enthusiasts and prisoners.
      4. It soon became a “monument to inefficiency” (Graham).
   C. The Palace of the Soviets.
      1. Stalin planned a massive ceremonial building in Moscow, rich in symbolic significance.
      2. It was to be taller than New York’s Empire State Building, and the statue of Lenin topping it was to dwarf the Statue of Liberty.
      3. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior was dynamited to make room.
      4. However, only the foundation was built, because the ground was too unstable for the projected building. It became a swimming pool and today is the site of a rebuilt cathedral.
   D. The Moscow Metro underground railway, opened in 1935, was a major showpiece, built at record speed, at a cost of more than 1,000 dead or wounded, under the direction of Nikita Khrushchev.
   E. The Great Dnieper Dam was a gigantic hydroelectric project, the world’s largest, involving foreign companies and engineers and forced labor. Ten thousand farmers were evicted to make way for the area to be flooded.
   F. Baltic-White Sea Canal.
      1. The canal was built in 1931–1933, by prisoners working with few tools, and was celebrated in propaganda.
      2. Tens of thousands of prisoners died in its construction, yet it turned out to be largely useless; it was too shallow and built using poor materials and design in order to meet the plan.
   G. Magadan.
      1. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn observed that the Gulag was a microcosm of society outside. The Gulag system was a crucial part of the Soviet regime.
      2. The existence of camps was not secret. They had huge staffs of warders, guards, and officials.
      3. Magadan, in the Far East, was a Gulag capital, where more than a million prisoners were sent to mine gold and other minerals across a territory of three million square miles, the size of Europe, managed by the Far Northern Construction Trust, Dal’stroi.

IV. Artifacts of everyday life.
   A. “Communal apartments,” komunalkas, crowded many families together into single apartments with shared kitchens, toilet, and bath and almost no privacy.
      1. Under the slogan “Palaces for the Workers,” expropriated residences were subdivided, with more than 50 people living in one apartment.
      2. In Leningrad in the 1930s, about 68 percent of the population lived in komunalkas.
   B. The Punkt radio was a loudspeaker set up in dwellings, farms, factories, and public places. It carried a single station and could not be switched off, nor could the station be altered.

V. Outside views.
   A. During and after the revolution, sympathetic visitors were caught up in the excitement of world-historical events.
      1. American journalist John Reed, in Ten Days That Shook the World, offered a romantic view of the revolution.
      2. In 1919, American journalist Lincoln Steffens said of the Soviet Union, “I have seen the future, and it works!”
   B. International visitors were welcomed with carefully stage-managed tours.
C. Socialist Realist depictions of Stalin’s Soviet Union seemed especially attractive to many Westerners at a time of economic crisis in the Great Depression.

1. After a visit in 1932, British writer George Bernard Shaw called it a “land of hope.” British reformers Sidney and Beatrice Webb also visited and wrote a book on Soviet Communism as “a new civilization.”

2. In an act of psychological projection, sympathizers celebrated what they saw as positive changes while discounting disturbing impressions as relics of the past, shortly to be overcome, or necessary sacrifices in achieving utopia.

VI. Zamyatin’s world.

A. A very different inside perspective was held by engineer Yevgeny Zamyatin (1884–1937), who wrote one of the most famous novels of utopia as nightmare, *We*.

B. Written in 1920, before Stalinism (and appearing in Russia only in 1988), the novel anticipated later developments.

C. Set in the 26th century, the novel imagines the society of OneState. All life is ruled by daily schedules, all citizens wear uniforms and are known by numbers, and all individuality is submerged in the collective.

1. Society is controlled by a leader-figure, the Benefactor, and a caste of Guardians, the secret police.

2. A revolt of individualists is suppressed. In a triumph of abstract reason, vestiges of imagination will be removed from citizens’ brains through a “Great Operation.”

3. The novel, ending in failure and hopelessness, suggests darkly that many humans find freedom unbearable and embrace tyranny if it eliminates uncertainty, finding happiness in chains.

D. Zamyatin was allowed to leave the Soviet Union in 1931 and died in exile. His book is the archetype of *dystopia*, or “anti-utopian” fiction.

Essential Reading:
Loren Graham, *Ghost of the Executed Engineer: Technology and the Fall of the Soviet Union*.

Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We*.

Supplementary Reading:


Questions to Consider:

1. Which features of Soviet society seemed most strongly to validate its claim to be a “new civilization”?

2. Was technology used in a rational or irrational way in Stalinist projects?
Fascism

Scope: Another new ideology growing out of the dislocations and traumas of the First World War was Fascism, first appearing in postwar Italy, but soon spreading its influence. Rejecting parliamentary democracy and liberalism, as well as Socialism and Communism, the Italian former Socialist Benito Mussolini organized paramilitary squads of “Blackshirt” thugs to wage political war in the streets, announcing their aim of a rejuvenated national community. Coming to power in 1922 through the falsely mythologized March on Rome, the Fascists brutalized their opponents, prepared to mobilize society in a “total state,” and chanted slogans of “Believe, Obey, and Fight.” The Fascist style of Il Duce, Mussolini, was soon imitated by would-be dictators worldwide, a symptom of the rapidly eroding fortunes of democratic ideas.

Outline

I. Defining the phenomenon.
   A. Fascism was a reaction to the destabilizing influence of World War I.
   B. Though now the term is used broadly, to designate authoritarian regimes or as a generalized term of abuse, its meaning grew out of a specific time and place, postwar Italy.
      1. Fascist ideas would spread and be imitated in many other countries but would rarely become dominant as in Italy. The Nazis would draw inspiration from Italian Fascism.
      2. Historians still debate today whether Nazi Germany must be understood as a sub-variety of Fascism or whether Nazism represented a different phenomenon and was distinctively German.
      3. Italian Fascism originally lacked the explicit racism and anti-Semitism of the Nazis and adopted these later, only under Hitler’s influence.
   C. Though Fascist ideology was often inchoate, in general, it opposed Socialism and Communism; opposed parliamentary government, democracy, and liberal ideas; and championed order, the power of the state over individuals, and an ethos of brutal heroism, to be realized through revolution and violence.

II. Benito Mussolini: origins.
   A. Mussolini was born in 1883 in a poor village in the Romagna region. His blacksmith father, a Socialist, named him after a famous Mexican revolutionary, Benito Juarez.
   B. Like Stalin, Mussolini was expelled from school (for stabbing a classmate) but returned to finish his education. He lived a bohemian life and worked in Switzerland, where he claimed to have met Lenin.
   C. Returning to Italy, he worked as a schoolteacher and entered Socialist politics, editing journals, including the Socialist newspaper Avanti and a journal called “Utopia.” He had a characteristic belief that violence was what “turned the wheels of history.”
   D. When war broke out in 1914, after some initial hesitation, Mussolini broke with his Socialist comrades, who condemned the war, and argued that Italy should intervene. Like Lenin, he was convinced that the war was an opportunity.
   E. Stripped of his editorship and expelled from the Socialist Party, Mussolini used French money to advocate war and fought in the war.

III. World War I.
   A. After entry into the war in 1915, called for by Mussolini and the Futurists, the conflict went badly for Italy, which suffered a half million dead.
   B. Storm troopers, called Arditi, “bold ones,” were hailed as national heroes.
   C. Victory was a disappointment.
      1. At Versailles, Italy was denied the territorial gains it had been promised by the Allies.
      2. Italians denounced the “mutilated peace.”
   D. The aftermath.
      1. Postwar turmoil included workers’ strikes, rural unrest, unstable governments, and the organization of veteran groups resembling the Freikorps in Germany.
2. In 1919, in protest at the outcome of the war, the Romantic poet Gabriele D’Annunzio led a raid that captured the contested port of Trieste.

IV. The myth of the March on Rome.
A. Mussolini sought to use this turmoil for a new political movement, fusing Nationalism with revolutionary ideas.
   1. His movement presented itself as a safeguard against Communist revolution.
   2. Nonetheless, Mussolini expressed his admiration for Lenin as an artist using human beings as his material.
B. Blackshirt squads.
   1. The movement, begun in March 1919 in Milan, took its name from the Fasci di Combattimento (“Combat Squads”) that Mussolini gathered. In Italian, fascio means a “league” and is also the name of an ancient Roman symbol of the unity of the state, a bundle of sticks around an axe.
   2. These violent squads, often made up of former Arditi veterans, adopted the storm troopers’ anthem (“Giovinezza”), black shirts as uniforms, and the Roman salute. Gang leaders were called Ras, after Ethiopian chieftains.
   3. In the streets, the squads brutalized and murdered political opponents and broke up strikes, claiming that they were restoring order.
C. The seizure of power.
   1. Claiming that a Communist takeover was in the offing, in October 1922, Fascist leaders organized their squads to march on Rome, converging on the capital and threatening to take power by force.
   2. Behind the scenes, Mussolini was invited by the king to form a government.
   3. The political theater of the march was turned into a myth of direct action.
D. In power.
   1. Consolidating his power by stages, by 1929, Mussolini was in the position of a strong dictator.
   2. Once prime minister, he made the Blackshirts a government body.
   3. The 1924 Fascist murder of the Socialist Giacomo Matteotti shook the regime, but Mussolini weathered the crisis.
   4. In 1926, the OVRA secret police was formed. Elections were suspended and government by decree followed.
   5. In 1929, Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaties with the Vatican.
   6. Though Mussolini described his regime as “totalitarian,” in fact, its control was far from total.

V. Fascist ideology and style.
A. Action.
   1. Mussolini summed up Fascism with the word action. Vigorous action and violence were at the heart of the ideology.
   2. The Italian people were to be remade through war and the conquest of a new empire.
   3. The slogan of the movement was “Believe, obey, fight.”
B. State authority and Il Duce.
   1. The state stood above the individual, expressing a higher unity.
   2. The leader, Mussolini, as “Il Duce,” was to dominate the masses.
   3. Fascists claimed to have inaugurated a new world era, and the 1922 March on Rome was designated the “year zero” of a new Fascist calendar.
   5. At the same time, Fascists promised progress, technological change, and the modernization of Italy, claiming that they would “make the trains run on time.”
   6. Mussolini ordered the building of autostrada highways, the draining of the Pontine Marshes, and the “Battle for Grain” to make Italy self-sufficient in food.
   7. Even free time was regimented, in the Dopolavoro organization.
C. Youth.
   1. Fascists tried to project an image of youth, breaking with the old and traditional to produce a new man.
2. Italian youth were inducted into such organizations as the Balilla and Figli della Lupa (“Sons of the Wolf”).
3. Mass exercises and sports served both propaganda purposes and as preparation for war.

D. Corporatism.
1. Fascists claimed to have an economic philosophy that transcended class conflict and exploitation, called corporatism.
2. Corporate bodies, representing workers, owners, and professionals inducted into the government, were supposed to form a corporate state of economic harmony.

VI. The illiberal wave.

A. Rise of dictatorships.
1. Worldwide, but especially in Central and Eastern Europe and South America, dictatorships arose imitating Mussolini’s image of a “strong man” and the Fascist style.
2. In spite of their borrowings, however, most of these regimes remained more authoritarian and traditionally conservative in nature than purely Fascist.
3. Dictatorships included Hungary, Austria, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, Portugal, Spain, Rumania, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil.
4. In many countries, Fascist movements remained on the fringes. The French Cross of Fire and the British Union of British Fascists, led by Sir Oswald Mosley, gained notoriety but little influence.

B. Satire captured the ludicrous pretensions of Fascist-style movements, as in the classic comic novels of British writer P. G. Wodehouse, in which a recurring character is a buffoonish would-be dictator of England, Roderick Spode, with followers known as “Black Shorts.”

C. The appeal of the model of Fascist government would grow stronger with the Great Depression of 1929. By 1939, three-fifths of European countries were run by authoritarian governments.

D. The Fascists also inspired the Nazis, who would build a far stronger and more violent regime.

Essential Reading:
Denis Mack Smith, Mussolini.

Supplementary Reading:
Roger Griffin, The Nature of Fascism.
Stanley Payne, A History of Fascism.

Questions to Consider:
1. Who was drawn to Fascism and why?
2. Why did Fascism come to power in Italy while similar movements elsewhere in Europe mostly remained out of power?
Lecture Twelve
The 1930s—The “Low Dishonest Decade”

Scope: The 1930s were a dark time, marked by deepening worldwide economic crisis, the rejection of liberal ideas, and a growing anticipation of a global clash of ideologies. This lecture follows the tragic trajectory of what poet W. H. Auden called the “low dishonest decade.” It shows the ominous revival of imperialist ideas in “geopolitical” thought, which anticipated a world divided between contending superpowers. The strength of this neo-imperialism could also be seen in practice, as Japanese forces invading China waged a ferocious conflict. Their depredations, most starkly seen in the 1937 Rape of Nanking, were a prelude to the approaching Second World War. On the other side of the globe, the concurrent Spanish Civil War was its dress rehearsal.

Outline

I. Crisis.
   A. Crisis in culture.
      1. The British poet W. H. Auden wrote about the 1930s, in a poem marking the start of World War II, “September 1, 1939,” that he was “Uncertain and afraid / As the clever hopes expire / Of a low dishonest decade.”
      2. The Irish poet William Butler Yeats, likewise, wrote that it was a time when “the best lack all conviction, and the worst are full of passionate intensity.”
      3. Liberal ideas had been battered by the First World War and postwar disappointment with democratic politics, especially in Europe.
   B. Crisis in society.
      1. The Great Depression reached worldwide after 1929. In the United States, it was at its height in 1932, with a quarter of the workforce unemployed and industrial production sagging by 60 percent.
      2. Germany had likewise been badly hit, with six million unemployed in 1932. Both the Nazis and German Communists saw support grow.
   C. Renewed ideas of imperialism.
      1. Some Europeans looked back to the recent imperialist past, hoping to reinvigorate their own cultures and politics by expanding empire. Paradoxically, these demands were strongest in nations whose colonies were few or (in the case of Germany) had been lost.
      2. The Fascists in Italy clamored for an imperial mission in Africa.
      3. In Germany, geopolitics became a popular pseudo-science, raising demands for national autarchy (“total economic self-sufficiency”), the division of the world into blocs of superpowers, and concern over Lebensraum (“living space”).
      4. In fact, renewed imperialism did not prove durable, as Nationalist movements spread in non-Western areas under colonial control. Their growth was met with brutal repression and imperialist “punitive expeditions,” which failed to quell demands for independence, such as those championed by Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948).
      5. An early example was the notorious Amritsar Massacre in India in 1919, which killed hundreds.
   D. Eugenics.
      1. Eugenics (“the good birth”) claimed to solve social problems by regarding them as basically biological or medical issues. It was argued that the genetic stock of a society needed to be improved by vigorous state intervention.
      2. Eugenics achieved remarkable popularity worldwide and across the political spectrum.
      3. It included laws for the sterilization of the mentally ill in Sweden and the United States.
      4. In Germany, soon after coming to power, the Nazis would pass eugenics laws and enact ambitious programs.
   E. Aldous Huxley’s future vision.
1. In 1932, the British journalist Aldous Huxley (1894–1963) described in *Brave New World* a dystopian future society based on trends he saw in the 1930s: The disorder and uncertainty of his time might lead to a demand for a society of too much order.

2. Set around the 27th century, the novel showed a society based on the ideas of its founder, Henry Ford, in which stability was the central value.

3. Chemistry and “emotional engineering” solved the problem of happiness, as soma pills replaced religion. Cloning and eugenic manipulation produced unequal castes in society (from dominant Alphas to Epsilon drudges), eliminating human nature.

II. Ethiopia.

A. Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia (then called Abyssinia) in 1935 was an important milestone of the decade, showing the weakness of collective security and international opinion.

B. Mussolini aimed to carve out an African empire on the model of the ancient Romans, as well as to redeem the defeat of the Italians in Ethiopia in 1896.
   1. The Italian forces used airplanes and poison gas against the Ethiopians.
   2. In 1936, the country was annexed and the Italian king was declared Emperor of Ethiopia.

C. International reaction.
   1. The League of Nations condemned the act, but mustered only weak sanctions against Italy, not including an oil embargo.
   2. Its helpless response to aggression discredited the League of Nations.
   3. The German dictator Hitler praised Mussolini’s action, and relations between Italy and Germany warmed, leading to the formation of a Rome-Berlin Axis in October 1936.

III. Japan: the Rising Sun.

A. Modernization.
   1. Japan had embraced modernization after the 1868 Meiji Restoration, adapting Western technology.
   2. It launched imperialist expansion by going to war with China in 1894 and with Russia in 1904. After both wars ended in victory, Japan annexed Korea in 1910, carving out an Asian empire.
   3. During World War I, Japan encroached further on China to make it a Japanese protectorate.

B. Ideology.
   1. Japanese imperialism masked domination of non-Japanese peoples with the slogan “Asia for the Asians.”
   2. Propaganda spread the doctrine of Japanese racial superiority and unity under a divine emperor.

C. Carving up China.
   1. In the 1931 Manchurian crisis, the Japanese military staged the Mukden incident, blowing up a railway. Claiming a Chinese terrorist attack, they took over the province and established the puppet state of Manchukuo.
   2. After the League of Nations criticized the occupation, Japan left the league in 1933.
   3. Japanese attacks on China continued. In 1937, fighting broke out between Chinese and Japanese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing, leading to eight years of war and Japanese control of northern China and the coasts.
   4. Chinese Nationalists and Communists resisted the Japanese but also fought each other.
   5. In 1937, Japanese forces took the city of Nanking, capital of the Nationalist government. In what contemporaries called the “Rape of Nanking,” massacres and brutalization of civilians taking many thousands of lives continued for weeks.
   6. In the war, Unit 731 of the Japanese army used biological weapons against Chinese civilians.

IV. Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939.

A. In July 1936, General Francisco Franco (1892–1975) led a military revolt against the Spanish Republic, supported by the Fascist Phalange. The Popular Front of Democrats, Socialists, Anarchists, and Communists supported the republic.

B. Civil war soon developed an international dimension.
   1. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany intervened with supplies and troops in favor of Franco.
2. Pursuing the Popular Front strategy of the Comintern, the Soviet Union supplied the Republican forces and international brigades of volunteers.
3. At the same time, Communist forces purged their own Anarchist allies in the Popular Front, undermining the Republican war effort.

C. The war took some 500,000 lives. It was marked by atrocities, including the April 1937 terror-bombing attack on the town of Guernica from the air by the German Condor Legion.

D. In *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), British writer and Republican volunteer George Orwell (1903–1950) bitterly recounted how Communists had betrayed their allies in Spain.

E. Franco won by 1939 and established harsh authoritarian rule. In its brutality and clash of ideological camps, the civil war appeared to be a “dress rehearsal” for the next world war.

V. Rise of Nazism.

A. In 1930, the Nazi Party (to be discussed in full in the next lecture) made a breakthrough in German elections.

B. Promising to restore order, create unity, and abolish democracy, the Nazis came to power in 1933.

C. Along with the international crises of the 1930s, the rise of Hitler and his Nazi Party led to the Second World War.

**Essential Reading:**

Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s*.

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking*.

George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*.


