EUROPEAN HISTORY FACT SHEET

The following fact sheet covers the United Kingdom, France, and Germany (Prussia). For further background, consult the following works, which were used in the preparation of this fact sheet: Raymond Grew, editor, Crises of Political Development in Europe and the United States; Barrington Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy; Perry Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State; William Langer's Encyclopedia of World History (a reference work); and Dan Jacobs, David Conradt, B. Guy Peters, and William Safran, Comparative Politics.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

William, Duke of Normandy, defeats Anglo-Saxon King Harold at Battle of Hastings. William the Conquerer imposes an advanced form of feudalism on the country, but the Norman conquest also brings a higher degree of centralization and royal control. The Domesday survey (1086) helps the monarchy achieve greater administrative efficacy. William I retains one feature of Anglo-Saxon local government, the shire. As an unpaid administrator recruited from the native elite, the local sheriff (and, later, the Justice of the Peace) provides a crucial link between local and central government. Later on, the sheriff and J.P. also inhibit the development of a professional judicial and administrative bureaucracy along the lines of French Absolutism.

1103 First invasion of Ireland.

1154-1189 Reign of Henry II. Conflict with Thomas Becket (and papacy). Henry II is also responsible for reforms that extend the scope of royal justice.

1215 Magna Carta (Great Charter). Although the result of a conflict between King John and his barons over the safeguarding of feudal privileges, the Magna Carta is regarded as the foundation of the modern British constitution.

Parliament develops out of King's Great Council under Henry III.

Conquest of Wales.

1327-1377 Under reign of Edward III, Parliament develops into a stronger institution with two houses (Commons and Lords). Local justices of the peace take over many of the tasks of "amateur" administration once exercised by sheriffs.

1337 Beginning of Hundred Years War under Edward III. Phillip VI of France and Edward clash over control of a) areas of southwestern France owing homage to the English crown and b) Flanders (today part of Belgium), politically under French administration but economically linked to England. Armed conflict breaks out in 1338, and a series of wars continues until about 1453, when the French (under Charles VII) expel the English (under Henry VI) from Normandy and Guyenne. The French victory does not, however, mark the end of English (or French) regain lost territories on the Continent.)
Decimation of population by Black Death results in regulation of wages and prices and the Statute of Laborers, which requires able-bodied to accept work. However, labor shortage speeds up transition from feudal to formally "free" labor. Enclosure movement (for sheep-raising) also begins at this time, continuing into 18th century. Social structure of upper classes becoming more fluid.

Outbreak of the War of the Roses, between the rival houses of Lancaster and York, each claiming the English crown.

The War of the Roses is ended when Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, defeats Richard III on Bosworth Field. Henry, who is descended from the Lancaster line but is married to a York, reestablishes national unity under the Tudor dynasty after three decades of destructive civil war.

Reign of Henry VIII. Protestant reformation and creation of Church of England. Henry greatly strengthens monarchy in the short run, but his costly wars with France (which force him to sell confiscated Church lands and rely on the support of Parliament) ultimately strengthen the landed gentry at the expense of the crown.

Rebellion and subjugation of Ireland.

Elizabethan Poor Law, regulating public charity.


Charles I, facing a religious rebellion in Scotland, summons "Short Parliament." But Parliament is dismissed when it refuses to grant the king money unless he responds to long-standing religious and economic (monopolies, royal charters, ship money) grievances. Financial obligations to the military force Charles to call a second session, the "Long Parliament," which institutes reforms and impeaches the king's ministers.

English Civil War between Charles and the Parliamentary army. War ends with the capture of the king, the purging of the Parliament in 1648 by the army ("Pride's Purge"); and the trial and execution of the king under the authority of the "Rump" (i.e., unpurged remnant) Parliament in 1649. During the Civil War, radical religious and social movements (Levellers, Diggers) emerge.

