

# PART TWELVE

## The World Is in Conflict

Chapter 32: Colonial Empires Crumble

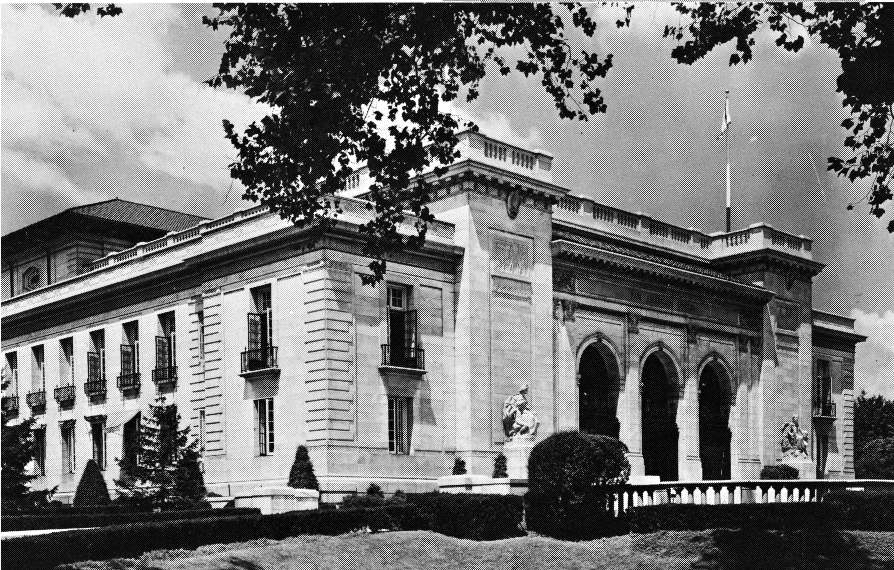
Chapter 33: Wars in Asia Involve the United States

Chapter 34: Western Hemisphere Pursues a Vision



**HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**  
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**PAN AMERICAN UNION**  
Washington

## Chapter 32

# Colonial Empires Crumble

### OPPOSING FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

THE VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS in 1492 lured explorers westward from Europe to seek riches and adventure in an unknown hemisphere. After their discoveries, new maps were drawn showing the Western Hemisphere and the Eastern Hemisphere – the New World and the Old World – separated by oceans on the north, south, east, and west.

Down through the centuries, as a rule, the few had ruled the many in the Old World. Through war and conquest, families gained enough power to maintain their control over peoples, declaring they governed by divine right as princes, emperors, and kings. The thrones were passed down from fathers to sons, and sometimes, to daughters. Their loyal followers were granted land and privileges along with titles of count, lord, duke, earl and the like. These honors, being inherited, created a nobility as a ruling class. Gradually, as towns grew in size and number, merchants and tradesmen gained a voice in their governments in some countries. However, the pattern of the few ruling the many prevailed throughout the Eastern Hemisphere when Columbus sailed

from Palos, Spain, on his famous voyage.

Anxious to gain territory in the newly discovered Hemisphere, governments in Europe encouraged their subjects to seek new homes in distant places so they could hold the country. Although an effort was made to transfer the same pattern of living across the sea, the main goal was possession. Newcomers in a wilderness, far from home, learned that survival depended upon what each one did for himself – man, woman and child. When every family faced the necessity of acquiring food, clothing and shelter, a common bond held them together. People began to think for themselves and to share their ideas with their neighbors. To survive and prosper, they gradually developed government in which they shared responsibility for their safety, success, and happiness. In learning to govern themselves, they acquired the notion that they had the right to govern themselves. This idea, fostered strongly in the British colonies, gradually spread over the Americas, crossing boundaries like seeds in the wind. Leaders rose among peoples to champion the principle of government by the governed:

1765 – I say RIGHTS, for such men have, . . . RIGHTS that can not be repealed or

restrained by human laws, . . . RIGHTS, from the great Legislator of the universe . . . .

JOHN ADAMS  
President of the U.S.

1774 — . . . the experience of all states mercifully demonstrating to us that, when arbitrary power has been established over them, even the wisest and bravest nations that have ever flourished have, in a few years, degenerated into abject and wretched vassals.