**Questions to Consider:**

1. What were the international stakes in the Spanish Civil War?
2. Why was the League of Nations unable to intervene effectively in international crises?
Timeline

1516.................................. Thomas More’s *Utopia* published.
1776.................................. American Revolution.
1789 .................................. French Revolution.
1793–1794 ........................... Reign of Terror in France.
1848 ................................. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels publish *The Communist Manifesto*.
1859 ................................. Charles Darwin publishes *On the Origin of Species*.
1875 ................................. Founding of German Social Democratic Party.
1880 ................................. Beginning of European “High Imperialism.”
1896 ................................. Use of concentration camps by Spain in Cuba.
1898 ................................. Battle of Omdurman in Sudan.
1899–1902 ........................... Boer War in South Africa.
1903 ................................. Lenin leads Bolshevik faction.
1904 ................................. German campaign against the Herero in Southwest Africa.
1908 ................................. Young Turks come to power in Ottoman Empire.
1910 ................................. Japan annexes Korea.
1914–1918 ........................... World War I.
1915 ................................. Armenian massacres in Ottoman Empire.
1916 ................................. Battle of Verdun.
1916 ................................. German army’s “Jewish Census.”
1917 ................................. United States enters war against Central Powers.
1917 ................................. February Revolution in Russia, followed by Bolshevik seizure of power in October Revolution.
1917 ................................. Cheka secret police formed in Russia.
1918 ................................. Germany forces Russia to sign Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.
1918 ................................. Bolsheviks shoot tsar and his family. Red Terror declared.
1918–1921 ........................... Russian Civil War.
1919 ................................. Fascist movement founded in Italy.
1919 ................................. Versailles Treaty written; Germany signs under protest.
1919 ................................. Radical Socialist revolt in Germany suppressed.
1919 ................................. Communist Bavaria and Soviet Hungary suppressed.
1920 ................................. Yevgeny Zamyatin writes dystopian novel *We*.
1921 ................................. Kronstadt revolt crushed by Bolsheviks.
1921 ................................. Lenin introduces NEP.
1921 ................................. Hitler becomes leader of the Nazis.
1922 ................................. Mussolini becomes prime minister of Italy after March on Rome.
1922.................................Founding of Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.).
1923.................................Treaty of Lausanne agrees on “population transfer” between Greece and Turkey.
1923.................................Hitler’s Beer Hall *putsch* fails.
1923.................................Italian journalist coins term *totalitarian* to denounce Fascists.
1924.........................Lenin dies.
1927.................................Stalin dominates government in Soviet Union.
1928.................................Soviet First Five-Year Plan launched.
1929.................................Stalin orders collectivization.
1929.................................Great Depression worldwide.
1930.................................Breakthrough election for Nazis in Germany.
1932.................................Socialist Realism made official style in Soviet Union.
1932.................................Aldous Huxley publishes *Brave New World*.
1932–1933......................Terror Famine in Ukraine and elsewhere in Soviet Union.
1933.................................On January 30, Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany.
1933.................................Concentration camps established.
1934.................................Reichstag fire and Enabling Act in Germany. SA purged in Night of Long Knives.
1935.................................Mussolini invades Ethiopia.
1935.................................Nuremberg Laws strip German Jews of rights.
1936.................................Rome-Berlin Axis formed.
1936–1939......................Spanish Civil War.
1937.................................Rape of Nanking by Japanese troops.
1937.................................Terror bombing of Guernica in Spain.
1938.................................Munich Conference.
1938.................................Kristallnacht in Germany.
1939.................................Nazi-Soviet Pact.
1939–1945......................Hitler invades Poland, beginning World War II.
1939–1945......................World War II.
1940.................................Stalin annexes Baltic Republics.
1941.................................Hitler invades Soviet ally in Operation Barbarossa.
1941.................................SS Einsatzgruppen begin mass murder of Eastern European Jews.
1941.................................Japan attacks Pearl Harbor; America enters the war.
1942.................................Wannsee Conference ratifies “final solution” plans.
1942.................................Nazi death camps operating.
1944–1950......................Stalin’s deportations of “punished peoples.”
1945.................................. Hitler commits suicide; Germany surrenders.
1945.................................. United States drops atomic bombs on Japan; Japan surrenders.
1945.................................. At Potsdam Conference, Allies agree to “transfer” of ethnic Germans.
1945.................................. United Nations founded.
1945–1947........................ Nuremberg war crimes trials.
1945–1947........................ Cold War tensions rising into open.
1948 .................................. United Nations proscribes the international crime of genocide.
1948 .................................. George Orwell writes his dystopian classic *1984*.
1949 .................................. Communists victorious in China, declare People’s Republic.
1953 .................................. Stalin dies.
1956 .................................. Nikita Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech” denounces Stalin.
1958–1961 ......................... Mao’s “Great Leap Forward.”
1960 .................................. Famine in China.
1961 .................................. East Germans build Berlin Wall.
1962 .................................. Cuban missile crisis.
1975 .................................. Khmer Rouge take power in Cambodia.
1976 .................................. Mao dies.
1979 .................................. Iranian Islamic Revolution.
1979 .................................. Saddam Hussein takes control in Iraq.
1979 .................................. Khmer Rouge overthrown by Vietnamese invasion.
1982 .................................. Polish union Solidarity banned.
1985 .................................. Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev becomes leader of Soviet Union.
1986 .................................. Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Soviet Union.
1988 .................................. Saddam Hussein’s campaign against Kurds uses chemical weapons; Halabja gassed.
1989 .................................. Fall of Berlin Wall, collapse of Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe.
1989 .................................. Chinese government crushes democracy protests in Beijing.
1989 .................................. Osama bin Laden becomes head of a group that will become al Qaeda.
1990 .................................. Iraq invades Kuwait.
1991 .................................. Gulf War expels Saddam Hussein from Kuwait.
1994 .................................. Rwandan genocide.
1995 .................................. Aum Shinri Kyo cult stages poison attack on Tokyo subway.
1996 Bin Laden declaration of *jihad* against West.

1999 Kosovo War.

2001 September 11th attacks by al Qaeda on American targets.

2002 International Criminal Court established.

2003 United States confronts Iraq over disarmament.
Glossary

Al Qaeda: Islamist terrorist group, “the base,” with networks across the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Europe, and the United States. Led by Osama bin Laden, the group was responsible for attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001.

Aum Shin Rikyu: Originally a Japanese cult, led by Shoko Asahara, combining Buddhist inspiration with apocalyptic predictions. In 1995, cult members tried to hurry along the final crisis by releasing poison gas in the Tokyo subway system.

Autarchy: Self-sufficiency and economic independence of a state from the outside world, theorized by geopolitical thinkers of the 1920s and 1930s and aimed at by many ideological regimes.

Ba’athism: An ideology originating in the 1940s that fused pan-Arab Nationalism with Socialism. This secular ideology came to power under separate leaders in Syria in 1963 and in Iraq in 1968.

Blitzkrieg: Nazi tactic for “lightning war” to avoid the trench stalemate of World War I, using massed tanks and planes to smash and encircle enemy forces. It was used to stunning effect in 1939–1940 in Poland, Scandinavia, and France, but failed against the Soviet Union in 1941.

Bolsheviks: The “majority” radical faction of Russian Democrats that split off from the mainstream in 1903 under Lenin, who remade them into a disciplined organization of professional revolutionaries and led their seizure of power in Russia in 1917.

Cheka: Acronym for Cherezvechainaya Kommisiya, the “All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for the Suppression of Counter-Revolution and Sabotage,” formed by the Bolsheviks in 1917 as their secret police and executors of Red Terror, at first under Felix Dzerzhinsky. Later successively called the OGPU, NKVD, and KGB.

Civil society: The idea popularized by Vaclav Havel and other Eastern European dissidents of a buffer zone or safety zone between the individual and the state, made up of private organizations, churches, the family, and other relationships that do not run through the state center (precisely what had been eliminated in total regimes). It was hailed as a route to recovery from totalitarianism.

Collectivization: The elimination of private property (the term usually refers to land) and productive resources, centralized in the hands of the state under Communist and Socialist systems in the form of communes or collective farms. Stalin’s collectivization in the 1930s led to famine, as did similar campaigns by Mao, the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and others.

Comintern: The Third or Communist International, founded in 1919 by the Bolsheviks to steer Communist movements worldwide and encourage global revolution. It spurned cooperation with moderate Social Democrats. Stalin ended it in 1943 in the interest of cooperation with the Western democracies to defeat Hitler.

Communism: The most advanced stage of Socialism in Marxist theories, eliminating private property in favor of collective ownership of the means of production.

Concentration camps: A perennial feature of the century, these prison centers were first established in the 1896 Spanish suppression of revolt in Cuba and by the British in the 1899–1902 Boer War. They took far more radical and murderous form in the Nazi death camps and the Soviet Gulag.

Cultural Revolution: Formally titled the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, this campaign ordered by Mao raged in China from 1966–1976 as Red Guard gangs terrorized society to purge it of alleged counter-revolutionary tendencies, wrecked the educational system, and “reeducated” victims.

Dystopia: A “negative utopia” or utopia as nightmare. In literature, this includes the worlds imagined by Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, and George Orwell.

Einsatzgruppen: Specially trained SS killing squads sent into Poland in 1939 and the Soviet Union in 1941 to eliminate targeted groups behind the front. In 1941, they murdered a million Jews in Eastern Europe.

Ethnic cleansing: A term that gained currency in the 1990s in the Balkan Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo to describe an age-old practice of intimidation, terror, and violence to drive out different ethnic groups. Ethnic cleansing can easily tip over into genocide.
**Eugenics:** The doctrine of encouraging “good births,” popular throughout the world in the first half of the 20th century under the impact of Social Darwinism and evolutionary theory. In the hands of the Nazis, who largely discredited the school of thought, it would be used to justify euthanasia.

**Euthanasia:** Related to eugenics, this term means “the good death” or “mercy killing” to eliminate those who are judged unfit. The Nazi euthanasia programs from 1939 killed some 100,000 in medicalized mass murder for the aim of a racial utopia.

**Fascism:** The Italian Fascist movement (taking its name from the Roman symbol of bundled sticks) was founded in 1919 and came to power under Mussolini in 1922. The movement espoused state power, anti-liberal ideas, discipline, the cult of the leader, technology, and war. Many other similar movements are also sometimes labeled Fascist, less precisely.

**Final solution:** The bureaucratic euphemism used by the Nazis to refer to their planned extermination of European Jews, as laid out in the 1942 Wannsee Conference.

**Freikorps:** German mercenary and paramilitary movements arising in 1918 and 1919 in the aftermath of defeat in World War I. The famously brutal and murderous units fought against revolutionaries in German cities and against Poles and Baltic peoples in Eastern Europe.

**Führer:** Hitler’s title as “leader” in the Nazi movement from 1925 and of Germany from 1934. The title expressed the Nazis’ mystical cult of the leader.

**G.D.R.:** The German Democratic Republic, established in 1949 in the Soviet zone of East Germany. The regime was based on repressive rule by the Stasi secret police and the population was confined by the Berlin Wall built in 1962. The state collapsed in 1989.

**Genocide:** A term invented by Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin for the phenomenon of the extermination of a group on ethnic or religious grounds, in whole or in part. The 1948 Genocide Convention adopted by the UN made it an international crime, but debates continue about the definition and application of the term.

**Gestapo:** The Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police) was the Nazi secret police established in 1933, an integral part of the machinery of terror.

**Glasnost':** The policy of “openness” announced by Gorbachev in 1985 to allow constructive criticism to reform the Soviet Union, along with perestroika. The process quickly escaped Gorbachev’s control.

**Gleichschaltung:** The “coordination” or Nazification process by which the Nazis used their first years in power to bring German society and the state into line and under their control. Afterward, organized resistance became much more difficult.

**Great Leap Forward:** From 1958–1961, Mao ordered a battle for collectivization and industrialization to overtake all other societies. The campaign was riddled with failures and produced famine in which millions died.

**Great Terror:** Also called the Great Purge of 1936–1938, in which Stalin purged the party and society in the Soviet Union. It included staged show trials, mass denunciations, and the expansion of the Gulag camp system.

**Greater Serbia:** The ideology used by Slobodan Milosevic from 1987 to replace Communist ideology as Yugoslavia fractured and used to justify ethnic cleansing. All Serbs were to be united into an ethnically pure state in the Balkans.

**Gulag:** The acronym for the “Main Administration of Corrective Labor Camps,” a vast network of camps and prisons throughout the Soviet Union, mainly in Siberia. Millions of prisoners provided slave labor during the Stalinist period, working in deadly conditions.

**Hutu:** The majority ethnic group in Rwanda, traditionally farmers subservient to the Tutsi group. “Hutu power” was the slogan of killers in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

**Interahamwe:** “Those who work together,” the Hutu militia organized before the Rwandan genocide under the slogan “Hutu power.”
International Criminal Court (I.C.C.): Founded in 2002, the court claims universal jurisdiction to try war crimes and crimes against humanity. Some nations, including the United States, express worries about the implications for national sovereignty and have not joined.

Islamism: As distinct from traditional Islamic belief, Islamism is a political ideology with religious forms. Key thinkers, such as Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), altered traditional religious precepts, calling for a religious state. The Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 sought to enact these ideas.

Juche: The North Korean ideology of autarky.

Khmer Rouge: The Cambodian Communist movement led by Pol Pot that ruled Cambodia from 1975–1979, organizing genocide against its own people.

Kommunalka: The cramped “communal apartments” of the Soviet Union, a distinctive element of Soviet civilization.

Kronstadt: An uprising of sailors at the Kronstadt garrison in 1921, calling for an end to Bolshevik dictatorship, was brutally suppressed by Bolshevik forces.

Kulak: The term of abuse, meaning “tight-fisted,” used to single out more successful farmers in Stalin’s 1931–1933 collectivization drive. They were to be eliminated as a class and were targeted in the Terror Famine or sent to the Gulag.

Lebensraum: “Living space,” which Hitler demanded for the German master race he planned to create. This space was to be conquered in Eastern Europe and would be ethnically cleansed of populations already living there to make way for German settlement in the future.

M.A.D.: Acronym for “mutually assured destruction,” the premise of nuclear deterrence that a nuclear exchange would leave no victors.

Memorial: An organization based in Russia today that seeks to commemorate and keep alive the memory of the victims of Stalinism and to resist historical amnesia on the subject.

Mukhabarat: The secret police and security forces of Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq.

Nazism: “National Socialism,” the ideology of Hitler’s movement, which ruled Germany from 1933–1945. Its core ideas were racism, anti-Semitism, militarism, a total state, the cult of the leader, and the Volksgemeinschaft. Historians debate whether it was a subvariety of Fascism or in a category all its own.

Nazi-Soviet Pact: Treaty of friendship signed between Stalin and Hitler in 1939, enabling Hitler to begin the Second World War with his attack on Poland. Secret clauses carved up Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. The treaty seemed an impossibility because of the ideological hatred between the new friends.

N.E.P.: Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy in 1921, backtracking in ideological terms to revive the economy by allowing limited free enterprise. Stalin eliminated NEP in the late 1920s.

Nomenklatura: Privileged elite classes of party members and specialists arising in Communist countries, contrary to the egalitarian ideology of the state, enjoying special privileges.

Perestroika: The “restructuring” program announced by Gorbachev in 1985 to reform the Communist economic system, coupled with Glasnost’. The process quickly escaped Gorbachev’s control.

Propaganda: Originally a religious term, it has come to signify the deliberate spreading of ideological ideas and interpretations to win the hearts and minds of a population, even if through lies.

Punkt: The radio of Stalin’s Soviet Union, pre-tuned to a government channel. Similar radios are found in many other ideological regimes, such as in North Korea today.

Red Guards: Mao’s special units in China’s Cultural Revolution in 1966–1976. They terrorized Chinese society to cleanse it of allegedly counter-revolutionary tendencies and to break with the past.

Red Terror: The systematic use of violence by Lenin and the Bolsheviks against their opponents, ordered in 1918, to consolidate their revolution and hold on Russia.
S.A.: The *Sturmabteilungen*, or “storm troopers,” were units of Nazi thugs on the model of Mussolini’s Blackshirts who terrorized the opponents of the Nazis. Once in power, Hitler purged their leaders in 1934.

Social Darwinism: The belief, building on Darwin’s evolutionary theories, that societies should pursue policies that benefit the strong and should allow the weak to fail, because these were considered natural processes. A constituent part of modern biological racism.

Socialism: An ideology organized around the principle of communal ownership in economics and social cooperation. It has been called one of the most important ideas of human history.

Socialist Realism: In 1932, this became the formal artistic doctrine in the Soviet Union, whereby artists were to portray reality as it was in the process of becoming, not in its contemporary state. Art was subservient to propaganda, with predictable aesthetic results.

S.S.: The *Schutzstaffel*, or “protective unit,” Hitler’s personal bodyguard, which grew into a racial elite and empire-within-an-empire under Heinrich Himmler’s leadership. The S.S. was charged with the Nazis’ racial programs, including genocide against the Jews.

Stakhanovites: “Hero workers” of Soviet industrialization and the Five-Year Plans, held up as propaganda models for others in stage-managed feats of overproduction. They were often hated by fellow workers.

Stasi Staatssicherheit: “State Security,” the remarkably extensive secret police of the East German state.

Storm troopers: Elite trenchfighters of the First World War (called *Sturmtruppen* in Germany, *Arditi* in Italy) who believed they had invented a new form of desperate heroism and enjoyed the war as an adventure.

Taylorism: “Scientific management” theories of American Frederick Winslow Taylor, adopted by Henry Ford’s factories in 1914, which promised rational planning of economic progress. They won worldwide enthusiasm.

Terror: The deliberate and organized use of violence, intimidation, and fear to achieve political ends. It includes the targeting of civilians and ordinary citizens. The term originates with the Reign of Terror of 1793–1794 in the French Revolution.

Terror Famine: In 1932–1933, Stalin’s collectivization led to resistance and famine in Ukraine. Estimates are that five to seven million died. The Soviet authorities shut off the region and kept news of the famine secret.

Total war: Term used in the aftermath of World War I to describe the all-consuming nature of modern industrial war, mobilizing entire populations, societies, and economies. In total war, the boundaries between soldiers and civilians would be blurred and civilians would increasingly be the targets of violence.

Totalitarianism: A term first used in the 1920s by anti-Fascists to describe their foes and taken up by the Fascists themselves. The term signifies the ambitions for total control of the subject populations by dynamic ideological regimes. Hannah Arendt’s work theoretically explored totalitarianism as a modern form of rule.

Treaty of Lausanne: The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne between Greece and Turkey ended their war with agreements for “population transfers” of ethnic minority populations. Masses of people were uprooted on either side in a brutal process of ethnic cleansing, but ironically, this action was often held up as a positive precedent for solving ethnic conflict.

Turbo-Folk: Electronic pop-music with folk-song style in Serbia of the 1990s, propagating the messages of Greater Serbia.

Tutsi: The minority group of pastoralists, traditionally dominant in Rwanda, targeted in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

United Nations: Established in 1945, this organization was to work for collective security, peace, and progress. Cold War tensions hampered its operation, but even after the Cold War’s end, its future role remains uncertain and its effectiveness in preventing genocide, dubious.