COMMONWEALTH AND PROTECTORATE. Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan army general, is made Lord Protector after he purges the Rump Parliament and sets up the "Barebone's Parliament" in 1653. After his death in 1658, he is succeeded for a few months by his son Richard. There follows a period of rule by the military and the Rump Parliament. In 1660, one of the army generals captures London and recalls the living members of the original Long Parliament (from 1640). The reconstituted Long Parliament, in turn, asks the king to return from exile (the "Restoration").
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1689</td>
<td>&quot;Glorious Revolution,&quot; when King James II is replaced by William and Mary of Orange. Victory for the Whig party (who believe in supremacy of Parliament), opponents of the Tories. (Whigs become the Liberals, Tories the Conservatives in the 19th century.) Parliament passes Declaration of Rights (strengthening Parliament and some civil liberties) and Toleration Act (allowing for more religious dissent).</td>
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<td>1707</td>
<td>Act of Union, uniting parliaments of England and Scotland.</td>
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<td>1791-1822</td>
<td>Period of domestic political repression during and after war with revolutionary and Napoleonic France.</td>
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<td>1838-1848</td>
<td>First Reform Act.</td>
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<td>1832</td>
<td>Factory Act, prohibiting (or regulating) child labor and setting up system of factory inspection.</td>
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<td>New Poor Law, creating workhouses for paupers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Repeal of Corn Laws. Victorian Britain becomes more committed to laissez-faire industrial economy and free trade.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Second Reform Act, followed by Reform Acts of 1884, 1918 (all men and women over 30). Women over 21 get vote in 1928.</td>
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<td>Beginning of constitutional crisis over Lloyd George's budget and House of Lords.</td>
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<td>1911</td>
<td>Parliament Act removes last vestiges of real power from House of Lords.</td>
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<td>1922</td>
<td>Irish independence.</td>
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<td>First Labour (coalition) government, under Ramsey MacDonald.</td>
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<td>General strike in sympathy with coal miners.</td>
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<td>Second MacDonald government.</td>
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<td>MacDonald, without broad support of Labour party, forms National Government in coalition with Liberals and Conservatives.</td>
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<td>1945-1950</td>
<td>First postwar Labour government establishes foundations of welfare state (nationalization of Bank of England and mines, National Health Service etc.).</td>
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<td>1950-1964</td>
<td>Conservative governments.</td>
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(also discovery of North Sea oil). Britain joins (then leaves, then rejoins) Common Market.

1979–today

Government of Margaret Thatcher. Social Democratic party splits off from Labour party 1981, forms alliance with Liberals. Benefiting from the Falklands war and a badly divided opposition, Thatcher wins reelection to a second term.

FRANCE

987–996

Reign of Hugh Capet, founder of the Capetian line (the major trunk of future dynastic branches in France). Beginning with Hugh, the Capetians expand and strengthen a state that has its center in the Ile de France, the northern region surrounding Paris. There are major rivals to Capetian hegemony, most notably the House of Burgundy.

1328

Accession of Philip VI, first king from the House of Valois (a branch of the Capetians). During his reign, the Hundred Years War begins. (See UNITED KINGDOM.) Feudal conflicts inside France combine with a joint outside attack from England and Burgundy to weaken the authority of the Valois rulers.

1422–1461

Under Charles VII, the weakness of the Valois dynasty is ended with the defeat of the English at the end of the Hundred Years War. Knight service is abandoned for a permanent army, and the taille (a royal tax from which the nobility is exempt) is introduced in 1439. Charles VII's successor, Louis XI (1461–1483), defeats Burgundy, and his successors unite Brittany (the last remaining principality not subject to Parisian control) with Valois France at the end of the century. In this united, strengthened French kingdom, the nobility retains power in provincial assemblies and local parlements. At the national level, the Estates-General experiences a revival, but because the nobility is tax-exempt, the noble "estate" has little reason to make use of this representative institution.

1562–1598

The Religious Wars. Ostensibly a conflict between the Huguenots (French Protestants) and the Catholic League, this religious struggle overlaps with dynastic struggles (among three rival lines to the throne) as well as with municipal rebellions, peasant revolts, and regional conflicts. The wars subside when Henry of Navarre (a Protestant) gains the throne and converts (for the second time!) to Catholicism. Henry IV, the first Bourbon king, reestablishes order and issues the Edict of Nantes in 1598, which grants a measure of political protection to the Huguenots. Henry's Bourbon successors lay the foundations for French Absolutism, which culminates with Louis XIV.

