

# Europe Since 1970

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## *Spielvogel Chapter 29*

- I. Détente (period of easing a formerly tense situation) – begin 1970s
  - A. 1970s
    1. 1972 – Antiballistic Missile treaty between US & USSR
      - a. Limit arms; no defense
    2. 1975 – Helsinki Accords (Agreements) – 35 nations present
      - a. Recognition of post-WWII political boundaries (what Soviets want)
      - b. Pledge to work for peace and human rights (what West wants)
        - i. Communist countries must give rights
  - B. 1980s – reapplying pressure
    1. 1980 – U.S. (Reagan) begins new arms race
    2. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) “Star Wars”
      - a. Creation of a satellite-mounted weapons to stop incoming missiles
      - b. Soviets worry about a U.S. that can launch ICBMs but not be harmed by them – violation of Helsinki Accords
- II. A Different Europe
  - A. *Revolution in the Soviet Union*
    1. Problems with change
      - a. USSR great for military/industry; terrible for people (rights, food)
      - b. Significant players in USSR human rights
        - i. 1958 Boris Pasternak – Dr. Zhivago – govt. refuses to let him receive Nobel Prize – exposed Soviet life
        - ii. 1970 – Alexander Solzhenitsyn – Gulag Archipelago – terrors of concentration camps – not allowed his Nobel Prize – deported – furor over treatment of Jews
      - c. Leonid Brezhnev does not display vigorous leadership or the desire to reform – rely on the old ways
      - d. Brezhnev dies 1982 – succeeded by old guard – Andropov, Chernenko – Mikhail Gorbachev takes over 1985
    2. Mikhail Gorbachev
      - a. Perestroika – political and economic restructuring, including decentralization (with limited capitalism)
      - b. Glasnost (openness) – free expression - necessary for change
      - c. Once let loose, change came more rapidly than expected – took on a life of its own
        - i. Find out life in other places is better
        - ii. Denunciation of lack of freedoms
        - iii. Individual production encouraged – first time since Lenin’s NEP
      - d. Relaxation of totalitarian control unleashed ethnic conflict along its frontier
        - i. Georgia, Moldavia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Baltic States

- e. Gorbachev threatens to clamp down on all the unrest – opposed by Boris Yeltsin 1990-91
- f. Gorbachev cannot muster enough support – becomes victim of the revolution he began
- g. Boris Yeltsin becomes president of Russia – 1991
- h. Oct. 1991 – USSR ceases to exist – becomes Confederation of Independent States (Russia and 15 Republics)

#### B. *Revolutions in Eastern Europe*

1. Poland – growth of Solidarity (non-Communist trade union – fought communism)
  - a. Visit by Pope stirred nationalist and religious feelings
  - b. 1988 – Solidarity recognized
  - c. Elections held – communists lose – first non-communist govt. in 40 years in Soviet Bloc
2. Hungary loosens controls – guarantees free elections
3. Germany – East German border opens Nov. 1989 – jubilant public rips down the wall – reunification in 1990
  - a. Major economic problems (East drags West down)
    - i. Lack of jobs leads to hatred of minorities, resurgence of neo-Nazi groups
4. Czechoslovakia
  - a. Velvet Revolution
    - i. 1989 – disgusted students begin protest – spreads to others, and eventually becomes a general strike of all Czech citizens
    - ii. Communist government realized it can't continue – actually abdicates
  - b. Czechoslovakia splits into Czech Republic and Slovakia 1993 – sometimes called Velvet divorce
5. Bulgaria falls
6. Romania – very bloody – Nicolae Ceausescu executed – had been brutal – Dictator from 1965-89
7. People rejoice at new freedoms – new problems arise
  - a. Freedom shows failure and corruption of old regime
  - b. Breeds ethnic, social, ideological problems

#### C. *The Disintegration of Yugoslavia*

1. Yugoslavia had been an artificial creation (1919)
2. Tito dies – 1980
  - a. Had kept everything under tight autocratic control
3. No one can hold it together
4. Demands for ethnic separation creates new countries (or recreates) – New Nationalism
  - a. Slovenia, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro
  - b. Serbs again left out
5. War in Bosnia (1992-95)
  - a. Serbs begin “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia
    - i. Yugoslavian and Bosnian Serbs trying to eliminate Muslims from Bosnia

- b. Area turned into sectors (like Germany after WWII)
- c. Brought under control by U.N. peacekeeping forces
  - i. No settlement – foreign troops keeping peace
- 6. War in Kosovo (1999-2000)
  - a. Small province in southern Yugoslavia
    - i. Was autonomous (self-governing if not independent – 1974)
    - ii. Ethnic Albanians kept their language
  - b. Had Serbian minority
    - i. Serbs felt area was sacred
    - ii. Serbs had defeated Ottomans in 1300s battle defining their history
  - c. Yugoslavian Serbs try to shut down Albanian autonomy
    - i. Albanians resist
    - ii. Serbs begin mass killing
    - iii. U.S. & other governments step in

#### *D. Modern Western Europe*

- 1. Great Britain
  - a. Problems with Ireland (IRA terrorists) during 1970s creates unrest over government
  - b. Economic problems from Socialist programs of past lead to Conservative Revolution (Margaret Thatcher)
  - c. Margaret Thatcher
    - i. England and Europe's first female prime minister (1979-90)
    - ii. Known as the "Iron Lady" – not really allowed to act feminine
    - iii. Led the conservative movement in Europe
      - i. Reintroduced free market economy – Britain begins improvement
    - iv. She and Reagan took a hard line against communism
  - d. Replaced by John Major – Conservative Party
  - e. Tony Blair from 1997-2007
    - i. Labour Party
  - f. Gordon Brown now – he's a historian (Ph.D. in history from University of Edinburgh)
- 2. France
  - a. Economy bad in 1970
  - b. Francois Mitterrand elected president as extreme socialist – move left
  - c. Price freezing, more social benefits (minimum wage increase, 5 week paid vacation, higher taxes against the rich)
    - i. Did not solve the problem
  - d. He reintroduces some private enterprise – France begins a slow recovery
  - e. Jacques Chirac elected – 1995
    - i. Social and fiscal conservative
  - f. Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007

### 3. European Cooperation

- a. 1986 – Single European Act – no restrictions within the community on movement of goods, services, workers, capital
  - i. Much accomplished – check points gone, EC passports, banks accounts, mortgages
- b. 1992 – Treaty of Maastricht
  - i. Committed all countries of the EC to achieving true economic and monetary unity – currency – Euro
  - ii. Each country must approve – many not sure about giving up national identity and autonomy – treaty approved 1993
- c. EC becomes European Union - 1994
- d. Major problems plaguing European unity since the fall of the USSR
  - i. Integrating the poorer – less developed areas – Eastern nations
  - ii. Hostility toward German domination of the financial system
  - iii. Differences in deciding how to deal with the violence in Bosnia – Balkans
  - iv. Balance national concerns with European Union