JOHN DICKINSON  
Signer of the Constitution

1788 — In a serene mind the sciences and virtues love to dwell. But can the mind of a man be serene, when the property, liberty, substance of himself and of those for whom he feels more than for himself, depend on a tyrant's nod?

JAMES WILSON  
Signer of the Constitution

1811 — Let us fearlessly lay the cornerstone of South American liberty; if we hesitate we are lost.

SIMON BOLIVAR  
Liberator of Spanish colonies in South America

1816 — . . . the way to have good and safe government, is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among the many, distributing to every one exactly the functions he is competent to.

THOMAS JEFFERSON  
Author of Declaration of Independence

After government by the governed became law through the Constitution of the United States, the idea spread in the Americas and crossed the Atlantic to Europe. In some countries, peoples gained more personal liberty during the nineteenth century. This march of freedom was halted in 1914 by the outbreak of war, involving so many nations that it was called World War I. The armistice, signed on November 11, 1918 officially ended the shooting war, the most destructive conflict in history to that date, and left to war-weary peoples the

turmoil resulting from the struggle. The way of life did not return to that of 1914.

Before the Treaty of Versailles was signed in Paris, a feud between two forms of government was brewing in the Russian revolution. After the Communists had gained control of the nation, their plans for government were enforced, and later written into a constitution to be the law of the United Soviet Socialist Republics, and to be promoted in other countries. A few samples from this document are quoted as follows:

#### ARTICLE 4

The economic foundation of the U.S.S.R. is the socialist system of economy and the socialist ownership of the instruments and means of production . . . the abolition of private ownership of the instruments and means of production . . . .”

#### ARTICLE 6

The land, its mineral wealth, waters, forests, mills, factories, mines, rail, water and air transport, banks, communications, large state-organized agricultural enterprises (state farms, machine and tractor station and the like), as well as municipal enterprises and the bulk of the dwelling-houses in the cities and industrial localities, are state property . . . .

#### ARTICLE 12

The principle applied in the U.S.S.R. is that of socialism: From each according to his ability, to each according to his work.

### NEW NATIONS IN EUROPE RISE AND FALL

IN THE SAME MONTH of the same year that the Armistice was signed, General Jan Christian Smuts, a founder of the future League of Nations released a plan for peace. Since a number of peoples in the defeated empires had been living

under governments they did not choose, General Smuts suggested that these peoples be allowed to form new countries of their own. He wrote this section in his proposal for peace:

That there shall be no annexation of any of those territories to any of the victorious Powers, and secondly, that in the future government of these territories and peoples the rule of self-determination or the consent of the governed to their form of government, shall be fairly and reasonably applied.

Czar Nicholas II, ruler of Russia, and his wife and children were murdered, bringing an end to the old order in that land. Millions of Russians lost their lives through disease, starvation, and massacres during the revolution that swept over that vast country. While the government was changing from a monarchy to a Communist dictatorship, peoples living on the western boundary of the old Russian empire took advantage of the confusion to gain their liberty. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania along the Baltic Sea became independent countries. After years of living as a conquered people under Russian domination, Poland was a free nation again and the proud Poles rejoiced. Austria and Hungary were separate countries, and their former neighbors were in a new nation, Czechoslovakia. The map of Europe had been remade by war, again, but not for long. Men promoting Lenin's kind of government were scheming for approval, necessary for gaining the power not only to remap Europe, but the entire world in time.

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized the Communist dictatorship that had taken over the Russian people as the official government.

Communists of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics were received in Washington as ambassadors and official delegates with the same rank as these representatives from all other countries. As nations recognized the U.S.S.R. officially, Communists were located in their capitals.

New nations in Europe scarcely had time to become acquainted with their freedom when another conflict was brewing in Europe and in Asia. In this one, World War II, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was on the side of the United States. With this nation as an ally, officials of the United States discussed both war and peace with Soviet leaders. President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States, Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill of the British government, and Marshal Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union were known as "The Big Three."