1610–1643

Henry's son, Louis XIII, comes to the throne at age 9. In 1614, the last session of the Estates-General prior to the French Revolution is held. From 1624 onward, the chief administrator of the French state is Cardinal Richelieu, who establishes the intendant system and lays the groundwork for the highly centralized Old Regime described by Tocqueville. Side by side with this tightly controlled stratum of royal bureaucrats, however, other privileged political classes less
subject to monarchical control are growing: the noblesse de robe (noble-controlled judiciary) and the officiers (tax farmers and other government officials who can buy, sell, or even inherit public offices).

1643-1715 Reign of Louis XIV, the "Sun King." Until 1661, the power behind the throne is Cardinal Mazarin. Between 1648 and 1653, elements of the French nobility left out of the emerging Absolutist system and other classes, overburdened by Mazarin's expensive wars, revolt against the central state in a series of disturbances known as the "Fronde." Scared by the extent of the rebellions, most of the nobility rallies to Louis after the Fronde. Following the death of Mazarin, Louis develops a highly personal style of rule, establishing a court at Versailles where the nobility can come to take part in the cult of the Sun King. His minister of finances, Colbert, encourages French trade through the mercantilist system. In 1685, the Edict of Nantes is revoked.

1789 After Louis XVI's conflict with the parlement of Paris over the resolution of the state's fiscal crisis, the Estates-General is summoned for the first time since 1614. The Estates-General becomes the National Assembly, which proclaims an end to feudalism and issues a declaration on the "Rights of Man." Beginning of the French Revolution.

1792 Abolition of the monarchy, creation of the FIRST REPUBLIC.

Execution of the king, beginning of the Terror, dictatorship of the Jacobin Committee of Public Safety and Robespierre. In 1794, during the month of Thermidor (revolutionary calendar), Robespierre is himself guillotined.

1795-1799 Rule of the Directory, an executive committee of five.

1798 On the 18th of Brumaire (revolutionary calendar date for Nov. 9), coup d'état of Directory member and General Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1799, Bonaparte establishes a three-member Consulate with himself as chief Counsel. Napoleon assumes title of Emperor. The first Napoleonic Empire lasts until other European powers defeat him in 1814 and again at Waterloo in 1815.

1815-1830 BOURBON RESTORATION (Legitimist).

1830 JULY MONARCHY of Louis Philippe (Orleanist)

1848 Revolution establishing SECOND REPUBLIC.

1852 Coup of Louis Bonaparte establishing SECOND (Napoleonic) EMPIRE.

1870 Defeat of Napoleon II at Battle of Sedan in Franco-Prussian war. Loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany. Siege of Paris, suppression of Paris
Commune. THIRD REPUBLIC, lasting until Second World War. (Various constitutional laws create the legal foundations for a republican form of government in 1875. A major constitutional crisis occurs in 1877 when the President and National Assembly clash over the question of whether the executive or the legislature forms the government. The crisis is resolved in favor of the National Assembly.)

Trade unions legalized.

1886-1889 Boulanger crisis. While the Republic is endangered by scandals and torn by conflict between the right (monarchist and pro-Church in orientation) and the left (republican and anti-clerical), a politically astute army general, Boulanger, enjoys great popularity. General Boulanger has the chance to attempt a coup d'etat in 1889 but fails to take advantage of this opportunity to establish a dictatorship. Following the Boulanger crisis came the "Ralliement": The Church -- which had been providing the conservative enemies of the French democracy with an institutional focus -- encouraged Catholics to participate in republican politics.

1898 Height of the Dreyfuss Affair. Emile Zola, the novelist, publishes an article ("J'accuse") which charges that Captain Dreyfuss, a Jewish army officer tried on a trumped-up treason charge four years earlier, had been framed by anti-Semitic foes of the Republic. After the army's coverup has been exposed, Dreyfuss receives a second trial and is eventually exonerated with a Presidential pardon. French politics is divided into two camps -- the Dreyfusards and the anti-Dreyfusards. The affair is a symbol of deeper divisions between Republicans (on one side) and those monarchists and reactionary Catholics (on the other side) who have not yet accepted French democracy. Following the Dreyfuss affair, Radical Republican governments undertake measures to separate church and state and to weaken the power of the clergy.