Utopia: A term invented in Thomas More’s book of the same name in 1516, meaning “No-place.” Utopia describes an imagined perfect society in which all contradictions have been overcome.

Volksgemeinschaft: The “people’s community” promised by the Nazis was to be a classless, racially pure society, cleansed of outsiders and those the Nazis considered inferior.
Utopia and Terror in the 20th Century
Part II
Professor Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius
Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius was born in Chicago, Illinois. He grew up on Chicago’s Southside in a Lithuanian-American neighborhood and spent some years attending school in Aarhus, Denmark, and Bonn, Germany. He received his B.A. from the University of Chicago. In 1989, he spent the summer in Moscow and Leningrad (today St. Petersburg) in intensive language study in Russian. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in European history in 1994, specializing in modern German history.

After receiving his doctorate, Professor Liulevicius spent a year as a postdoctoral research fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Peace, and Revolution at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Since 1995, he has been a history professor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He teaches courses on modern German history, Western civilization, Nazi Germany, World War I, war and culture, 20th-century Europe, nationalism, and utopian thought. In 2003, he received the University of Tennessee’s Excellence in Teaching award.

Professor Liulevicius’s research focuses on German relations with Eastern Europe in the modern period. His other interests include the utopian tradition and its impact on modern politics, images of the United States abroad, and the history of Lithuania and the Baltic region. He has published numerous articles and his first book, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in the First World War* (2000), published by Cambridge University Press, also appeared in German translation in 2002. His next project is a larger study of German stereotypes of Eastern Europeans and ideas of a special German cultural mission in the East over the last two centuries.

Professor Liulevicius lives in Knoxville, Tennessee, with his wife, Kathleen.
Table of Contents
Utopia and Terror in the 20th Century
Part II

Professor Biography ........................................................................................................i
Course Scope ................................................................................................................1
Lecture Thirteen  Nazism ..........................................................................................3
Lecture Fourteen  Hitler .........................................................................................7
Lecture Fifteen  World War II .............................................................................10
Lecture Sixteen  Nazi Genocide and Master Plans .............................................13
Lecture Seventeen  The Cold War .................................................................16
Lecture Eighteen  Mao .......................................................................................19
Lecture Nineteen  Cambodia and Pol Pot’s Killing Fields ...............................22
Lecture Twenty  East Germany, the Soviet Union, North Korea ...................25
Lecture Twenty-One  From the Berlin Wall to the Balkans ...........................28
Lecture Twenty-Two  Rwanda .............................................................................31
Lecture Twenty-Three  Saddam Hussein’s Iraq ................................................35
Lecture Twenty-Four  The Future of Terror ......................................................38
Biographical Notes ..................................................................................................42
Bibliography .............................................................................................................45
Utopia and Terror in the 20th Century

Scope:

Our course examines a fundamental question of our times: Why was the 20th century so violent? This terrible century saw bloodletting on an unprecedented scale. Scholars estimate that around the globe, wars cost more than 40 million lives, while government-sponsored persecutions, mass murder, and genocide accounted for 170 million victims.

Viewing the past century as a whole, this course examines the ideologies that promised utopias and total solutions to social problems (Fascism, Nazism, Communism, and others), and relates the terrible human toll of attempts to realize these blueprints. Such ideologies functioned as political religions, commanding faith and fanatical adherence and promising salvation. At the same time, the ideological regimes were an emphatically modern phenomenon, using new technology, the capabilities of the modern state, and sophisticated methods of control. The four elements making up such a regime were masses, machines, mobsters, and master plans. Masses of people to organize and the machinery of social control were the means by which a movement came to prominence. Within the regime, a mobster elite of political criminals functioned as leaders, following a master plan laying out an ideological blueprint for the future. Terror would be used to shape the intractable human material to fit the ambitions of the ideological movement.

Our course discusses how these elements came together, taking different forms and variations over the course of the 20th century. To begin with, the revolutionary legacies of the 18th and 19th centuries are examined, showing the utopian hopes vested in technological and social progress. At the same time, political philosophies that saw conflict as the motor of progress are noted. World War I had a massive brutalizing effect, inaugurating the phenomenon of total war and militarizing and mobilizing entire societies. Civilians were increasingly the targets of this war, most cruelly in the first modern genocide, the Armenian massacres of 1915. Total war also led to total revolution, as radical Socialists directed by Lenin took power in Russia in 1917 and established a new Soviet regime, championing a global revolution. In the aftermath of World War I, aftershocks of the war continued in an unsettled political landscape. Millions of refugees were uprooted, civil wars raged in many countries, and the fortunes of democracy were battered.

In the Soviet Union, an elaborate Communist dictatorship emerged, built up by Josef Stalin, the “Man of Steel,” at a massive cost in lives, as in the Gulag state camp system. The utopian outlines of the new Soviet civilization are examined. In Italy, Fascists came to power under Benito Mussolini, proclaiming slogans of order, unity, and absolute state power. The decade of the 1930s saw gathering storm clouds in international politics, with the Japanese rampage in China, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War, and a growing pessimism in culture and thought. In Germany, the Nazi Party, led by Adolf Hitler, promised a racial utopia, reordering German society with brutal means and the persecution of a minority group, German Jews. Unleashed by Hitler with help from Stalin, World War II brought a further escalation of total war and violence directed against civilians. The Nazis’ program of racial murder of the Jews, the murderously efficient “final solution,” unfolded against the background of ambitious future plans for domination.

No sooner had World War II ended than a new global ideological confrontation emerged, the Cold War. In China, Chairman Mao’s Communists came to power and, over the next decades, launched campaigns to reconstruct Chinese society fundamentally, no matter the cost. An even more radical project was put into effect in nearby Cambodia, where the Khmer Rouge revolutionaries, under the elusive Pol Pot, abolished cities, eliminated perceived enemies among the ordinary people, and caused the death of a quarter of the population. During the Cold War, Communist regimes took differing forms; the cases of isolated North Korea, seemingly efficient East Germany, and the formidable Soviet Union are examined.

At the end of the 20th century, even with democratic revolutions taking place in Eastern Europe and Russia, darker trends also emerged. In Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic pressed “ethnic cleansing” as a way to achieve his goal of a “Greater Serbia.” In Africa, a renewed genocide occurred in Rwanda, as the Hutu government masterminded a carefully planned slaughter of the Tutsi minority. In the Middle East, Saddam Hussein’s regime championed the ideological precepts of Ba’athism and sought and used weapons of mass destruction, including chemical arms used against Iraq’s Kurdish minority.
At its conclusion, the course poses the question of the future of terror, assessing the role of terrorism in the world at present and what lessons have been learned by the hard experience of this past century. Throughout the narrative of these tragedies, the lectures also point out individuals who resisted these inhuman trends, acting as remarkable witnesses to the century, dissenting from its violent course, often at great personal cost. Their examples represent a hopeful conclusion.
Lecture Thirteen

Nazism

Scope: This lecture surveys the origins of the Nazi movement, its ideological roots, and its rise to power in Germany. All of these were linked to the brutalizing legacies of World War I. In many ways, the mobilization for total war would be a model the Nazis strove to recreate on coming to power in 1933. The brown-shirted gangsters gathered into the S.A. storm-troop units saw themselves as “political soldiers,” and they were led by a former soldier, Adolf Hitler. This lecture examines the Nazi worldview and its promises for fundamentally reordering German society along racial lines after 1933, fusing terror with modernizing programs for superhighways, superweapons, and supermen.

Outline

I. Origins of Nazism.
   A. Effects of World War I.
      1. The war’s destructive impact laid the groundwork for the emergence of the Nazi movement in Germany and informed its ideology.
      2. Defeat in 1918 left many ordinary Germans embittered, unable to accept the fact of failure.
      3. Faith in the democratic Weimar Republic was undermined by its association with defeat; the Versailles Treaty, universally condemned in German society; and economic hardship. In spite of a period of stability from 1924–1929, German democracy remained fragile.
      5. In the postwar turmoil, a small new party, the German Workers’ Party (DAP), was established in Munich in January 1919 by Nationalists who had also been active earlier in the Fatherland Party, one among hundreds of such groups in Germany.
      6. In September 1919, a DAP meeting was visited by a soldier, Adolf Hitler, who soon became a member and, by 1921, became chairman. At his urging, the party renamed itself the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP).
   B. Hitler as an “unknown soldier” of the Great War.
      1. The obscure Hitler presented himself as the embodiment of unknown trench soldiers. Hitler aimed to be a “drummer” summoning a new political coalition to do away with democracy.
      2. Because of his skills in oratory, as well as organization and propaganda, Hitler himself became ever more crucial to the Nazis, often called the “Hitler movement.” Followers called him Führer, “leader.”
      3. In urban legend, Hitler’s oratorical skills were ascribed to his being gassed in the trenches.
   C. S.A.: Nazi storm troopers.
      1. Nazi organization and ritual were permeated with influences of World War I, most clearly in the case of the S.A. (Sturmabteilung), storm troopers organized in 1921 as a police arm of the party. These brown-shirted thugs also drew inspiration from Italian Fascist Blackshirts.
      2. The S.A. grew out of a wider milieu of thugs in Germany. More than a million men belonged to paramilitary organizations in Germany in 1919–1920.
      3. The leadership prided itself on a gangster style. Ernst Röhm, a former Freikorps captain, led the S.A.
   D. The Beer Hall putsch.
      1. In imitation of Mussolini’s March on Rome, on November 8, 1923, Hitler launched a march on Berlin.
      2. The revolt ended in failure and a treason trial, which Hitler exploited to win a media victory, crucial to relaunching the party in 1925 on his release from prison.

II. Nazi ideology.
   A. Ideological core.
      1. The core ideas were racism and anti-Semitism. Hitler’s Social Darwinist worldview saw constant race war and struggle for Lebensraum (“living space”).
      2. Conscious application of racial strategies and embrace of natural conflict was presented as the key to history.
3. Nazism posited a superior “Aryan” race, embodying creativity and health, juxtaposed with demonized stereotypes of Jews, depicted as parasites, contaminating influences, and eternal enemies. Germans were supposedly the purest remnants of original Aryans.

B. Nazis promised creation of a true racial unity, *Volksgemeinschaft*, or “people’s community.” This racial utopia would be achieved by purification and consolidation of Germany within, elimination of Jews, and aggressive expansion.

C. Other elements of Nazism included opposition to democracy, Marxism (though Nazis claimed to represent true German Socialism), pacifism, individualism, capitalism, rationality, and intellectuals. Influenced by World War I, the Nazis valued a strong state, military mobilization, and war.

III. The rise to power.

A. Organizational work.
   1. In prison, Hitler dictated his manifesto, *Mein Kampf* (“My Struggle”), presenting a “legal route to power,” creating a mass party, and discussing remarkably innovative ideas on the use of manipulative propaganda.
   2. Nazis outdid other parties in organization and intensive activity. They set up a nationwide party network in imitation of Communist Party cells.
   3. Yet Nazis gained less than three percent of the vote in the 1928 parliamentary elections.
   4. The Great Depression sped their way to power. The Weimar democracy was already moribund even before 1933.
   5. In the 1930 breakthrough election, the Nazis became the second largest party, a mass movement.
   6. In the July 1932 elections, they became the largest party in Germany.

B. Propaganda.
   1. Nazi mass meetings generated excitement and an image of dynamism. In 1932, the Nazis organized up to 3,000 meetings every day nationwide.
   2. They used modern technology, including airplanes, to orchestrate their campaigns.
   3. The image of the youthfulness of Nazi Party members and activists was another important feature of their self-image.
   4. Coordinated marching masses were to have an exhilarating effect.

C. Polarization.
   1. Marxist parties, the Social Democrats, and the German Communist Party did not cooperate against Nazism.
   2. The Comintern, following Stalin’s orders, directed German Communists to denounce Social Democrats as “Social Fascists.” In the coming struggle, Communists were confident of being able to pick up the pieces after the collapse of the Nazis and their Social Democratic rivals, as reflected in the slogan, “After Hitler—Us.”
   3. By contrast, Nazis presented themselves to Germans as the only alternative to Communism, now that democracy had failed.
   4. Curiously, a reciprocal antagonistic relationship emerged between the Nazis and Communists in this crisis.

D. Coming to power.
   1. Ironically, in spite of Hitler’s ambitions to come to power through the ballot box, the Nazis came to power in January 1933 through backroom intrigue.
   2. In the November 1932 elections, the Nazis were stunned to see their vote dip, suggesting ebbing support.
   3. Nonetheless, on January 30, 1933, Hitler became chancellor, in coalition with conservative Nationalists who planned to manipulate him.

IV. The worldview in power.

A. Nazification: *Gleichschaltung*.
   1. Once in power, Hitler outflanked his conservative Nationalist allies by securing control of police forces and, after the Reichstag fire on February 27, passage of an Enabling Act on March 23, 1933, which gave Hitler control of legal authority.
2. In the six months following their seizure of power, Nazis pursued the policy of *Gleichschaltung*, or “coordination to consolidate control.” They purged the civil service, outlawed other political parties, shut down labor unions, and terrorized political opponents.

B. The promise of *Volksgemeinschaft*.
1. The Nazis vowed to create a national community of solidarity in which “the common good comes before individual good.”
2. Their striving for total power was presented as a transcendence of earlier divisions.
3. In the August 1934 plebiscite, 85 percent of voters approved the Nazi regime.

C. The use of terror.
1. The Nazis made open use of terror in quelling resistance or challenges. In 1934, the S.A. consisted of four million men.
2. Concentration camps were established openly, not hidden, supposedly for “reeducation” and “protective custody.” A “model camp” was established in March 1933 in Dachau, which was later imitated widely.
3. In spite of their brutality, these camps were not yet places of mass murder, but they prefigured the later horror of the death camps.

D. Building the future.
1. The Nazis announced the rebuilding of Germany with vast public works projects, including *Autobahn* superhighways. The *Volkswagen*, “people’s car,” was planned for the future, while rearmament began.
2. In 1936, the Four-Year Plan was announced, in imitation of Stalin’s industrialization drives.
3. By 1939, the regime boasted full employment.

E. Nazifying society.
1. Nazi propaganda urged an idealized utopia of a united *Volk*, with images of shared meals of communal stew (*Eintopf*) or winter relief campaigns.
2. To shape opinion, in March 1933, the Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda was established, led by Josef Goebbels (1897–1945), a propaganda mastermind, exemplified by his earlier “Ten Commandments for National Socialists.”
3. The regime subsidized production of millions of *Volkssender*, “people’s radios,” and set up thousands of loudspeaker pillars in public places throughout Germany.
4. The regime intervened in the family. Women’s chief role was to be breeders of new soldiers, and medals were awarded for large numbers of children, as in the Soviet Union.
5. Special attention was given to young people. Ritual burning of books showed the downgrading of traditional humanistic education, replaced with induction of boys into the Hitler Youth for military training and girls into the League of German Maidens.

F. Nazi German language.
1. German-Jewish philologist Victor Klemperer, famed for his diaries, made a study of Nazi perversion of the German language.
2. A witness to these times, he observed with horror the transvaluation of such terms as *fanaticism* into highest praise.

G. Racial persecution.
1. In the racial utopia promised by the Nazis, solidarity was also defined against those labeled as outsiders (German Jews, gypsies, Slavs, homosexuals, and other minorities).
2. The Nazi state attacked these groups with growing radicalism.

**Essential Reading:**
Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945*.
Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*.

**Supplementary Reading:**
Questions to Consider:
1. Which Nazi promises were most appealing to ordinary Germans?
2. How were the Nazis able to turn the German language to their ideological purposes?
Lecture Fourteen

Hitler

Scope: This lecture illuminates the man behind the Nazi movement, indispensable to both its success and its growing radicalism, Adolf Hitler. His beginnings were obscure and unpromising, yet his mastery of techniques of political manipulation would make him Führer, “leader,” of the German people. This lecture profiles the man and his distinctive characteristics as a dictator and considers the keys to his effectiveness, in particular his capability for boundlessly cynical propaganda. His long-range ideological goals were revealed in his foreign policy revolution, upsetting the postwar international order and the launching of programs for the racial persecution of the Jews.

Outline

I. The man.
   A. Youth.
      1. Hitler was born in 1889 to a middle-class family in Braunau am Inn in Austria.
      2. His youth was unremarkable and directionless; he dropped out of high school to go to Vienna in 1907 to become an artist.
      3. After rejection by the Academy of Fine Arts, Hitler slipped into a Viennese netherworld of poverty. He claimed that this “down and out” period was decisive in his development.
      4. He soaked up the radical influences aswirl in the imperial capital: the populist anti-Semitism of Mayor Karl Lüger, racialism, the extreme Nationalism of the Pan-Germans, and the heroic artistic stances of Richard Wagner’s operas.
      5. In spite of his personal failure, the arts and architecture would remain important to him.
   B. Hitler in the First World War.
      1. The coming of the war fired Hitler’s imagination and finally gave him a sense of purpose and belonging. He was caught up in the August Madness in Munich and was captured on film.
      2. Shortly after he evaded military service in Austria, Hitler volunteered for a German regiment. He served on the western front and earned a rare Iron Cross First Class.
      3. While recovering at a hospital from being gassed, Hitler learned that Germany had sued for peace. He was devastated and underwent a breakdown, in the course of which he became convinced that he had a political mission to save Germany.
   C. Launching a political career.
      1. Remaining in the army even after the armistice, Hitler was sent to observe radical parties in Munich.
      2. On visiting the German Workers’ Party (DAP) in September 1919, he made a speech and was enrolled as a member.
      3. By 1921, he had risen to the chairmanship of the party. Members called him the Führer.
      4. Hitler renamed the party the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP), seeking to appeal across the political spectrum.
      5. After the failed Beer Hall putsch of 1923, Hitler’s “legal route to power” used Weimar democracy to destroy parliamentary government. Growing mass support and intrigue brought Hitler to the chancellorship in January 1933.
   D. Psychological background.
      1. Psychohistorians have sought to analyze Hitler’s childhood or upbringing to account for his later role.
      2. However, authoritarian childrearing common to the era or disappointed career goals alone obviously cannot explain Hitler.

II. The dictator.
   A. Method to the madness.
      1. Hitler’s work methods were unsystematic and his delegation of authority, chaotic. His personal habits were eccentric, and he kept unusual hours.
      2. Historians have referred to his duplication of authority as “bureaucratic Darwinism” and argue over whether this was a deliberate tactic or unconscious.
3. The outcome of his style of authority was a dynamic that favored radical solutions. Nazi followers spoke of “working towards the Führer.”
4. Hitler’s unsystematic approach has led some historians to suggest that he was a “weak dictator.” In fact, in matters of ideological importance to him, Hitler always intervened effectively.

B. The cult of the Führer.
1. A carefully cultivated myth of Hitler as the infallible Führer of the Third Reich was deliberately constructed by Josef Goebbels.
2. It took on religious overtones, as did other imagery of the Third Reich.
3. This charismatic element included an erotic charge for some followers; to preserve this, Hitler’s mistress, Eva Braun, was kept out of sight.
4. Letters from enthusiastic followers testified to the effective cult of the leader.
5. Remarkably, the leader cult also insulated Hitler himself from criticism, which was deflected onto the party and state, until nearly the end of his rule.