In November, 1943 these three leaders met in Teheran (Tehran), Iran. Because Stalin refused to leave his country again, the "Big Three" met next in Yalta, a port on the Black Sea, in January of 1945. After Roosevelt's death in April of the same year, Harry S. Truman, the Vice President became President and joined the "Big Three" meeting in Potsdam near Berlin, Germany. Although agreements made at these meetings considered the right of peoples to a choice of their governments, Stalin ignored them. Soviet soldiers overpowered the Baltic countries that had gained their independence after World War I. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were annexed to the U.S.S.R. and Communist rule was forced upon the people. Finland lost valuable territory and, at great sacrifice, had to pay costly reparations to the Moscow government although left free in name. Poland, Czecho-

slovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania, and Eastern Germany fell as the U.S.S.R. was able to establish Communist governments in the defenseless nations. Communism pushed into Central Europe, leaving only a fringe of free nations bordering the Atlantic Ocean and the western Mediterranean.

On March 12, 1947 President Truman outlined to a joint session of Congress the policy of giving military and economic aid to nations threatened by powerful neighbors. The President immediately recommended advancing \$400,000,000 to Greece and Turkey on the border of the Soviet Union for these nations to spend in defending themselves. A few months later General George C. Marshall, Secretary of State in President Truman's Cabinet, began developing a program for Americans to spend billions of dollars in helping war-ridden nations of Europe to rebuild their bombed-out cities, restore their ruined industries, and become self-supporting again. Under the Marshall Plan, both friends and former enemies regained prosperity. The taxpayers of the United States financed their recovery.

In 1949, the United States, Canada, The United Kingdom (Great Britain), the Netherlands, France, and Belgium founded the Atlantic Pact. Later Norway, Denmark, Italy, Iceland, and Portugal joined "The North Atlantic Treaty For Defense, Peace and Security," called NATO. The countries in NATO intended to work together in their own defense. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was selected as the first commander of the armed forces of NATO. The headquarters were near Paris, France. General Eisenhower had the task of uniting nations with different languages and customs, and peoples with strong national pride. His

successors inherited that problem. In 1967 NATO headquarters were moved to a new location near Brussels, Belgium.

History records the efforts of a number of far-seeing men who advocated a united Europe to end the wars that plagued Europe for centuries. In 1683 William Penn in his famous essay, "The Peace of Europe," had suggested that the countries of Europe:

For love of peace and order, agree to meet by their stated deputies in a general diet, estates, or parliament, and there establish rules of justice for sovereign princes to observe one to another; and thus to meet yearly, or once in two or three years at farthest, or as they shall see cause, and to be styled, the Sovereign or Imperial Diet, Parliament, or State of Europe.

A step was made in this direction in 1952 when an agreement called the European Defense Community was signed in Paris by the foreign ministers of West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The United Kingdom refused to join lest national sovereignty be endangered, but did sign a treaty to resist aggression against anyone of the seven nations in the European Defense Community. Trade agreements are gradually bringing the free nations of western Europe closer together. Nevertheless, the burden of financing armaments for a united European defense still falls heavily upon the taxpayers of the United States. Congress appropriates huge sums of money to aid foreign nations, and supports thousands of American fighting men, ready for combat, who live in these countries to resist any attack. After two world wars, the United States shares the uneasy peace of western Europe, peace by armed might.

## EUROPEAN POWERS LOSE COLONIES

AFRICA HAD long been a colonial continent with only a few independent nations. Most of Africa was claimed by France, Belgium, Great Britain, and Portugal. After World War II, unrest among the natives brought strife and revolution. Many small nations were carved from the former colonies, and their independence recognized by the former mother countries. Twenty years after World War II, Africa had only one European power holding a large block of its land. Portugal had Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea. However, these areas are overseas provinces of the homeland rather than colonies. The people in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea are Portuguese citizens, the same as people living in European Portugal.

Other countries in southern Asia that had been British colonies gained recognition as separate countries, like Canada and Australia, in the British Commonwealth, and some gained total independence. Burma became an independent republic. It

was a blow to Great Britain to lose its richest colony, India. French soldiers fought for years to hold Indochina. The area was lost and broken up into small nations, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Although the peoples of the East Indies had enjoyed considerable self-government under the Dutch, they also wanted independence. The Netherlands lost these rich and populous islands, held as the nation's colonies for several centuries. The name was changed to Indonesia.

Independence did not insure peace to these new nations. Peoples without experience in self-government do not always understand that freedom is tied to responsibility. Unable to provide for themselves, emerging nations sought financial help from the United States. Congress yearly voted billions of dollars for foreign aid. Meanwhile, Communists took advantage of the confusion seeking to establish communism as the form of government in the new nations without the consent of the people. This policy involved the United States in many ways, including wars overseas.