1914 First World War. Formation of the "union sacree" -- a patriotic alliance of bourgeois parties with socialists who abandon their "internationalism" in favor of national unity. Assassination of socialist leader Jean Jaures, who opposes the war.

Formation of Popular Front government under Socialist Premier Leon Blum. A coalition of left parties concerned about the rise of fascism abroad and eventually committed to social reforms at home. An upsurge of worker militancy (factory occupations) leads to a few welfare state measures and government protection of collective bargaining between employers and employees (the Matignon agreement). The Popular Front collapses in 1937 due to an economic crisis.

War with Germany.


Liberation.
Constitution of FOURTH REPUBLIC. Initially, a "tripartite" coalition (Socialists, Catholics, Communists) along with General DeGaulle forms the government. DeGaulle soon quits politics and remains in retirement throughout most of the 1950's. The tripartite coalition breaks apart with the onset of the Cold War. Throughout the 1950's, France is ruled by a succession of weak and unstable parliamentary coalitions. But administrative continuity and economic growth are provided by planning ministries, who preside over a decade of successful agricultural and industrial modernization.

FIFTH REPUBLIC formed when the parties of the Fourth Republic turn to DeGaulle for a solution to the Algerian crisis. DeGaulle demands a constitution with broad executive powers as a condition for his acceptance of office.

DeGaulle strengthens the Presidency with a constitutional amendment establishing popular election of the President.

1965
DeGaulle reelected in first popular Presidential election.

The "May events" -- a revolt of workers and students paralyzes France in the worst crisis of the Fifth Republic.

DeGaulle resigns after French voters defeat his proposal for a reform of the Senate and local government in a referendum. He is succeeded by two other conservative leaders of the Gaullist coalition -- Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing.

1972
The new Socialist party and the Communist party join with one smaller left party to issue a "Common Program of the Left." Although subject to continual renegotiations throughout various elections in the 1970's, the Common Program demonstrates that the left is successfully adjusting to the Presidential system created by DeGaulle. Eventually, the two parties of the right -- the Gaullists under Chirac and the Independents under (then) President Giscard also form a common program.

1981
Election of Francois Mitterrand as first Socialist President of Fifth Republic.

After a series of economic crises, cabinet reshufflings, and policy revisions throughout his term in office, Mitterrand appoints a new Prime Minister and government. The Communists leave the ruling coalition.

Parliamentary elections give the parties of the right a majority in the National Assembly. Mitterrand names one of his rivals, Jacques Chirac, as Prime Minister. The resulting arrangement, unique in the short history of the Fifth Republic, is a governing "cohabitation" of the right and left.
from Prussia during the Baltic War (1656-1660). In the 1670's, Prussia also becomes involved in large-scale conflicts with France and Sweden. At the same time that Prussia becomes a European power to contend with, Frederick William consolidates his rule domestically: He suppresses representative institutions, puts an end to resistance from urban centers, and creates a militarized civil service centered around the Generalgrietgskommissariat (General War Commissariat).

The Great Elector's successor, Frederick III, becomes the first Prussian King (redesignated Frederick I). He is followed by King Frederick William I, the "Sergeant King," who consolidates the military service state created by his grandfather, Elector Frederick William. By the time the Sergeant King is succeeded by Frederick II ("Frederick the Great") in 1740, the Kingdom of Prussia can compete with other powers for the leadership of Germany.

1740

Prussia acquires Silesia, an economically more advanced region.

Prussia is defeated by Napoleon in the Battle of Jena. There follows the "Era of Reforms."

1807-1816

The Stein-Hardenberg Reforms. Stein reforms the ministerial system of Prussian government along French lines. His reforms are followed by the agrarian reform of Hardenberg, which turns the Junker class into a more commercially oriented landowning class. The modernization of Prussian agriculture and public administration helps Prussia to defeat Napoleon. In the post-Napoleonic settlement, Prussia picks up the northern Rhineland and Westphalia -- later the industrial heartland of Germany (including the Ruhr valley, center of heavy industry).