III. The keys to his effectiveness.
A. Underestimation.
1. Throughout his rise to power and once installed as dictator, Hitler repeatedly benefited from being underestimated and misunderstood.
2. Even movies, such as Charlie Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*, popularized a comic image at odds with his true menace.
3. In what Hitler considered the most perilous period of his plans, the consolidation of this rule and rearmament, he repeated claims that he desired nothing more than peace.

B. Ruthlessness.
1. Hitler also showed the readiness to use ruthless violence to achieve his ends, beyond bloodthirsty rhetoric.
2. This was made especially clear early on, on June 30, 1934, when scores of his own S.A. storm trooper leaders and other targets were murdered by the SS in the Night of the Long Knives (Stalin expressed his admiration).
3. In secret deliberations, such as those recorded in the 1937 Hossbach memorandum, Hitler charted an aggressive foreign policy of rearmament and future conquest.

C. SS as security.
1. After the 1934 purge, Heinrich Himmler’s SS commenced a dramatic institutional growth, taking on ever larger responsibilities, becoming a pillar of the Nazi regime and a state within the state.
2. The SS carved out a special role in executing the racial initiatives of the Third Reich.

IV. The diplomatic revolution.
A. The foreign policy vision.
1. Hitler envisioned a new order in Europe and the world, with Germany holding a dominant position.
2. Following the ideas of geopolitics, Hitler believed in the paramount need for increased *Lebensraum*, or “living space,” for the reconstituted German master race.
3. In this future order, small nations were to be eliminated, creating consolidated great power blocs.

B. Hitler’s demands for revision of the Versailles Treaty were enthusiastically seconded by ordinary Germans, though his aggressive long-range plans were not yet revealed.

C. The Axis.
1. Mussolini coined this term in 1936 to describe the solidarity of Germany and Italy in a new era of changed alignments. Nazi Germany later signed the Pact of Steel with Italy in 1939.
2. In 1936, Hitler signed the anti-Comintern Pact with Japan, directed against Communism.

D. Appeasement.
1. Misunderstanding Hitler and determined to avoid a repetition of the world war, the Western democracies sought to meet Nazi Germany’s demands.
2. Hitler systematically broke the Versailles Treaty’s strictures and effected a diplomatic revolution: leaving the League of Nations, rearming Germany, moving troops into the Rhineland, and annexing Austria.
3. When Hitler prepared to move against Czechoslovakia over the Sudetenland border region, Britain and France gave in to Hitler’s demand for the area at the September 29, 1938, Munich Conference. In March 1939, he nonetheless occupied the rest of the country.
4. Appeasement had failed in both political and moral terms.

V. Anti-Semitic programs.

A. The longer European history of anti-Semitism.
1. Centuries of religious anti-Semitism, discriminating against or abusing minority Jewish populations in Europe, were the background to the growth of a new variety of virulent hatred.
2. Often called radical racial anti-Semitism or biological anti-Semitism, this Social Darwinist and racist ideology called not for conversion, but separation and elimination. The libelous “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” an 1890s forgery of the Russian Tsarist secret police, claimed a world conspiracy.
3. The supposedly scientific nature of this new anti-Semitism and its promises of social integration caused it be labeled “Socialism for idiots.”

B. Nazi hatred in action.
1. Historians debate how the Nazi regime reached the destination of genocide. Was the road to Auschwitz direct and premeditated from the first, or was it a twisted path?
2. In this debate, intentionalists argue that the Nazis pursued a blueprint for genocide from the outset. Functionalists contend that the Nazi regime grew more radical in its policies over time.
3. At first, the Nazis sought to encourage emigration of German Jews through intimidation and violence.
4. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws took away the citizenship and rights of Jews and isolated them socially.
5. In the Kristallnacht of November 9, 1938, Jewish homes, synagogues, and businesses were attacked and Jews were arrested.
6. With the coming of World War II, forced emigration would be replaced with murderous policies.

Essential Reading:
Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler’s Vienna: A Dictator’s Apprenticeship*.
Ian Kershaw, *Hitler*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What aspects of Hitler’s background and youth might be useful to the cult of the leader, and which ones might need to be hidden?
2. How did the cult of the Führer compare to the cult of Mussolini as the Duce? What similarities and contrasts are notable?
Lecture Fifteen
World War II

Scope: The Second World War was unleashed by Hitler in 1939 with some help from his newfound friend, the Soviet Union’s Stalin. Recently ideological mortal enemies, these former foes aimed to usher in a new international order by swearing friendship in the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Affinities between their regimes were remarked on at the time by contemporary observers and are discussed here. The war saw more violence directed at unarmed people: the Nazi terror bombings of civilian centers and killing squads sent into Poland, Soviet executions of Polish officers at Katyn, and mass deportations from newly seized countries. In 1941, Hitler turned on his former ally Stalin and launched an invasion of the Soviet Union as a racial war. On all sides, this “perfected” total war took massive civilian casualties, especially in war from the air, culminating in the opening of the atomic age with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Outline

I. The road to war.
   A. World War II was Hitler’s war. Although historians debate the First World War’s causes, the Second World War’s origins are far clearer.
   B. Gathering forces.
      1. Fascism and Nazism saw war not as a necessary evil, but as a positive thing.
      2. As Mussolini drew closer to Hitler (earlier his disciple), he adopted anti-Semitic racism from 1938. Contorted racialist justifications were found for alliance with Japan.
   C. Enabling invasion.
      1. Convinced of Western democracies’ weakness, Hitler resolved to attack Poland, disregarding British security guarantees.
      2. To avoid two-front war, Hitler sought cooperation with Stalin.
      3. The start of World War II thus was a common project of the two dictators. Both believed it would usher in a new epoch, reordering Europe and hurrying democracy’s abolition.

II. The Nazi-Soviet Pact.
   A. The Treaty.
      1. News of the Nazi-Soviet Pact by Joachim von Ribbentropp and Vyacheslav Molotov on August 23, 1939, came as a shock around the world.
      2. Given that the regimes were sworn ideological enemies, this pact seemed impossible.
      3. Propaganda machines of both states turned on a dime, reversing denunciations, to herald new friendship.
      4. Formally called a nonaggression treaty, it had secret protocols dividing Eastern Europe into spheres of influence.
      5. Western Poland and Lithuania were the Nazi share, while Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and eastern Poland were allocated to Stalin. Later, the Nazis exchanged Lithuania for more Polish territory.
   B. Consequences.
      1. Hitler was now freed to attack Poland. World War II was enabled by cooperation between the dictators.
      2. The Soviets provided shipments of raw materials and supplies to Germany.
      3. An era of population movement began, with ethnic Germans transported from the Baltic states to be used as settlers in conquered Poland.
   C. Why would Stalin do this?
      1. Stalin’s decision is obscure but would be entirely unfathomable without considering his ideological mindset.
      2. Convinced that Nazism represented capitalism’s last, most brutal phase, Stalin sought to redirect Hitler westward against the capitalist powers.
      3. In the meantime, Stalin sought more time to prepare for war and to mend damage done by his purges.
In the coming world struggle that would wear down all the capitalist powers fighting in the West, much like World War I, Stalin hoped to pick up the pieces.

III. Totalitarian affinities.

A. The term: definitions and origins.
1. Totalitarianism denotes regimes unlike earlier tyrannies, aiming at total control of populations through both terror and ideological belief, demanding not merely passive assent but active participation and mandatory enthusiasm.
2. In 1923, a journalist critical of the Fascists applied the label to them, and Mussolini took it up, accepting it.

B. Hannah Arendt.
1. In 1951, Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) published The Origins of Totalitarianism, on the development of modern dictatorial systems, such as Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.
2. Arendt drew on personal observations as a German-Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, settling in the United States.
3. Arendt remains controversial. As a student in philosophy in Germany, she had an affair with Martin Heidegger, who supported Nazism. Her 1963 Eichmann in Jerusalem was criticized for its concept of the “banality of evil” and other assertions.

C. The essence of totalitarianism.
1. Others before Arendt noted similarities between ideologically opposed regimes, suggesting that “extremes meet.”
2. Arendt, however, systematically traced the model’s origins as an extension of imperialism after the breakdown of 19th-century liberalism.
3. Similarities across regimes included: the cult of the leader, dynamic claims of ideological infallibility, use of violence to fulfill those claims, concentration camps as microcosms of totalitarian aims, hierarchies of believers and elites, secret police, atomized masses, and similar monumental art and propaganda.
4. A final, essential feature was constant motion, pursuing universal, global aims.

D. Continuing debate.
1. After the 1960s, the concept was criticized as a Cold War rhetorical tool, inaccurate in describing everyday life under dictatorships.
2. From the 1990s, however, Eastern Europeans enthusiastically endorsed and revived this description of regimes they had endured.

IV. The war.

A. Blitzkrieg.
1. Blitzkrieg (“lightning war”) was a strategy to overcome the immobility of World War I.
2. Instead, tanks and planes acting in unison would decisively annihilate the enemy.
3. Quick victory would allow the enemy’s territory and population to be exploited for the next war.
4. The Blitzkrieg idea was also a symptom of Hitler’s mistrust of ordinary Germans, avoiding total mobilization.

B. Destroying Poland.
1. The attack on Poland commenced on September 1, 1939. Britain and France declared war on September 3, and World War II began.
2. In spite of heroic resistance, Poland was quickly overrun. Airplanes bombed Polish cities, underlining the radical nature of this war.
3. Special SS Einsatzgruppen were sent in to “decapitate” Polish society by murdering intellectuals, political leaders, and clergy.

C. Stalin’s share and “cleaning” in the Soviet sphere of influence.
1. Stalin moved to take his share and to impose his order.
2. On September 17, the Soviet army moved in to claim eastern Poland.
3. Stalin had thousands of Polish officers shot and buried in mass graves in Katyn (a crime denied until 1990).
4. After forcing the Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) to accept bases in 1939, Stalin annexed them as Soviet republics in August 1940.
5. Stalin began mass deportations of Baltic civilians in June 1941, aiming to remake the territories.
6. When the Soviet Union invaded Finland in the Winter War of 1939–1940, the army’s dismal performance revealed the cost of Stalin’s purges.

D. Assault on the West.
1. In 1940, Hitler attacked in the West, overrunning Denmark and Norway, then defeating France by June (in six weeks). Hitler celebrated the overturning of World War I.
2. Though Britain remained undefeated, Hitler turned to his next goal, conquest of living space in Eastern Europe. He attacked his Soviet ally.

V. Hitler’s attack on the Soviet ally.
A. Barbarossa.
1. Operation Barbarossa began June 22, 1941. With three and a half million men, this was the largest invasion in history.
2. In spite of repeated warnings, Stalin did not believe the attack was coming. Ideological assumptions blinded him.
B. A radical form of war.
1. Hitler declared this a new kind of war, freed of civilized constraints: a war of ideologies and racial enemies.
2. This was underlined in the Kommissar Order of June 6, 1941, instructing soldiers to kill Soviet political officers, orders later extended to Jews in the occupied territories.
3. Soviet prisoners of war were captured in enormous numbers, put in camps, and allowed to die of hunger and neglect, considered to be Slavic subhumans. By the end of 1941, two million Soviet prisoners of war had died.

VI. Total war intensified.
A. The nature of improved total war.
1. World War II saw intensification of trends already evident in World War I, especially in mobilization and targeting of civilians.
2. Nazis used slave labor, which became crucial to their war economy.
3. In occupied territories, especially in Eastern Europe, the Nazis killed civilians in reprisal for partisan activity.
4. Bombing of civilian centers became common, beginning with Nazi attacks on Warsaw in Poland, Rotterdam in the Netherlands, and Coventry in Great Britain.
5. Air war came to Germany, where bombing killed between 350,000 to 650,000 civilians. In a raid on Dresden near the war’s end, around 80,000 were killed.
6. Japan’s surprise air attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought America into the war.
7. In August 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing an estimated total of 110,000.
B. The Nazi regime, embracing total war, made deliberate murder of civilians a special aim and project.

Essential Reading:
Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

Supplementary Reading:
Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War*.

Questions to Consider:
1. How did the Nazi and Soviet regimes explain their friendship to their respective populations?
2. Without ideological blinders, how might a Russian leader more pragmatic than Stalin have acted in this era?
Lecture Sixteen
Nazi Genocide and Master Plans

Scope: This lecture considers the Nazis’ program of mass murder against the Jews and Hitler’s future plans for construction of a racial utopia. The Nazis set off on the road to mass murder with escalating persecutions, euthanasia programs of medicalized killing, and execution squads sent into occupied countries. Their program culminated in the factories of death—extermination camps, such as Auschwitz, where killing was mass-produced on an industrial scale. For the future, the General Plan for the East foresaw German settlement of Eastern Europe. Nazi architecture and monuments hinted at the vast scale of Hitler’s ambitions for world domination, reflected also in his views of the United States. Only the end of the war in 1945 foreclosed these megalomaniac plans.

Outline

I. The road to murder.
   A. Eugenics.
      1. Eugenic thinking, widespread worldwide during the first half of the century, urged planning of a superior population through encouraging “good births” and discouraging reproduction of those judged unfit.
      2. German eugenics was not limited to Nazi medical experts but was a strong tradition long before 1933.
      3. American eugenic measures provided inspiration to German eugenicists.
      4. Soon after coming to office, the Nazis passed a July 1933 law authorizing sterilization of those with hereditary diseases (including mental illness, epilepsy, blindness, and alcoholism). Hundreds of thousands of Germans were sterilized.
      5. Nazi schools propagated eugenic thinking with readings and math problems about the social costs of “useless eaters” and “life unworthy of living.”
   B. Euthanasia.
      1. In 1939, a program of “mercy killing” was instituted, using the war as cover to justify these measures.
      2. Departments in hospitals collected information on children, then adults with handicaps and mental illness, referring them to SS experts. An estimated 100,000 people were killed.
      3. The program was halted in August 1941 for reasons that are still debated.
   C. The SS.
      1. The SS was a key institution in the Third Reich’s racial policies.
      2. SS medical personnel were involved in euthanasia, gaining experience in scientific, medicalized mass murder.
      3. The Reichsführer SS, Heinrich Himmler, sought a new racial elite, devoted to breeding of a master race. In 1939, he became Commissar for Strengthening of Germandom.
      4. Under Himmler’s deputy, Reinhard Heydrich, the SS pressed forward with a policy of Entjudung, “removal of Jews” from Germany. By 1939, more than a fourth of all German Jews emigrated.
   D. Master executioners: the Einsatzgruppen.
      1. SS Einsatzgruppen were sent into Poland to eliminate intellectuals and leaders.
      2. Tens of thousands of Polish Jews were also deported to occupied Poland, which the regime planned to use as a dumping ground or reservation for Jews from the rest of their sphere of influence, which was to become “cleansed of Jews.”
      3. With the attack on the Soviet Union, Einsatzgruppen followed the armies and committed mass murder of the Jewish communities behind the lines, killing one million Jews by the end of 1941.
      4. However, Nazi leaders judged this mode of killing too open and inefficient and, thus, laid new plans.
   E. The final solution.
      1. The Wannsee Conference took place January 20, 1942, in a villa outside Berlin. There, the operations already underway were systematized into a comprehensive “final solution.”
      2. When the meeting protocol, couched in bureaucratic euphemism, was discovered after the war, it was called one of the most shameful documents in world history.
      3. Europe’s Jews were to be shipped to the East and exterminated there.

©2003 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership
4. The introduction of an obligatory yellow star for Jews in Germany in 1941 marked them and singled them out for this fate.

F. Hitler’s role.
   1. Historians debate Hitler’s precise actions in launching the Nazi genocide.
   2. Hitler’s aversion to written orders and caution about leaving paper trails make tracing the documentary evidence complicated.
   3. Clearly, Hitler’s role was pivotal, because he established the goals of the regime and endorsed programs of growing radicalism.

G. The circle of complicity.
   1. It is crucial to note that a program of this scope and magnitude involved more than a small circle of planners. In fact, enormous numbers of officials, at the highest and lowest levels of the state and party, from generals to station masters, were implicated and were needed to make the final solution happen.
   2. Collaborators who helped the Nazis in their programs turned up in every country.

II. The factories of death.
   A. The institutions.
      1. By early 1942, death camps were operating under SS control in the occupied eastern territories, at Auschwitz, Belzec, Treblinka, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor.
      2. Jews concentrated in ghettos were shipped to the camps by train.
      3. Gas chambers disguised as showers were used to kill millions, a machinery of death.
      4. Unlike in earlier concentration camps, here, secrecy was emphasized, to avoid news affecting world opinion or the German homefront or provoking more desperate resistance among intended victims.
      5. Yet millions of Germans and others were involved, directly or indirectly, and had some measure of knowledge about the program’s details.
      6. Ironically, when news of the death camps did leak out to the West, it was often initially not believed, because of skepticism engendered by World War I propaganda.

   B. The toll.
      1. The Nazis killed an estimated six million Jews in camps and elsewhere during the Holocaust and were responsible for the deaths of millions of others as a result of abuse, slave labor, and executions.
      2. Primo Levi (1919–1987) gave a searing account of his experiences in *Survival in Auschwitz*, showing how the camp universe was designed to destroy human identity itself, demonstrating that there were no limits and fulfilling ideological prophecies.

III. Future plans.
   A. The Nazi vision of the future.
      1. Hitler foresaw a Europe dominated and “organized” by Germans, spreading into living spaces of the East as colonial overlords.
      2. The German people were to grow from 80 million to 250 million in one century and would be racially reengineered.
      3. The Third Reich was to last a thousand years and dominate world politics.

   B. GPO: the general plan for the East.
      1. An actual blueprint of Nazi plans was the *Generalplan Ost* produced in the SS planning office and reviewed by Himmler in June 1942.
      2. It projected what Eastern Europe would look like 25 years after the war and coolly calculated removal and decimation of 31 million non-Germans, along with the use of slave labor and planned colonization.
      3. These projects were already underway with movement of ethnic Germans from Eastern European countries.

   C. Nazi architecture.
      1. Nazi architecture matched the regime’s ambitions and was declared to be ideology in stone.
      2. Hitler compulsively planned the rebuilding of Berlin on a grand scale as a new capital, with vast parade grounds and assembly halls.
      3. These buildings were to be cultic centers replacing traditional religion, which was expected to wither away.
4. The grandiosity of Nazi architectural plans has suggested to some historians larger aims, including world domination.

IV. World domination
   A. Superpower visions.
      1. Hitler envisioned a postwar order of large blocs of superpowers contending for supremacy.
      2. There is evidence of global goals in planning for an invasion of India, plans for superbattleships and superbombers capable of reaching America.
   B. Hitler’s view of the United States.
      1. Hitler’s views of Americans had been ambivalent, and he seemed to expect a showdown, perhaps in another generation.
      2. On December 11, 1941, Hitler declared war on the United States after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor.