Foundation of the Zollverein, a north German customs union.

During the Revolution of 1848, liberals and nationalists from German-speaking states gather in Frankfurt with the aim of creating a single German nation-state. The two major options are 1) the kleindeutsch (or little German) solution with Prussian monarch as the head of state and 2) the grossdeutsch (or big German) solution looking toward the Hapsburg monarch. Neither solution is achieved; the revolution is defeated. Among the counterrevolutionaries is a Junker named Bismarck.

1863-1865

Prussia and Austria fight Denmark for control of Schleswig-Holstein, at the base of the Danish peninsula. The war with Denmark marks the international debut of Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who promises to achieve by "blood and iron" what the liberals had failed to do by parliamentary means in 1848 -- unite Germany.

1866

Victory of Prussia over Austria. In addition to helping Prussia become the undisputed leader of German unification, the war helps Chancellor Bismarck to divide his domestic political opponents: In a dispute over how to finance the war, the Chancellor manages to split the liberals into two groups, one of which (the National Liberals) supports his methods of national unification.

Foundation of the North German Confederation, dominated by Prussia.
Franco-Prussian War. By defeating the Second Napoleonic Empire, Bismarck acquires Alsace-Lorraine for Prussia and completes the unification of Germany on the basis of the "little German" solution. All German states north of the Austrian border now united in the GERMAN REICH (or EMPIRE) with William I of Prussia serving as Emperor (Kaiser). Although the Reichstag (or Imperial parliament) in Berlin is elected on the basis of universal manhood suffrage, the Prussian Landtag (or provincial parliament) is elected on the basis of a complicated three-class voting system that favors the very wealthy. And it is in Prussia, by far the largest territory within the new Reich, where real power lies. (Typically, the Imperial Chancellor or Reichskanzler was also the Minister-President of Prussia.)

1870's

Kulturkampf ("Cultural Struggle") of Bismarck against the Catholics, concentrated in the Center party. Most Catholics are from southern Germany, and the Catholic Center party is in favor of local government ("particularism"), as opposed to the centralizing tendencies of the Prussian-dominated (and Lutheran-dominated) Reich. For Bismarck, who brands Center party supporters "Reichsfeinde" (enemies of the Reich), the Kulturkampf is a method of consolidating the new Empire with the support of the (largely Protestant, largely northern) National Liberals. By the 1880's, the Kulturkampf comes to an end, and Bismarck seeks Catholic support for a political coalition less reliant on liberal support.

1878-1879

The so-called "second founding" of the Reich. In 1878, Bismarck secures the passage of the Anti-Socialist Law, banning the increasingly popular Social Democratic party. With this measure, the Social Democrats (SPD) begin to replace the Catholic Center party as "Reichsfeind" Nr. 1. In 1879, Bismarck puts together a protectionist (high tariff) coalition -- the "marriage of iron and rye."

Both of these measures change the social basis of support for the Bismarckian-Wilhelminian Reich and help make the Empire more repressive and less subject to parliamentary control. Now that the Reich is nearly a decade old, Bismarck no longer wants to be dependent on the National Liberals for support. He therefore weakens the liberals in two ways: 1) Economically, by splitting the liberal camp into protectionists and free traders. 2) Politically, by splitting the liberal camp into extreme anti-socialists and supporters of parliamentary liberties. Bismarck's protectionist, anti-socialist alliance lets him bring Conservative agrarians (and, later, Catholics) into the governing coalition of the 1880's.

Passage of the Sickness Insurance Law, the first of several measures Bismarck favors in order to create a paternalistic, conservative welfare state and to lessen the popularity of the persecuted SPD among the workers.

1890

Kaiser William II dismisses Bismarck as Chancellor. Until 1894, the Chancellor is General Caprivi, who moves Germany away from the protectionism of the 1880's and back toward free trade. This move is vigorously supported by industry and by the Junkers. Throughout the 1890's, they agitate for a revision of Caprivi's