V. The war ends.
   A. The battle over Stalingrad in late 1942 and 1943 was an emblematic struggle between the dictators. German surrender there in January 1943 marked a turning point of the war.
   B. Mussolini was deposed and arrested in July 1943, ending his domination of Italy. After the Nazis rescued him, he was set up in a puppet state, the Republic of Salo.
   C. The war turned against Germany.
      1. In spite of total mobilization of the economy, the Soviet army advanced relentlessly on Germany and was joined by American and British forces in the West in 1944.
      2. Goebbels manipulated the Stalingrad defeat to motivate Germans through fear.
   D. The bunker.
      1. Hitler retreated to a bunker in Berlin, losing touch with reality.
      2. Goebbels sought to choreograph the fall of Berlin as a film, the final act of the “Twilight of the Gods” as the last element of the myth of the Führer.
      3. With the so-called Nero Order of March 1945, Hitler ordered the “scorched earth” destruction of Germany.
      4. After leaving a hate-filled final testament, Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945, in the bunker.
   E. In Asia, Japan was defeated with the dropping of atomic bombs, opening the atomic age.

Essential Reading:
Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What were the crucial milestones on the Nazis’ road to genocide?
2. Was world domination a logically implicit aim in Nazi ideology, or were more limited goals likelier?
Lecture Seventeen
The Cold War

Scope: No sooner had World War II ended than a new ideological confrontation emerged. This lecture considers the Cold War and how ideological blocs of countries faced off against one another. It discusses Stalin’s renewed consolidation of control in the Soviet Union, as liberated Soviet prisoners of war were sent to the Gulag camps and societies were remade by force, with the mass deportations of Baltic peoples, Tatars, and Chechens. Before his death in 1953, Stalin seemed to be preparing a new round of persecutions, now targeting the Soviet Union’s Jews. In the decades that followed, a new worldwide fear became almost ordinary: the nuclear balance of terror, with “mutually assured destruction” precariously maintained by the Cold War opponents.

Outline

I. Aftermath of World War II.
   A. The costs.
      1. The war, involving more than 40 nations, left over 50 million dead.
      2. Roughly half were civilians (versus an estimated 10 percent in World War I).
   B. The atomic age.
      1. Invention of atomic weapons opened a new age of potential destruction.
      2. By 1949, the Soviet Union also produced a nuclear weapon (aided by espionage).
   C. Onset of the Cold War.
      1. The uneasy alliance of the United States and Britain with Stalin was already strained, but hopes remained that international cooperation could continue, despite stark ideological differences.
      2. These differences, however, soon led to Cold War, armed ideological confrontation lasting nearly half a century.

II. International efforts and human rights.
   A. The United Nations.
      1. The United Nations Organization was founded at the San Francisco Conference (April–June 1945).
      2. The Charter defined aims: peace through collective security, self-determination, international cooperation and progress, and respect for human rights.
      3. Above the General Assembly, the Security Council wields power. Its five permanent members are victors of World War II (the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, China, and France).
      4. Cold War tensions impeded its functioning. The Soviets demanded and received extra seats.
      5. Vetoes in the Security Council immobilized the body.
      6. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved December 10, 1948, in Paris, remained a nonbinding expression of ideals, which many member states violated and continue to violate.
   B. Nuremberg war crime trials.
      1. From 1945 to 1947, Nazi leaders were tried in Nuremberg by Allied judges for crimes against humanity, placing a new emphasis on human rights.
      2. Critics pointed out the irony of Soviet judges passing verdicts while Soviet crimes, such as the events at Katyn, were not considered. Nonetheless, the sentences were richly deserved.
   C. Genocide Convention.
      1. In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly passed the Genocide Convention, making genocide (a term invented by crusading jurist Raphael Lemkin) an international crime.
      2. The term was defined in special ways that are still controversial today.
      3. The convention’s effect has been slow to be felt.

III. George Orwell’s vision of 1984.
   A. British journalist George Orwell wrote his dystopian novel 1984 in 1948, drawing on contemporary trends and his reading of Zamyatin’s We.
B. Protagonist Winston Smith lives in a society dominated by the omnipresent, mysterious Big Brother. Inner resistance dooms Smith and his love for a young woman.
   1. He works in the Ministry of Truth, revising historical records and purging the past.
   2. A political language, Newspeak, eliminated “thoughtcrime.”
   3. Smith resists the system but is tracked down and broken, betraying his love for Julia and his own humanity.

C. Orwell’s vision is dark and pessimistic.
   1. The future is presented as “a boot stamping on a human face—forever.”
   2. Details of his story matched many of the features of contemporary regimes.
   3. Yet the message was a wider one, on the human susceptibility to tyranny.

IV. Forced population movement and ethnic cleansing in Europe.
   A. The war left 11 million refugees, bureaucratically labeled “displaced persons.”
   B. Expulsion of ethnic Germans.
      1. Some 15 million ethnic Germans fled or were expelled, especially from Poland and Czechoslovakia.
      2. At the Potsdam Conference (July–August 1945), the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union approved their “humane and orderly transfer,” referring to the 1923 Lausanne Treaty as precedent.
      3. The process was, in fact, violent, with an estimated three million dead.
   C. Over two million refugees from Eastern Europe were forcibly deported, returned to Stalin’s control, killed, or jailed.

V. The Cold War and Stalin.
   A. Outer empire and inner empire.
      1. Claiming security needs, Stalin established an “outer empire” of Eastern European People’s Republics, ruled by Communists after a period of coalition governments.
      2. In the “inner empire” of the Soviet Union itself, Stalin clamped down again, betraying implicit wartime promises of liberalization.
   B. Soviet prisoners of war.
      1. Stalin considered captured soldiers to be traitors.
      2. Instead of being returned home, they were shipped by cattle car to labor camps.
      3. Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* portrayed his own experiences in the Gulag of this period.
   C. Punished peoples.
      1. Entire nations suspected of disloyalty were deported and decimated.
      2. Before the war’s end, in 1944, Chechens, Ingush, and Crimean Tartars were all deported from the Caucasus and Crimea to Central Asia.
      3. Half a million Chechens and Ingush were deported, and 189,000 Tartars, with great losses.
      4. Conflict in Chechnya today cannot be understood without this background.
      5. Mass deportations resumed in the Baltics (following on deportations of 1941). Several hundred thousand people were deported to Siberia. Scarcely any families were left untouched, and 15 percent of the Baltic populations were gone by 1950.
      6. World War II continued in Eastern Europe even after 1945. The Baltic Forest War saw guerrillas fighting Soviet forces into the 1950s.
   D. Growth of the Cold War.
      1. Stalin stated that a territory’s occupier determines its social system and worked with allies in Eastern European countries to consolidate Communist rule.
      2. In 1947, non-Communist parties were dropped from government in Hungary, Romania, and Poland. In 1948, a Communist coup in Czechoslovakia created sole rule.
      3. In October 1947, the Comintern, shut down when Stalin had looked for support in the West against Hitler, was revived under the name of *Cominform*.
      4. Communist parties in Italy and France enjoyed considerable popularity and prestige because of their anti-Nazi resistance.
   E. Stalin’s death.
1. Stalin died in March 1953, perhaps on the eve of another wave of purges.
2. In January 1953, Soviet authorities announced discovery of an alleged “doctor’s plot.” Government doctors, mostly Jewish, were accused of a wide conspiracy to poison Soviet leaders.
3. Stalin’s regime seemed to be taking a radical anti-Semitic turn before his death.

F. De-Stalinization and changes.
   1. In 1956, Nikita Khrushchev’s speech at the 20th congress of the Communist Party denounced Stalin’s crimes, especially those against the party.
   2. Khrushchev announced a new policy of coexistence and competition, promising to bury the West technologically.
   3. Soviet forces suppressed uprisings in East Germany (1953), Poland (1956), Hungary (1956), and Czechoslovakia (1968).
   4. Sputnik (1957) and nuclear weapons gave the Soviet Union an image of progress, belied by failures of development, such as Lysenkoism’s crackpot agricultural theories.

G. Dividing lines.
   1. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn compared ideological conflicts of the Cold War to a line running through individuals.
   2. The blocs of East and West were not monolithic. Individual sympathies and allegiances varied greatly.
   3. Although the Cold War did not erupt into a full-scale clash, it did cause “proxy wars,” such as America’s Vietnam War and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
   4. Alliances on both sides contradicted ideological consistency.

VI. The Berlin Wall.
   A. Division of the Germanies.
      1. On occupying eastern Germany, Soviet forces engaged in abuse of civilians and mass rape, in a cycle of revenge for Nazi atrocities. This experience undercut support for German Communists.
      2. In the eastern Soviet zone, the German Democratic Republic was declared in October 1949.
   B. After massive population flight, the Berlin Wall was built on August 13, 1961.
      1. Called an “anti-Fascist protection wall,” extending through the border between the Germanies, the wall became a symbol of division.
      2. Some 900 people died trying to escape westward.

VII. M.A.D.: mutually assured destruction.
   A. Cuban missile crisis.
      1. The 1962 Cuban missile crisis over the stationing of Soviet missiles in Cuba (where Fidel Castro had taken power in 1959) seemed to bring the world to the brink of nuclear war.
      2. It was followed by attempts at détente, relaxing tensions.
   B. Balance of terror.
      1. A key concept of deterrence, assured destruction, sought to prevent nuclear aggression by the implicit threat of a second nuclear strike that would obliter ate the attacker and render victory meaningless.
      2. Globally, this balance of terror kept an uneasy peace.

Essential Reading:
George Orwell, *1984*.

Supplementary Reading:
Samantha Power, “*A Problem From Hell*: America and the Age of Genocide, pp. 17–85.
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Was the Cold War a period of stability or instability in international politics? Why?
2. Could the Cold War have been avoided? How?
Lecture Eighteen
Mao

**Scope:** After decades of civil war and struggle over the future of China, Chinese Communists came to power in 1949. The “People’s Republic” was declared under the leadership of Mao Zedong. This lecture examines the society formed by the ideology of “Mao thought,” as it revised and adapted Marxist ideas. We examine the *Little Red Book*, the uniform dress of “Mao suits,” and the cultural break with a rich past forced through by the regime. Mao commanded massive campaigns with the goal of developing the country. The failed *Great Leap Forward* in the 1950s led to massive violence against civilians and a famine. Renewed inner turmoil came with the *Cultural Revolution*, as young Red Guards terrorized and “reeducated” millions, ending only with Mao’s death.

**Outline**

I. The Communists come to power.
   A. Preludes.
      1. After the collapse of the Manchu dynasty, China became a republic in 1911. When the country dissolved into warlord rule, Sun Yat-Sen founded the Guomindang (GMD) Nationalist Revolutionary Party to promote national independence, progress, and science.
      2. The GMD was at first supported by the Chinese Communist Party (founded in 1921).
      3. By 1927, the earlier allies came into conflict. General Chiang Kai-shek attacked Communists, destroying them in Shanghai and in urban areas. Communists needed to pull back to peasant areas.
   B. Mao Zedong.
      1. Mao (1893–1976), called the “Great Helmsman,” was born in 1893 in Hunan province, son of a peasant landlord. In his youth, he admired Napoleon.
      2. He became a revolutionary activist from 1911, active in both the Nationalist movement protesting the Paris Peace Conference and the Communist Party, and serving as chairman of the Chinese Soviet Republic established in Jiangxi in 1931.
      3. When the GMD encircled their Communist enemies in 1934, 100,000 Communists were forced to undertake the *Long March* to Yanan in 1934–1935.
      4. Some 60,000 died on the march, which was turned into a foundational myth of Communist propaganda, underlining the notion that determination could overcome material obstacles.
      5. With this march, Mao became principal leader.
      6. In particular, Mao understood how to use peasant unrest to mobilize for revolt. To set peasants against one another, he called for a short reign of terror in the countryside.
      7. Mao stated that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”
      8. Unlike such men as Zhou En-Lai, who became a Communist in France in 1921, or Deng Xiaoping, who studied in the Soviet Union, Mao’s experience was limited to China.
      9. From 1935, Mao clearly headed the leadership of the party.
   C. Communist victory.
      1. Communists took over northern areas during Japanese occupation and enacted land reforms.
      2. Once World War II ended, civil war intensified between the GMD and Communists.
      3. After their defeat, the GMD withdrew to the island of Taiwan in 1949.
      4. On October 1, 1949, Mao declared the People’s Republic of China in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square.

II. Red dawn in China.
   A. The founding.
      1. Mao later admitted that 800,000 people were “liquidated” in the first five years of the People’s Republic.
      2. After an initial “New Democracy” policy (modeled on Lenin’s NEP), Mao commanded collectivization, following (and perhaps seeking to surpass) Stalin’s campaigns against the *kulaks*.
      3. Farmers were reorganized into communes in the countryside, though small private plots were allowed, as in the Soviet Union.
4. Activists agitated for radical social change, working to eliminate illiteracy, footbinding, and traditional medicine and to replace these with a modern social organization.

5. They also launched attacks on the past and traditional life, banning songs and opera, destroying temples, and plowing over ancestral graves.

B. Industrialization

1. The first Five-Year Plan was launched in 1953.
2. The Soviet Union was the model for development. A common slogan of the 1950s was: “The Soviet Union’s today is our tomorrow.”
3. At the same time, Mao was determined to outdo the Soviets.

C. Communist fraternity breaks down.

1. Relations worsened with the Soviet Union.
2. Stalin pressured Mao to help North Korea. Mao came to resent being treated as a junior partner.
3. After Stalin’s death and de-Stalinization, Mao despised the Soviet Union and declared that torch passed to China.
4. By 1958, the Chinese-Soviet split was increasingly clear, and border clashes took place between their armies in the late 1960s.
5. In 1964, China exploded a nuclear bomb, underlining its independence.

D. Purges.

1. In 1956–1957, in the Hundred Flowers Campaign, Mao encouraged the blossoming of a “hundred flowers and a hundred schools of thought.”
2. This seeming liberalization lured forth dissidents, whom Mao then attacked. An estimated half million were killed in the purges that followed.


A. The Great Leap Forward was announced in 1958 as a revolutionizing of the country.

1. Mao wanted to “strike while the iron is hot” and press forward through will.
2. Official slogans promised “hard work for a few years, then a thousand years of happiness.”

B. Measures.

1. Collectives were consolidated into larger “people’s communes.”
2. The fraudulent agricultural ideas of Lysenko were copied.
3. Harvests failed.

C. The great famine.

1. By 1960, famine was raging, and cases of cannibalism were recorded.
2. The famine left up to 40 million dead.
3. By 1960, the project was abandoned, but the commune structure remained in place.

IV. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.


1. Fearing a slowing of revolutionary fervor, Mao sought to regain the initiative by encouraging youths to move against established party officials, teachers, and elders.
2. “Enemies of the people” were accused of trying to move China over to a “capitalist road.”
3. A smaller group of party leaders, including Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, supported this campaign.

B. Red Guards.

1. Young people were organized into Red Guard units, several million strong, organized on military lines.
2. They were charged with the duty of purging the party and society.
3. Accused of revisionism or capitalist betrayal, millions were killed or sent to laogai camps for “reeducation.”
4. Ordinary people were forced to participate in rituals of self-criticism to show the proper revolutionary consciousness. Party General Secretary Deng Xiaoping and other rivals of Mao were purged.
5. Campaigns also focused on traces of the past, Western influences, education and teachers, books, and old art.
6. The Four Olds (old thought, old culture, old customs, old habits) were to be obliterated.
C. Mao Zedong’s thought.
   1. A collection of Mao’s sayings, gathered in the *Little Red Book*, was hailed as a replacement for education.
   2. Standardized “Mao suits” became approved garb.
D. Mao later used the army to suppress the Red Guard movement when he feared it was going too far. Mao’s death brought an end to the Cultural Revolution.
E. Mao’s personality.
   1. Mao’s overriding conviction of the power of will was not orthodox Marxism.
   2. Mao praised ordinary people as a beautiful blank page on which new characters could be written.
   3. Chairman Mao was puritanical in his views but indulgent toward himself.

V. Aftermath.
A. Mao died on September 9, 1976.
B. After his death, following a leadership struggle, Deng Xiaoping and his allies emerged victorious and put Mao’s wife and her associates, the *Gang of Four*, on trial.
C. Results.
   1. Even after a turn toward more pragmatic policies, the Communist government still hailed “Mao Zedong thought” and claimed that his contributions outweighed any mistakes.
   2. An honest reckoning with this period has been slow to emerge in China. One bizarre result is that advertisements intended to appeal to nostalgia use propaganda styles of the Cultural Revolution.

Essential Reading:
Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. In what specific ways did Mao aim to surpass the Soviet Union?
2. What were the keys to Mao’s success in coming to power and keeping power?
Lecture Nineteen
Cambodia and Pol Pot’s Killing Fields

Scope: In Southeast Asia, Cambodian Communists led by the mysterious Pol Pot, educated in France, turned their own land into a laboratory for a social experiment, described in this lecture. On coming to power in 1975, the Khmer Rouge declared that they were making a new start in human history. To build their rural utopia, they totally emptied Cambodia’s cities in the course of one week, expelling people into the countryside, where they suffered intense privation. The populace was then screened for “enemies of the people,” including intellectuals (the wearing of eyeglasses could be a death sentence), who were summarily executed, along with their families. In the three years of their rule, before they were overthrown by an invasion from Vietnam, the Khmer Rouge caused the deaths of some two million people, or more than 25 percent of Cambodians.

Outline

I. Cambodian prelude.
   A. The past.
      1. The Khmer empire ruled in Indochina from the 9th to the 13th centuries, but then, the country came under Thai rule.
      2. Cambodia was a French protectorate in the 19th century, then was occupied by Japan in World War II. Afterward, it became an independent kingdom in 1955.
   B. In the Cold War.
      1. Though Cambodia declared neutrality in the Vietnam conflict, it was infiltrated by Viet Cong, with sections of the Ho Chi Minh Trail running through its territory.
      2. The Khmer Rouge were the Cambodian Communists, active from 1963.
   C. In 1970, the monarchy was overthrown, and American and South Vietnamese forces intervened secretly.
      1. American bombing raids directed against Communist forces also took a toll on civilians and destabilized the government.
      2. When the United States withdrew from Vietnam and South Vietnam collapsed, the Khmer Rouge moved to take control.
      3. In April 1975, the Khmer Rouge took the capital, Phnom Penh, and began to put their revolution into action.
      4. Cambodia was renamed Democratic Kampuchea.

II. Pol Pot.
   A. Origins.
      1. The man later known as Pol Pot (1925–1998) was born as Saloth Sar to a farmer family along the Thai border. He claimed that he spent two years as a Buddhist monk.
      2. On turning to politics, he cut himself off from his family.
   B. Turn to radicalism.
      1. In the 1940s, he was active in the resistance against the French directed by Ho Chi Minh.
      2. In 1946, he became a member of the Cambodian Communist Party.
      3. In 1949, Pol Pot left to study in France. Though he was supposed to be studying radio electronic engineering, he devoted himself to Communist political activities.
      4. After failing his examinations, he returned to Cambodia in 1953 and taught at a private school at Phnom Penh.
      5. Pol Pot organized the Communist underground in Cambodia. The party was founded in 1960, and in 1963, he became its general secretary.
      7. In a contrast to other dictators, Pol Pot remained obscure, and no cult of personality around him was encouraged.
III. The year zero.

A. Beginning of the regime.
1. Ordinary Cambodians hoped that, at long last, stability and peace were at hand.
2. The black-clad Khmer Rouge, however, were obsessively secretive in their actions. Many of their recruits were young (recruited at the age of 12 or younger), adding a generational dimension to the tragedy.
3. The ruling body was a shadowy entity called *Angkar* (“organization”), which was referred to as the “mother-father” of the people.
4. The aim of the enacted policies was not only to imitate Mao’s Great Leap Forward in China but to surpass it.

B. Revolutionary violence.
1. In the campaign for ruralization, cities were ordered emptied out in 24 hours. Sixty percent of the population was exiled, and Phnom Penh, the capital city of two million, was deserted.
2. Former citydwellers were labeled “new people” and were segregated from the peasantry. Through repeated deportations, they were decimated.
3. Those who were educated, spoke foreign languages, or wore glasses were slated for execution as enemies of the people. Buddhist monks, as well as members of minority religions (Muslims, Catholics) and ethnic minorities (Chinese, Vietnamese), were also eliminated.
4. Many executions used the blade of a hoe, reminiscent of the French guillotine. Functionaries prided themselves on polite killing.
5. Conditions in the prisons were so bad that many guards died as well.
6. Pits where bodies are thrown were called “killing fields.” Hundreds of mass graves, large and small, are scattered throughout the land.
7. An estimated two million (out of a total population of seven million) died as a result of the Khmer Rouge’s policies, through killing, hunger, and abuse. Recently, new evidence has prompted higher estimates.

C. The new society.
1. The regime followed radical measures to purify society, while cutting the country off from the world and seeking autarchy.
2. Money was abolished in one week.
3. Total collectivization of land was decreed.
4. On communes, people ate in collective canteens and shared the same thin rice soup.
5. All Cambodians were ordered to wear black clothes.
6. Religion, writing, and education all disappeared.
7. Only arranged marriages approved by the Khmer Rouge were allowed.
8. Individualism was to be overcome. A slogan stated, “Losing you is not a loss; keeping you is not a gain.”
9. People were seen as human material for the revolution.

D. Results.
1. Construction and agricultural projects were marked by irrationality and a reliance on will over matter.
2. The collapse of agriculture led to famine and cases of cannibalism.
3. Suspecting sabotage, the Khmer Rouge movement began to purge itself of alleged enemies, and prisons filled with former members.

IV. End of the regime.

A. Intervention.
1. After border clashes, Communist Vietnam invaded in 1978 (in a refutation of Communist solidarity), and the Khmer Rouge government was overthrown by January 1979.
2. The Vietnamese set up a puppet regime that was friendly to Vietnam.

B. Khmer Rouge guerrillas.
1. Even after their overthrow, Khmer Rouge forces continued to fight in border areas and from within Thailand until 1992, when a UN-brokered plan sought to include them in elections.
2. In 1997, Pol Pot was arrested by his associates and condemned for treason. In April 1998, he died in the jungle, in mysterious circumstances, never having been brought to public trial.

C. International responses.
   1. In part because of the secrecy of the regime, news of Khmer Rouge activities filtered out only slowly.
   2. As part of Cold War politics, Thailand, China, and the United States supported the Khmer Rouge after their overthrow by Vietnam.

D. Memorials.
   1. In Cambodia today, the skeletons of the killing fields are displayed in open-air museums.
   2. The documentation of executions, including haunting pictures of the condemned, are preserved as eloquent witness to the tragedy.
   3. Resistance to trials of surviving Khmer Rouge leaders continues from different quarters in Cambodia and abroad, especially China. Cambodian politicians have suggested burying the past.

Essential Reading:
Elizabeth Becker, *When the War Was Over: Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge Revolution*.

Supplementary Reading:
Samantha Power, “*A Problem From Hell*”: *America and the Age of Genocide*, pp. 87–154.

Questions to Consider:
1. In what specific ways did the Khmer Rouge seek to surpass China’s Communists?
2. Why was Pol Pot not the center of a personality cult like that of Hitler or Stalin, with portraits and propaganda appearances?
Lecture Twenty
East Germany, the Soviet Union, North Korea

Scope: During the Cold War, different variants of Communist regimes emerged. This lecture considers the development of three such states. The German Democratic Republic from 1949 was considered a success story. Behind the Berlin Wall, “really existing Socialism” was built up under the supervision of the state and the surveillance of the Stasi secret police. In the Soviet Union, the system lurched toward stagnation, repressing dissidents but also steadily losing confidence in the ideology of the ruling party. North Korea, often called the Hermit Kingdom, enshrined its militarized isolation from the world in the ideology of juche, or “self-reliance,” first under Kim Il-Sung, then his son, “Beloved Leader” Kim Jong-Il, who has developed nuclear weapons.

Outline

I. Varieties of Socialist experience.
   A. Socialism and Communism took markedly different forms in different countries.
   B. In Western Europe, Social Democracy moved toward moderate forms.
      1. Social Democrats stressed reform over revolution, seeking broader appeal.
      2. Emblematic was the German Social Democratic Party’s Bad Godesberg Program in 1958, revising Marxist doctrine to avow both economic planning and economic freedom.
   C. By contrast, examining East Germany, the Soviet Union, and North Korea shows diversity and commonalties among hardline regimes.

II. Eastern Germany.
   A. German Democratic Republic (GDR): “State of Workers and Peasants.”
      1. After the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961, a grim “stabilization” set in, as citizens saw that they must come to terms with the inevitable.
      2. It was commonly said that if anyone could make Communism work, it would be the Germans. The GDR was to become a showcase.
      3. In spite of egalitarian claims, party elites enjoyed class privileges: special cars, separate quarters, special stores, and greater access to education and international exchanges.
      4. Erich Honecker (1912–1994), leader from 1971 until the eve of collapse, rose through the party’s ranks.
      5. The Free German Youth organization (FDJ) regimented youth.
      6. Churches were harassed, infiltrated, or closed, and religious ritual was replaced with secular traditions, such as “youth confirmation.”
   B. Coercion and the Stasi secret police.
      1. Border troops guarded the wall with orders to shoot to kill. “Flight from the republic” was a crime.
      2. Dissidents were kept under surveillance and spied on by informers in their midst.
      4. An estimated 274,000 people worked with the Stasi from 1950 to 1989. This included one secret policeman for every 166 citizens; when informers were added, the ratio would be one security person for every 6.5 persons.
      5. The Stasi generated 121 miles of files on targets and maintained feared prisons, such as Hohenschönhausen.
      6. Activities included bugging apartments, cooperating with international terrorist groups, trafficking in people “bought free” to emigrate to West Germany, and engaging in active cooperation with the Soviet KGB.
      7. The Stasi were proud to consider themselves in the lineage of Lenin’s Chekists.
   C. Seeking legitimacy.
      1. Shortcomings were rhetorically justified as “really existing Socialism.”
2. Vast resources were spent on the Olympic program and Leipzig’s Sports University. Doping was common and led to tragic results.
3. In the 1986 Five-Year Plan, the GDR invested in cybernetics, robots, and computer engineering, but the results disappointed.

D. Visions of the future.
1. In a bizarre utopian vision, planners envisioned making the wall totally mechanized by 2000, a perfect border.
2. In fact, another technology, Western television, undermined GDR slogans.

III. U.S.S.R.
A. Façade of vigor and realities.
1. The Soviet Union projected an image of power and progress, underlined by the 1957 Sputnik and space race successes.
2. Nuclear weapons gave it undisputed superpower status.
3. However, some observers called it “Upper Volta with rockets.”
4. In the 1980s, the Soviet Union was spending an estimated quarter of its gross domestic product (GDP) on arms. Added to this were subsidies to Communist satellites worldwide.
5. Widespread winding down of ideological fervor followed de-Stalinization.
6. A privileged elite nicknamed Apparat or Nomenklatura undermined egalitarian claims.

B. Geriatric leadership and continuing repression.
1. Khrushchev was turned out of office in 1964 and replaced by collective leadership, from which Leonid Brezhnev (1906–1982) emerged as the main leader. Brezhnev announced that the Soviet Union was in the stage of “developed Socialism.”
2. Repression of dissidents continued (including psychiatric hospitalization), though without Stalin’s mass murder.
3. In Eastern Europe, the Brezhnev Doctrine justified intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

C. Economic, technological, and environmental disaster.
1. Empty stores made economic decline clear, despite falsified official statistics. Stalin’s decimation of specialists left damaging gaps in Soviet science.
2. Crackpot agricultural projects, such as the Virgin Lands, produced environmental disaster (by contrast, private garden plots were productive).
3. On April 28, 1986 (just before May Day parades), the Chernobyl reactor near Kiev exploded. Costs of this accident and its initial denial by Soviet authorities eroded state credibility.

D. Loss of confidence.
1. Although loss of political confidence in a ruling elite is difficult to quantify, it is nonetheless important.
2. Jokes about the lived absurdity of the Soviet system proliferated.
3. Within the party itself, a mood of crisis grew and led to the elevation of a true believer and reformer, Mikhail Gorbachev.

IV. North Korea.
A. Establishing the dictatorship.
1. Korea, earlier a Chinese satellite, was annexed by Japan in 1910.
2. After World War II, Korea was to become an independent country, but with the Cold War occupation, two separate states were declared in 1948: South Korea, under American patronage, and North Korea, under Soviet patronage.
4. Without a peace treaty, a tense standoff has endured for half a century.
5. North Korea remains a massively militarized state, spending an estimated 30 percent of its GDP on one of the world’s largest armies.
6. At the same time, famine has wracked the land, killing perhaps two million or more in the 1990s.

B. Leaders and ideology.
1. The first leader was Kim Il-Sung (1912–1994), known as “Great Leader” and installed by Soviet forces.
2. Born Kim Son Ju near Pyongyang, he became an anti-Japanese guerrilla, was trained and educated in the Soviet Union, and served in the Soviet army during World War II.
3. He crafted the ideology of juche, or “self-reliance,” pursuing autarchy and radical isolation for the nation of 22 million.
4. In 1994, Kim Il-Sung was succeeded by his son, Kim Jong Il (b. 1941), called the “Sun of the Twenty-First Century.” Born in Siberia and schooled in East Germany, he has a reputation for being a volatile and cruel playboy.
5. Elaborate cults of leadership were built up around both leaders, including posthumous veneration of Kim Il-Sung, omnipresent statues, mass parades and calisthenics displays, and flower shows of Kimjongilia blooms.
6. Like many other dictators, Kim Jong II is an avid film enthusiast, styles himself a director, and has kidnapped actors for his entertainment.

C. Tools of state.
1. Every household is to have a radio receiver, “the speaker,” which broadcasts marches, songs, and proclamations. Like the Soviet punkt radio, it cannot be turned off, nor can its stations be changed.
2. A dozen prison camps resembling the Soviet Gulag hold an estimated million prisoners.
3. As recently admitted by the government, in the past, there were kidnappings of Japanese to serve as agents.
4. A former ally, Russia, reported North Korean chemical and biological weapons experimentation.
5. Sporadic attempts at controlled economic reform yielded only growing economic crises and tens of thousands of refugees trying to flee to China.

D. Continuing policies.
1. In the new century, North Korea is one of the last surviving Stalinist states and has intensified its threatening stance toward the outside world, perhaps seeking to extort more food and fuel aid.
2. It has kept up arms sales (including sales of Scud rockets and other technology) to the highest bidder and conducts rocket tests.
3. In 2002, North Korea announced, then denied, that it possesses nuclear weapons.

V. The role of confidence in utopian futures.

A. Ideological dictatorships need powerful visions of the future to sustain their momentum and compel awe from believers, as well as foes.

B. In the absence of such confidence in the future vision, regimes can stall and begin to disintegrate.

Essential Reading:
John O. Koehler, Stasi: The Untold Story of the East German Secret Police.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What were the crucial turning points in each of the three regimes, leading to a decline of political confidence?
2. Why has the North Korean regime been more durable than that of East Germany or the Soviet Union?
Lecture Twenty-One
From the Berlin Wall to the Balkans

Scope: As the 20th century neared its end, the spirit of the times seemed to be sending mixed signals. On the one hand, from 1989 to 1991, Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union fell with astonishing speed, and hopes for a transition to democracy abounded. Yet at the same juncture, Europe saw a reversion to the crimes that had marked World War II in the troubled Balkans. As Yugoslavia began to crumble, the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic came to power with the ideology of establishing a “Greater Serbia,” ethnically cleansed of minorities. Radio propaganda and even pop music incited ethnic hatreds. In Bosnia and Kosovo, Serbian paramilitary groups and government forces cooperated in mass terror and expulsions, also setting up concentration camps before belated intervention by the international community.

Outline

I. The democratic wave.
   A. An epoch ends.
      1. For most of the Cold War, an estimated third of the world’s population lived under Communist regimes.
      2. The remarkable self-liberation of societies made the century’s close a hopeful time.
   B. Simultaneously, however, certain events suggested that millenarian expectations were premature.

II. The hopes of 1989.
   A. Figures.
      1. Remarkable individuals, many more than can be described here, challenged authoritarian states, and their demands converged around 1989.
      3. A rich literature of dissidence circulated in samizdat (“underground press”) form, including Solzhenitsyn’s works.
      4. Czechoslovakian playwright Vaclav Havel (b. 1936), later president, was imprisoned for his human rights activism. His ideas on “civil society” seemed a prescription for recovery from totalitarianism.
      5. Pope John Paul II (b. 1920), born Karol Wojtyla, the first non-Italian pontiff since 1522, was shaped by his experience of Nazi and Communist control of Poland and influenced Eastern European transition.
   B. Perceptions of the future.
      1. Economic failure and political repression eroded confidence in future visions of Communist regimes.
      2. American and Western European economic progress contrasted starkly.
      3. Movement toward European unification also created fear of being left out.
   C. Technology.
      1. Technology’s role was ambiguous: It enabled surveillance and jamming, but television, radio (Radio Free Europe and Voice of America), and movies also had the opposite effect, opening societies.
      2. Fax machines were used by opposition movements.
      3. The S.D.I. program of space defenses proposed by American president Ronald Reagan raised the prospect of another unsustainable arms race.
   D. Peaceful revolt.
      1. The revolutions of Central and Eastern Europe were remarkably peaceful, given that the potential for violence seemed so high.
      2. An important catalyst and model for change came earlier, with the Polish trade union Solidarity (Solidarnosc) in Gdansk in the 1970s, led by Lech Walesa. Even after being banned in 1982, it was an open conspiracy including a quarter of the population.
      3. After Brezhnev’s death in 1982, the Soviet leadership moved to reform. In 1985, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev (b.1931) became the party’s general secretary, charged with saving Communism.
      4. Born to a peasant family in southwestern Russia, he rose in the Komsomol and party and, in 1985, was the Politburo’s youngest member.
5. His *Perestroika* movement sought reform of economics. *Glasnost* encouraged constructive criticism.

6. Too radical for hardliners yet too limited for democrats, Gorbachev’s reforms both raised popular expectations and disappointed them. In the West, he was lionized but misunderstood.

7. Gorbachev sought to cut expensive subsidies and improve relations with the West by shedding the “outer empire.”

8. In East Germany, after refugee outflows and internal conflict among the elite, the Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989. Scenes of celebration broadcast live worldwide set off chain reactions, and German unification followed in 1990.

9. Communist regimes elsewhere in Eastern and Central Europe were simultaneously liberalizing, abolishing Communist monopoly: Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia (the fall of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu [1918–1989] was violent).

10. The chain reaction also spread to the Soviet Union. National liberation movements, such as Sajudis in Lithuania, rallied populations, even after violence by Soviet special-forces troops in 1991.

11. In August 1991, Gorbachev’s hardliner allies attempted a coup, which failed, leading to the Soviet Union’s final breakup.

E. General observations.

1. Such total collapse, without conflagration, was astonishing.

2. The opposition movements leading the revolutions of 1989–1991, in spite of high expectations, were not utopian.

3. The process of escaping the mindsets created by these ideological regimes was not quick and is still ongoing.

4. Surveys of damage done to Central and Eastern European societies are still underway. Bitter Russian observers describe a century’s “negative selection.”

5. This underlines the need in such societies to confront the past, accounting for history’s blank spots. Recovery of the past is crucial to this reckoning.

III. Chastened expectations.

A. Democratic euphoria.

1. Some observers believed that a democratic millennium had arrived.

2. American political scientist Francis Fukuyama speculated that this was the “end of history.”

3. In fact, the democratic wave was not irresistible, as contemporary events made clear.

B. Tiananmen Square massacre.

1. Chinese student demonstrations in favor of democratic reforms massed in Beijing.

2. On June 4, 1989, the army moved in, killing, it was estimated, several hundred students and arresting about 10,000 more.

IV. The agony of Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Kosovo.

A. General observations.

1. The breakup of unitary Yugoslavia, earlier held together by Josef Tito (1892–1980), involved mass violence and genocide.

2. Although in 1948 the United Nations proscribed genocide, these atrocities at first met with international inaction.

3. Notions of “the international community” were used to evade responsibility.

B. Yugoslavia.


2. With Communist collapse in Europe, an ideological vacuum opened.

3. Serbian Communist leader Slobodan Milosevic (b. 1941) exploited this situation with a Nationalist ideology of “Greater Serbia.”

4. Milosevic was born to a Montenegrin family in Serbia.

5. Joining the Communist Party at 18, he rose swiftly, betraying his own patron.

6. In 1987, Milosevic spoke at Kosovo’s ancient battlefield, a prime example of abuse of history to mobilize present-day grievances.
7. Other nationalities grew anxious, and, in 1991, Slovenia and Croatia seceded and became independent after a brief war.
8. In the new aggressively Nationalist climate, radio and television broadcast propaganda and songs of the Turbo-folk genre.

C. Bosnia.
1. When Bosnia tried to secede in 1992, Milosevic mobilized paramilitaries to seize territory. Mortars and snipers targeted Sarajevo.
2. Paramilitaries, such as Arkan’s Tigers, engaged in “ethnic cleansing,” terrorizing, raping, and killing to expel. Stages of ethnic cleansing were systematized and became routine.
3. In concentration camps, such as Omarska, non-Serbs were abused, tortured, and killed.
4. When Srebrenica, declared a UN “safe area,” was overrun by Serb forces in July 1995, Muslim men and boys were separated from their families, and some 7,000 were killed.
5. International inaction, blaming “age-old hatreds,” allowed ethnic cleansing to continue. European diplomats declared this a European problem but did not intervene.
6. In a brutal cycle, ethnic Serbs were likewise driven out of areas where Milosevic was not in control.
7. NATO air war against Serb forces in August 1995 helped end the war, leading to the Dayton negotiations in November 1995, with de facto partition of Bosnia and no return for refugees.
8. In four years of fighting, some 200,000 died and two million were left homeless.

D. Kosovo.
1. Brutal repression of the majority ethnic Albanians in Serbia’s Kosovo province led to a guerrilla movement. In the summer of 1998, Serbian police actions of increasing ferocity took place, including killings in Racak in January 1999.
2. As NATO forces began bombing the Yugoslav army in March 1999 (without UN approval), Milosevic sped up ethnic cleansing already underway (Operation Horseshoe).
3. Television showed scenes of railcars of Albanians being expelled. Nearly a million Kosovar refugees were forced from their homes.
4. On June 3, 1999, Yugoslavia surrendered, losing control of Kosovo.

E. After losing presidential elections in 2000, Milosevic was handed over by Serbia to the Hague to stand trial for war crimes.

V. The future legacy of the past.
A. A crucial point comes into focus: The past does not dictate present or future actions.
B. However, the past is often manipulated for visions of a desired future.
C. This fact highlights the importance of knowledge of the past and a critical perspective.

Essential Reading:
Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both, Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime.

Supplementary Reading:
Rezak Hukanovic, The Tenth Circle of Hell: A Memoir of Life in the Death Camps of Bosnia.

Questions to Consider:
1. What are the main reasons that the Soviet Union’s collapse took place largely without explosions of mass violence, as many had predicted?
2. Why did China’s democratic movement fail while opposition movements in Eastern and Central Europe succeeded?
Lecture Twenty-Two

Rwanda

Scope: In 1994, as the world looked on, horrific events unfolded in the central African country of Rwanda. Tension between two social groups erupted into genocide, encouraged by the state. The Hutu-dominated government organized the mass murder of the Tutsi minority. The state provided machetes for the killers, directed their movements through radio broadcasts and lists of intended victims, and enflamed them with propaganda, including hate-filled songs and quasi-religious Hutu commandments preaching the destruction of the enemy Tutsis. In the course of 100 days, 800,000 people were slaughtered, while the international community failed to intervene to prevent this recent genocide.

Outline

I. Background.
   A. Hutu and Tutsi.
      1. The Hutus and Tutsis of the central African country of Rwanda speak the same language and have the same religious background.
      2. Traditionally, the minority Tutsis were herders and landowners, while the majority Hutus were farmers.
      3. In the past, the Tutsi minority had been dominant.
      4. Some scholars argue that the lines of division between the groups were initially fluid and based on class and occupation, not ethnic difference. Intermarriage was common.
   B. Colonial legacies.
      1. Rwanda became a German colony in 1885 and, after World War I, was transferred to Belgian rule.
      2. Belgian administrators invented a “nasal index” to measure Tutsis and to scientifically categorize people on identification documents.
      3. Colonial administrative division of Rwandans led to an increasingly strict separation of the groups, which had earlier intermingled.
   C. Independence.
      1. Rwanda became independent in 1962.
      2. The majority Hutu dominated the new republic. Discrimination compelled many Tutsis to flee Rwanda.
      3. Fighting continued between Tutsi rebel groups and the Hutu-led Rwandan government, which was supported by France and Belgium.
      4. The Arusha Peace Accords of 1993 called for a new government to include the Tutsi rebel groups, such as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). UN peacekeepers, coordinated by Kofi Annan (later UN secretary general), were sent in to observe.

II. Unleashing “Hutu power.”
   A. Origins.
      1. Some Hutu political leaders, championing “Hutu power,” began to cultivate a racial hatred of the Tutsi, and their publications referred to the Tutsi as cockroaches, dehumanizing their opponents.
      2. At the head of the movement was Juvenal Habyarimana, leader of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development and Democracy (MRND).
      3. A clear aspect of a political religion, the official newspaper published in 1990 a document called “The Hutu Ten Commandments,” which praised Hutu ideology, Hutu purity through separation, and a merciless approach toward the Tutsis.
      4. Hutu activists organized a militia called the Interahamwe (“those who work together”).
      5. The militia gathered weapons and more than half a million machetes, one for every third Hutu man.
   B. Inspirations.
      1. A government document found after the genocide quoted Lenin and Josef Goebbels on the uses of propaganda.
      2. Films about the Nazis were later found at the home of President Habyarimana.
3. In an echo of the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution, local killing units were called Public Safety Committees.

C. Language.
1. A phraseology was invented to cloak preparations for massacre, referred to as “work,” in ideological terms. The genocide was called umuganda, “public work.”
2. Weapons were called “tools.” The overall killing plan was called, in imitation of the Nazis, the “final solution.”

D. Propagating the message.
1. The government used newspapers and radio to spread its message.
2. The government provided free radios to expand its reach.
3. Songs of hate against Tutsis were played on radio stations that would later relay orders for killing.
4. Weekly propaganda meetings featured arts performances with messages of hate.
5. Images of President Habyarimana were posted ubiquitously and worn as buttons.

E. The flashpoint.
1. On April 6, 1994, Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana was assassinated under mysterious circumstances. The moderate vice president and Belgian peacekeepers were murdered immediately after.

III. Genocide.
A. The campaign.
1. Most killings took place in April 1994.
2. The massacres claimed 800,000 lives over the course of 100 days.
3. Although organized by the government, the killers included a remarkably broad section of Rwandan society, whether eager, enticed, or coerced. Neighbors turned on neighbors.
4. The massacres grew more radical as they continued, increasingly including women and children and even spouses.
5. Churches were not able to offer effective sanctuary. In some cases, pastors betrayed their parishioners.
6. Religious affiliation was trumped by the power of political religion.
7. Radio broadcasts coordinated the killings and read out lists of names of targets.
8. The popular singer Simon Bikindi was accused of writing songs inciting killings and participating in massacres.
9. The Rwandan minister for family and women’s affairs, Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, was accused of encouraging the rape of Tutsi women.
10. There were, however, many cases of heroic saviors who hid and sheltered intended victims.

B. Ending.
1. In July 1994, the Tutsi-led RPF took control in Rwanda.
2. Killers mixed in with the two million refugees fleeing the fighting.

IV. Aftermath.
A. International passivity.
1. Reasons for international inaction were complex, including stereotypes of Africa, lack of interest, and the remoteness of Rwanda, which meant that visual images took longer to reach an international audience.
2. While the killings were taking place, diplomats in the United Nations and in the United States deliberately avoided calling the events genocide, because doing so would obligate them to take action.
3. In November 1994, the UN Security Council approved a resolution for an international court to try crimes of genocide in Rwanda.

B. Reckoning.
1. In 1995, the United Nations set up an International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania.
2. Genocide trials are still ongoing in other jurisdictions as well.
Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Philip Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda.

Questions to Consider:
1. What action by the international community could have been most effective in forestalling the full tragedy (a) before the killings began and (b) after they had begun?
2. What role did religion play in the massacres in Rwanda?
Lecture Twenty-Three
Saddam Hussein’s Iraq

Scope: In the lands of ancient Mesopotamia, there arose a movement proclaiming a new secular ideology of Arab unity, Ba’athism. The Ba’ath Party came to power in a coup in 1968, and by 1979, Saddam Hussein had become president. This lecture traces how Hussein established his personal dictatorship, modeling himself on long-ago despot and surrounded by elite Republican Guards. He launched a war against Iran that lasted eight years, resembling World War I in its ferocity, and followed this with chemical attacks against Iraq’s Kurdish minority. Even after the failed invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf War in 1991, the regime endured until 2003.

Outline:

I. Ba’athism: Nationalism and Socialism.

A. Origins.
1. The Ba’ath Arab Socialist Rebirth Party grew out of 1930s pan-Arabism, synthesizing Marxist Socialism with Arab Nationalism.
2. The first organizers in the 1940s were educated at the Sorbonne in Paris: Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din Bitar.
3. Their origins reflected the ideology’s secular nature; Aflaq was Greek Orthodox and al-Din Bitar was a Sunni Muslim.
4. The mystical ideology aimed to revive “one Arab nation with an eternal mission,” shedding tradition and religion and uniting Arabs into a modern civilization, following the slogan “Unity, Freedom, and Socialism.”
5. Observers claim affinities of Ba’athism to Nazism, as well as Stalinism.

B. Ideology in power.
2. Ideological consistency took second place to establishment of personal dictatorships.
3. Iraq, site of ancient Mesopotamia, was established after World War I as a British mandate.
4. Its diversity of populations and faiths often made it unstable.

II. Saddam Hussein: “Great Son of the Arabs.”

A. Background.
1. Saddam Hussein was born in 1937, near Tikrit on the Tigris, into a poor peasant family. Though poor, Tikrit is notable as the birthplace of Saladin the Great, 12th-century conqueror of Jerusalem.
2. One translation of Saddam’s name is “He who confronts.”
3. Young Saddam was abused by his stepfather and fled to live with an uncle of radical racist views.
4. Saddam became notorious as a street thug.
5. He joined a Ba’athist coup attempt in 1959, fleeing to Egypt after its failure.
6. While exiled in the 1960s, Saddam reportedly became fascinated with Stalin and later imitated his show trials.

B. Rise to power.
1. Saddam returned to Iraq in 1963 after the Ba’ath Party came to power. When it was overthrown, he spent two years in prison.
2. The Ba’ath Party retook control in 1968, and Saddam rose to prominence.
3. In July 1979, Saddam took over leadership.
4. He gathered relatives and friends from Tikrit, including his brutal sons Uday and Qusay, into an inner circle often compared to the Mafia.
5. Republican Guards were core troops, while Special Republican Guards were his trusted elite.
6. Like Stalin, Saddam purged his following repeatedly.
7. Mukhabarat security services terrorized and spied on the population.
8. Saddam held many offices, including president, commander-in-chief, chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, and general secretary of the Ba’ath Party.
C. Cult of personality.
   1. His portraits were ubiquitous, in different poses and costumes.
   2. Like Stalin, Saddam used propaganda to rewrite his past exploits.
   3. He rarely appeared in public, however.
   4. The newspaper *Babel* (run by his son Uday), radio, and television spread propaganda celebrating the image of the leader.

D. Paranoia.
   1. Even Saddam’s own elite was suspected.
   2. He reportedly had eight body-doubles standing in for him to avoid assassination.
   3. He is said to have had an intense fear of germs and infection.

III. Armed action.
A. The Iran-Iraq War: clash of revolutionary ideologies.
   1. After Iran’s 1979 Islamic Revolution, Saddam attacked. The war strikingly resembled World War I and cost a million lives.
   2. The United States saw Iraq as a useful counterweight to Iran.

B. War on the Kurds.
   1. Kurds are about a quarter of the population, and Kurdish rebels challenged Saddam.
   2. In the Anfal campaign, launched in 1988, thousands of Kurdish villages were wiped out to remake society and concentrate Kurds in new “victory cities.” Some 100,000 Kurds were killed, mostly in mass executions.
   3. From 1987, chemical weapons were used against Kurds by “Chemical Ali” Hassan al-Majid, a cousin of Saddam.
   4. In March 1988, the Kurdish town of Halabja was gassed using mustard gas, nerve gasses, and perhaps, biological agents. Some 5,000 were killed, with thousands more hurt.

IV. Saddam’s regime and ambitions.
A. Ancient and recent models.
   1. Saddam emulated great past rulers, including Babylon’s Nebuchadnezzar of the 6th century B.C. and Hammurabi of the 18th century B.C. Symbols link their destinies.
   2. In Tikrit, a mural showed twin armies, modern and ancient: Saladin’s and Saddam’s, headed for Jerusalem.
   3. Buildings of Babylon (where ancient bricks bore Nebuchadnezzar’s name) were rebuilt, using bricks with Saddam’s name.

B. Strategic aims.
   1. Saddam presented himself as leader of the Arab world.
   2. He aimed for hegemony in the Middle East, evidenced by repeated wars of aggression.
   3. He sought to build nuclear weapons but was impeded by a 1981 Israeli airstrike on a nuclear plant built with French help.

C. Lunge for hegemony.
   1. In 1990, Saddam invaded Kuwait with the world’s fourth largest army. As “Province no. 19,” Kuwait was annexed and pillaged.
   2. In the 1991 Gulf War, the United States led a UN force against Iraq, winning after 90 hours of land war.
   3. After six weeks, Iraq was expelled from Kuwait, but Saddam was allowed to remain in power and quell rebellions by Kurds and Shi’ites.
   4. Afterward, Saddam allegedly said that his true mistake was to invade without nuclear weapons.

V. Repression, the religious turn, and dynamics of the regime.
A. Torture.
   1. Reports from Iraqi prisons included extreme instances of torture, as well as “cleansing” of jails through mass killings.
   2. Relatives of targeted people were also jailed, tortured, and killed to deter others.
   3. Rape was used as a tool of coercion.
4. Hussein’s son Uday reportedly used his Olympic program building to torture athletes for disappointing performances.

B. The religious gloss.
1. After defeat in the Gulf War, Hussein’s regime took on a new religious coloration despite the Ba’ath secularism, recalling Stalin’s tactical alliance with the Russian Orthodox Church in World War II.
2. The words “God is great” were added to Iraq’s flag.
3. In 1999, the Ahlamlalamaniyah campaign, “Enhancement of Islamic Belief,” was launched, banning drinking and gambling. A radio broadcasting the Quran was set up.
4. Accusations of prostitution against women mistrusted by the regime led to public executions.
5. Hussein claimed to champion the Palestinian cause and Muslim control over Jerusalem, organizing an “Army of Jerusalem” for propaganda effect.
6. Hussein reportedly donated $15 million in support for families of suicide bombers attacking Israel. Saddam decided on specific cash payments for specific actions.
7. Propaganda showed Hussein in traditional clothes and at prayer and claimed his descent from the prophet Muhammad.

C. Mosques and palaces.
1. In spite of UN sanctions, which the regime blamed for numerous civilian deaths, Hussein built magnificent new palaces, mosques, and amusement parks.
2. After the Gulf War, about 50 presidential palaces were built at an estimated outlay of $2.5 billion a year.
3. In 2002, 30 mosques were built in Baghdad.
4. The Mother of Battles Mosque was opened in 2001. Saturated with symbolism, it featured minarets made of missiles, details recalling Saddam’s background, and a Quran said to be written in his blood.
5. Under construction was the Mosque of Saddam the Great, intended as the second largest Muslim worship center after Mecca.

D. Bolstering the personality cult.
1. On October 2002, a referendum on his presidency was held, with nearly unanimous results reported.
2. In 2002, the government issued a little white book (reminiscent of Mao’s Little Red Book), Saddam Hussein: Great Lessons, Commandments to Strugglers, the Patient and Holy Warriors, containing 57 commandments.
3. These sayings were also displayed in public places, repeated at schools, and read after prayers five times daily.
4. In private, Saddam’s habits were reportedly indulgent, including Cuban cigars and rosé wine. His narcissism was reflected in his appearance and retinue.

VI. Steering toward conflict.
A. In November 1998, Hussein ended cooperation with UN inspectors after systematic, long-standing subterfuges. Defectors revealed details of weapons programs, including weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, and nuclear).
B. Observers described one of Saddam’s central weaknesses as miscalculation in international politics because of the closed circle around him.
C. By 2003, with the United Nations unable to enforce its resolutions on disarming Iraq, confrontation with the United States intensified.
1. American and British forces went to war with Iraq in March 2003, a conflict that lasted about a month.
2. The Iraqi regime melted away quickly; Saddam and his sons vanished. Hannah Arendt would not have been surprised by this rapid collapse.
3. Before the war began, Saddam’s son Qusay took $1 billion from the Central Bank, a return to the mobster role so common in such regimes.
4. Mass graves have since been uncovered in Iraq.

Essential Reading:
Supplementary Reading:
Con Coughlin, *Saddam: King of Terror*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Which lessons has Saddam seemingly learned in his emulation of leaders of the past?
2. Is the religious turn in the propaganda of the regime a genuine change or a ploy? What arguments speak for either position?
Lecture Twenty-Four
The Future of Terror

Scope: Ultimately, what are the lessons of the 20th century’s linked experiences of the promise of utopia and the reality of terror? This lecture poses the urgent question of how to be vigilant against the revival of movements such as those surveyed and how they can best be resisted. It examines the phenomenon of terrorism in the world today, attempts at international justice, and strivings for the effective proscription of genocide. Among other present-day developments, this lecture examines the growing appeal of Islamist radicalism, transmuting religion into ideology, and the mission of such groups as Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda, along with other groups spreading politicized religious messages. The question of whether these global trends are likely to continue and intensify is of vital importance to the future.

Outline

I. Terror today.
   A. After the rise of “political religions” in the 20th century, today we see more explicit syntheses of politics, religion, and ideology emerging.
   B. Aum Shinri Kyo.
      1. On March 20, 1995, Japan’s Aum Shinri Kyo (“Supreme Truth”) cult released sarin gas in Tokyo’s subways, leaving 12 dead and thousands injured.
      2. Teachings of their spiritual master, Shoko Asahara, drew on Buddhism but turned to predictions of apocalypse.
      3. Rather than simply await it, they tried to accelerate the apocalypse, also seeking an “earthquake machine.”
   C. Suicide bombers.
      1. Palestinian suicide bombers, young men and women called shahid, or “martyrs,” are increasingly common in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, exploding themselves among civilians.
      2. Polls indicate they enjoy wide popularity in their communities.
      3. Most are from religiously oriented groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and alter long-standing prohibitions against suicide in Islam. However, secular groups have also adopted this tactic.
   D. Radical Islamist ideology.
      1. Islamism, as distinct from traditional Islam, synthesizes religious impulses and modern ideology.
      2. Radical Islamists view themselves as carriers of a total ideology that supersedes modern Western ideologies.
      3. In a population of a billion Muslims worldwide, radical Islamists are a small group.
      4. In spite of expressing longings for restoration of the caliphate of the 7th century, Islamists often break with traditional Islam in significant ways: altering traditions, identifying Islam with state power in new ways, and hardening prescriptions for personal faith into political dogmas.
      5. Introduction of the concept of progress is also an important contrast with traditional Islam.
      6. Adherents are often from prosperous backgrounds and may be students of science or engineering. The movement’s use of technology, whether the Internet or modern weapons, is characteristic.
      7. In spite of denunciations of the West and the preaching of armed jihad, Islamist thinking is heavily influenced by Western ideologies it has appropriated.
      8. A key thinker, the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) of the Muslim Brotherhood, who studied in the United States, accepted Marx’s timeline of historical stages, adding a final one after Communism, the triumph of Islamism.
      9. His writings called for a unitary state and classless society, achieved through violent means.
      10. Similar trends can be seen in other schools of Islamist thought, including that of revolutionary Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini (1900–1989) after 1979.
      11. Islamism is not a throwback but, rather, a modern ideological form.
II. September 11th and al Qaeda.
   A. On September 11, 2001, New York’s World Trade Center Towers were destroyed by al Qaeda terrorists, coordinated by Osama bin Laden.
      1. The attack was also intended as an act of propaganda.
      2. In al Qaeda texts found later in Afghanistan, suicide missions were praised in a booklet entitled “The Solution.”
   B. Osama bin Laden.
      1. Bin Laden (b. 1957) was born into a prosperous family in Saudi Arabia; when his father died, he inherited millions from his father’s construction empire.
      2. He studied in Saudi Arabia, without finishing school, and was drawn to radical activists in Central Asia near Afghanistan, including the Egyptian Ayman al-Zawahiri.
      4. In 1996, bin Laden made a declaration of jihad against the West.
      5. In February 1998, bin Laden and Zawahiri declared a World Islamic Front, reminiscent of ideas of Socialist and Communist internationals, and issued a fatwa ruling against “Crusaders” (Westerners) and “Zionists,” ordering the killing of Americans, whether civilian or military.
   C. Terror and ideological visions.
      1. Of the September 11 attacks, bin Laden said, “It is what we instigated, for a while, in self-defense... Every time they kill us, we kill them so a balance of terror can be achieved.”
      2. In a tape released in December 2001, bin Laden spoke of “blessed terror.”
      3. Videos and other documents found in Afghanistan in 2002, after the defeat of the group’s Taliban hosts, showed experiments with chemical weapons.
   D. Such instances show that terror and utopia are still dynamic and active as the 21st century begins.

III. Why, then, did it all happen?
   A. The 20th century’s violent record requires explanation, at least in broad outline.
   B. Indisputable improvements in sciences and material progress opened up new horizons of what seemed possible in other areas of life, including social organization.
      1. Paradoxically, optimism about utopian possibilities led to frustration with obstacles to their realization (whether material limits or people).
      2. Glorious ends were used to justify any means, including violence, coercion, and terror.
   C. Modern popular politics, whether in the form of democracy or totalitarian attempts to orchestrate the masses, injected new forces into the international and domestic political arenas.
   D. Decline of traditional religions left a hunger for meaning to be filled by political faiths.
   E. Ultimately, readiness to undertake both utopian experiment and terror depended on views of man’s nature.
      1. Mao’s musing on the beauty of humans as “blank pages” to be written on captures one view.
      2. The resistance or dissent of the witnesses of the century we have discussed hinged on a different view of mankind, as intrinsically inviolable and durable in individual dignity.

IV. Institutional solutions?
   A. The United Nations.
      1. From its founding, the United Nations is a collection of states, not a world government.
      2. As an arena that includes democracies and dictatorships, it has not been immune from the contradictions of politics and ideology.
      3. In 2002, Libya, a state sponsoring terrorism, chaired the Human Rights Committee, illuminating these contradictions.
      4. In such crises as those that took place in Bosnia, Kosovo, or Rwanda, appeals to an “international community” often released nations from responsibility for action.
   B. The International Criminal Court.
      1. In 2002, a new International Criminal Court was established, with claims to universal jurisdiction.
      2. Some nations, including the United States (which declined to participate), are concerned about the implications for national sovereignty, the basis of democratic responsibility.
C. A level even deeper than that of institutions is that of the individual and how the individual’s human rights and being are regarded in politics and by ourselves.

V. The question of human nature.
   A. Much of the confrontation with utopias, their hopes, disappointments, and terrors, centered on the issue of human nature and whether it can be changed: Is there one essential human nature that is enduring and durable, or is man a product of environment, education, and social influence (what Steven Pinker calls the “blank slate”)?
   B. Isaiah Berlin.
      1. The late historian of ideas Isaiah Berlin (1909–1997) took as a central motto for his work a quote by philosopher Immanuel Kant on the “crooked timber of humanity.”
      2. Kant’s aphorism suggested that man is made of material so complex, organic, and “crooked” in its individuality that “nothing entirely straight” can be carved from it.
      3. A central paradox is this: Is it in human nature to imagine utopias in which that human nature is overcome?
   C. A new threshold?
      1. Is the utopian dream of changing human nature now to be accomplished by other means—technology?
      2. Advances in genetic engineering and pharmacology accelerate at such a dizzying pace that consideration of long-term implications lags behind.
      3. Aldous Huxley’s surmise in fiction that cloning would yield a new human condition is perhaps about to be tested in reality.
      4. Is a “posthuman” future in store?

VI. Lessons.
   A. What lessons emerge from studying the century’s record of utopia and terror?
   B. Returning to the key elements.
      1. In terms of the role played by the masses, one sees the importance of individuality, embedded in true, everyday human community, rather than given over to loneliness in crowds. Genuine individuals resist the “marching impulse” of organized crowds.
      2. Although machines of control were important to tyrannies, technology itself is clearly neither a curse nor an answer, given its surprising potential for liberating effects or enslavement.
      3. The role of a mobster mentality in elites seeking power in disordered societies urges cultivation of the virtues an active citizenry needs to build responsible states and societies.
      4. The fraudulent splendor of total master plans is abundantly clear in the historical record.
   C. Amnesia as a danger.
      1. The very fact that the ideological dictatorships of the century did not exist in vacuums but interacted, fought, learned from, and occasionally imitated one another carries a crucial implication: It is dangerous to be unaware of their records.
      2. There is special danger in forgetting these phenomena and crimes of the 20th century, which could lead to revivals.
      3. After Communism’s collapse in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, scarcely any leaders were held accountable or put on trial. The same is true in the case of other regimes worldwide, such as the Khmer Rouge.
      4. Such amnesia, though perhaps initially comfortable, poisons responsible politics and distorts the mature historical consciousness of societies.
      5. In Russia today, Communist symbols have returned, while newly discovered mass graves are ignored, in spite of the efforts of such organizations as Memorial. In a poll conducted throughout Russia in 2003, on the 50th anniversary of Stalin’s death, 53 percent of all those asked approved of Stalin, while only 33 percent disapproved.
      6. In Germany in 2003, an East German Communist theme park is planned by a Berlin company.
   D. A basis for cautious optimism.
      1. Philosophers continue to debate whether utopias are indispensable to human beings, a precondition of any progress.
2. Our survey of the historical record of the last century urges vigilance against revivals and new forms of the total ideologies, as well as humility and caution in utopian thought experiments.
3. The heroism and humanity of the witnesses to the century we considered, as well as countless other unknown people who confronted terror regardless of their own fates, provide an example that is not utopian, but historically and existentially very real.

**Essential Reading:**
Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*.
Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. Why did suicide attacks become much more frequent as forms of terrorism in the last 10 years?
2. Does an essential human nature exist, or is humanity a material that can be formed and shaped?
Biographical Notes

Arendt, Hannah (1906–1975). A German-Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, she came to the United States and became a noted political philosopher on the faculty of the University of Chicago. Her classic work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), is of lasting significance and likely to be read many centuries hence. She remains a controversial figure because of her relationship with German philosopher Martin Heidegger, who had supported the Nazis, and because of her *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), which popularized the notion of the “banality of evil.”

Berlin, Sir Isaiah (1909–1997). Born in Riga, Latvia, Berlin’s family emigrated to Britain. After study at Oxford, he became a noted historian and writer on political philosophy. His works in the history of ideas are classics, as are his meditations on the challenges of liberalism. He was knighted in 1957.

Bin Laden, Osama (b. 1957). Born in Saudi Arabia into a wealthy family, bin Laden was drawn to Islamist radicalism and became the leader of the al Qaeda terrorist group, with worldwide networks of activists, which launched the attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001. He is currently in hiding, probably somewhere in Central Asia.

Canetti, Elias (1905–1994). A remarkable polymath intellectual, novelist, playwright, and philosopher, who was born in Bulgaria and grew up in Vienna. His works are written in German and include the 1960 study *Crowds and Power*, an extended and sparkling examination of crowd psychology and the dynamics of masses. His interest in the topic was awoken by personal observation of the interwar turmoil in Germany and Austria. He was awarded the 1981 Nobel Prize in literature.

Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeyevich (b. 1931). Born into a peasant family in Stavropol, Gorbachev studied law at Moscow University and rose through the ranks of the Komsomol youth league and the party. In 1985, he was appointed General Secretary of the Party to reform the Soviet Union. A true believer, often misunderstood in the West, Gorbachev planned to use the programs of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* to put the Soviet system on a firm, efficient footing. The programs and the expectations they had raised throughout the Soviet Union and in satellite states in Eastern Europe soon escaped his control. He vacillated between liberalization and repression of the sort seen in Vilnius, Lithuania, in 1991. In the summer of 1991, his hardliner allies attempted a coup that collapsed almost immediately, leading to the breakup of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev remains a celebrity in the West but is intensely unpopular in Russia today.

Havel, Vaclav (b. 1936). Czech playwright and human rights activist. His absurdist writings were eloquent commentary on the absurdist political regime ruling his country. He was imprisoned for his human rights activities with Charter 77. In the 1989 revolutions, he led the dissident group Civic Forum and became president of the country in the same year, later becoming president of the Czech Republic after the breakup of Czechoslovakia.

Hitler, Adolf (1889–1945). Born in the Habsburg Empire to a customs official’s family, Hitler was a loner and dreamer as a youth. The Vienna Academy of Fine Arts rejected him in 1907, and he began a downward slide into the Viennese underworld. When World War I began in 1914, Hitler was exultant at having found meaning at last and volunteered for the German army, serving with distinction in the trenches of the Western Front. Germany’s defeat left him shattered but also woke a determination to enter political life. In 1919, Hitler joined the small German Workers’ Party and went on to become its “leader,” or *Führer*, changing the name to the National Socialist German Workers’ Party, or Nazis. After the failed Beer Hall *putsch* in 1923, Hitler served a minimum sentence in jail and wrote *Mein Kampf*, articulating the strategy of the “legal path to power.” With the Depression came political breakthroughs for the Nazi Party. On January 30, 1933, Hitler became chancellor of Germany. The Nazi Party coordinated and controlled the country through the policies of *Gleichschaltung*. Hitler consolidated his own control, purging even his own storm troopers when necessary. He pursued an aggressive foreign policy, breaking the Versailles Treaty and allying with Stalin to begin World War II with his attack on Poland. In 1941, he invaded the Soviet Union in turn to achieve *Lebensraum*, and the genocide against the Jews began in full force. Six million Jews were killed by the Nazis’ machinery of death, following their racial plans. When the war turned against Nazi Germany, Hitler retreated into the unreal world of the Berlin bunker, where he committed suicide in 1945 as Soviet armies approached, leaving the Third Reich, which was to last a thousand years, in ruins.

Hussein, Saddam (b. 1937). Born near Tikrit to a peasant family, Hussein gained a reputation as a street thug and became active in the Ba’ath Party. He was wounded in a coup attempt in 1959 and fled into exile in Egypt. On returning to Iraq after the Ba’ath Party came to power, he became leader by 1979. His wars with Iran (1979–1988)
and 1990 invasion of Kuwait testify to his strategic ambitions. He used chemical weapons against the Kurds, authorized brutal repression of the Iraqi population, and sought to develop weapons of mass destruction, evading UN inspections until his regime was toppled in 2003.

**Huxley, Aldous** (1894–1963). British writer of wide-ranging interests. In addition to many other novels, his 1932 *Brave New World* was a classic dystopia, focusing on cloning and biological conditioning. In 1958, he published *Brave New World Revisited*, in which he concluded that the state he had imagined in his fiction decades ago was now far closer than he had ever expected, an alarming prospect.

**Kim Il-Sung** (1912–1994). North Korean dictator, known as “Great Leader,” installed by Soviet forces after World War II. He was born Kim Son Ju near Pyongyang, became an anti-Japanese guerrilla, was trained and educated in the Soviet Union, and served in the Soviet army during World War II. He launched the disastrous Korean War (1950–1953) in an attempt to rule the entire country. He crafted the ideology of *juche*, or “self-reliance,” pursuing autarky and radical isolation for the nation of 22 million. An elaborate personality cult was built up around him. In 1994, Kim Il-Sung was succeeded by his son, Kim Jong-II.

**Kim Jong-II** (b. 1941). Current leader of North Korea, called “The Sun of the Twenty-first Century.” He was born in Siberia and schooled in East Germany. He has a reputation for being a volatile and cruel playboy, with a fanatical enthusiasm for film (leading to the kidnapping of movie actors). His style of leadership intensified the personality cult that surrounded his father and, in foreign policy, has been expressed in aggressive brinkmanship and production of arms, including a nuclear weapons program.

**Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich** (1870–1924). Born Vladimir Ilyich Ulianov in Simbirsk, the son of a school inspector. After the example of his brother, Lenin became active in revolutionary politics, was arrested, and was exiled to Siberia. After 1900, he lived in exile in Western Europe. In 1903, he led the Bolsheviks in a split with the Russian Social Democrats and organized a party of committed professional revolutionaries. In 1917, while World War I raged, German generals facilitated his return to Russia to undermine the war effort there. Lenin’s Bolsheviks seized power in November 1917 and consolidated their control. After winning the Civil War, Lenin instituted the NEP to speed economic recovery. He enabled the rise of Stalin within the party and state. After a stroke in 1922, Lenin died in 1924. The city of Petrograd was renamed Leningrad, and his body was mumified and displayed outside the Kremlin.

**Mao Zedong** (1893–1976). Born in Hunan province to a farmer family, Mao was attracted by Marxist ideas and cofounded the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. Fighting as a guerrilla, he argued for the revolutionary potential of the peasantry. In 1934, the Long March of encircled Communist guerrillas to northern China launched a myth of Mao’s genius for leadership. After World War II, civil war continued between Chinese Nationalists and the Communists, with the latter victorious by 1949. Mao forged ahead with the revolutionary transformation of China with the 1958 Great Leap Forward, which left massive economic dislocation and famine in its wake. Mao again sought to radically overhaul the system in the Cultural Revolution of 1966, which devastated Chinese society and institutions, until his death in 1976.

**Milosevic, Slobodan** (b. 1941). Born in Serbia to Montenegrin parents, he joined the Communist Party at 18 and rose quickly through its ranks, becoming part of the leadership elite of Yugoslavia. By 1987, as Communist ideology was eroding as a legitimation for rule, Milosevic discovered the power of revived aggressive Nationalism at the ancient battlefield of Kosovo. When Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia moved to break away from Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, Milosevic mobilized paramilitaries and the Yugoslav army to block their independence. Bosnia was subjected to ferocious ethnic cleansing before NATO intervention in 1995. In 1999, Milosevic moved against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo province in Serbia, but his project of demographically transforming the area through expulsions was reversed by another NATO attack. Milosevic is now on trial at the Hague for war crimes.

**Mussolini, Benito** (1883–1945). Born in the Romagna region of Italy, this son of a Socialist had an unruly youth and entered into Socialist politics. During the First World War, his convictions changed, because the military mobilization of the nation appealed to him. After serving in the war, he founded the Fascist movement in 1919, organized squads of Blackshirts, and after the stage-managed March on Rome of 1922, became the dictator of Italy. Increasingly, Mussolini’s regime, unable to live up to its ambitions, moved closer to Nazi Germany, an earlier rival. In 1943, Mussolini was forced to resign but afterwards presided over a small Fascist province. In 1945, he was caught by partisans while trying to flee and was killed and hung upside down in Milan.
Orwell, George (1903–1950). Born Eric Arthur Blair in India, where his father was part of the British civil service, Orwell’s journalism and writing showed a passionate commitment to Socialist ideas. *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) summed up his outrage with the Communist purges of their own allies in the Spanish Civil War, which he participated in on the Republican side. His *Animal Farm* (1945) was a parable condemning totalitarianism, while the classic dystopian novel *1984* (1949) warned of trends that Orwell believed were already well advanced in the modern world.

Pol Pot (1925–1998). Born Saloth Sar to a Cambodian peasant family, he apparently spent some time in a Buddhist monastery before studying in Phnom Penh, where he joined the Communists. From 1949, he studied in Paris but neglected his education and was forced to return to Cambodia. By the late 1960s, he was the mysterious leader of the Khmer Rouge, who came to power in 1975. Under his leadership, policies of ruralization, radical social revolution, and mass murder in the killing fields caused the deaths of some two million. Vietnam’s invasion overthrew the government, but Pol Pot and his followers withdrew into the jungles, where he died many years later, without being brought to trial.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr Isayevich (b. 1918). Born in Rostov-on-Don, Solzhenitsyn studied mathematics and served as an artillery officer in the Soviet army in World War II. In 1945, he was arrested for criticizing Stalin and was sent to the Gulag. He described his personal experiences there in the 1962 novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and related the history of the Gulag in the 1973 study *The Gulag Archipelago*. In 1970, he was awarded the Nobel prize in literature but was then arrested and deported from the Soviet Union in 1974 for his criticism of the state and party. In exile in Switzerland and the United States, Solzhenitsyn continued to write and, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, returned to Russia. He was among the severest critics of the Soviet system but also sternly warned the West of what he saw as its failings.

Stalin, Josef (1879–1953). Born Josef Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili in Georgia, Stalin attended and was expelled from seminary studies in Tiflis. Turning to revolutionary politics, he acquired distinction as a bank robber “expropriating” capital for the movement. Stalin’s role in the 1917 Bolshevik seizure of power was not major, but he was active in the Civil War and rose through the party ranks, occupying important bureaucratic positions that gave him leverage in the struggle for succession after Lenin’s death in 1924. Stalin beat out Trotsky and other rivals by 1927 and later had them murdered. He launched a drive to industrialize the country with the Five-Year Plans and collectivization, which resulted in the Terror Famine in Ukraine and elsewhere, costing millions of lives. In the 1930s, Stalin purged the party, army, and society repeatedly, with show trials dramatizing his power and infallibility. In 1939, Stalin and Hitler pledged friendship in the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Stalin seized his share of Eastern Europe, the Baltic States, and parts of Poland. When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, Stalin was caught unawares. After initial panic, he rallied the population with implicit promises of liberalization after the war. Once the war was won, he betrayed those promises with further violence, including the deportation of entire peoples and liberated Soviet prisoners of war. Just before his death in 1953, in circumstances that are still unclear and disputed today, Stalin (who was already responsible for the death of millions) was perhaps planning an even larger round of renewed purges.

Trotsky, Leon (1879–1940). Russian revolutionary. Born (as Lev Bronstein) in Yelisavetgrad, Trotsky became active as a Menshevik Socialist in Russia and in exile. In the 1905 Revolution, Trotsky led the St. Petersburg Soviet. In 1917, he switched his allegiance to Lenin’s Bolsheviks and was instrumental in their coming to power. As commissar for foreign affairs and architect of the Red Army during the Russian Civil War, Trotsky was one of the most prominent Old Bolsheviks and seemed a natural successor to Lenin, but he was pushed aside by Stalin in 1927, exiled, and finally assassinated in Mexico by an agent of Stalin.

Zamyatin, Yevgeny Ivanovich (1884–1937). Russian writer, novelist, and playwright, born in Tambov province and educated in the capital, St. Petersburg, as a naval engineer. His writing was experimental and satirical. Zamyatin supported the Bolsheviks before the revolution but turned against them after 1917, because he intuited the growing repressive nature of the regime and expressed his fear for the future of Russian literature. In his novel *We*, written in 1920 (published in Russia only in 1988), he created the modern dystopia, which anticipated full Stalinism in many ways. Remarkably, he was allowed to leave the Soviet Union in 1931 and died in exile in Paris.
Bibliography

Essential Reading

Arendt, Hannah. The Origins of Totalitarianism. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951. Classic political philosophy with theoretical explanations for total states. Likely to be read centuries from now to understand the age.


Supplementary Reading


**Internet Resources**

Illinois State University maintains a Web site devoted to documents concerning recent terrorism and responses to it: http://www.mlb.ilstu.edu/crsres/terrorism/home.htm.

The organization Memorial, headquartered in Russia, seeks to keep alive the memory of Stalin’s victims. Its Web site also includes visual materials and texts in English: http://www.memo.ru/eng/index.htm.