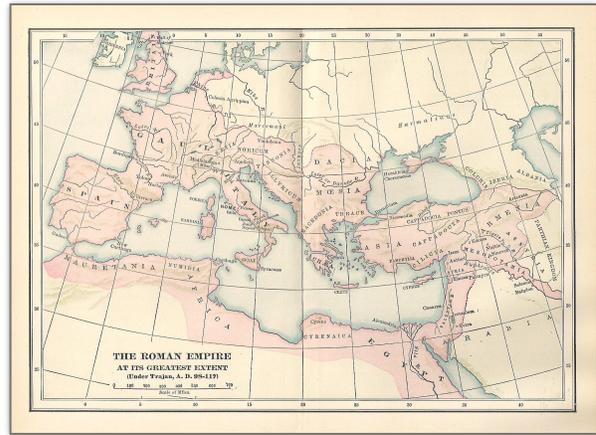


### **III. The Historical Anchor Facts of the Modern European Union**

#### A. 476 AD: The Beginning of the Europe of Nations

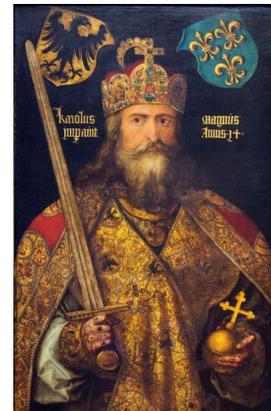
1. The European Union of 1993 is an attempt to solve a historical problem. The problem is the incessant wars between Europe's nations which nearly resulted in the complete self-destruction of European culture in the *World Wars*.
2. The modern situation is the outcome of a long progression of events that begins with the failure of the only previous attempt to integrate Europe into a union of sorts: the Roman Empire.
3. The Roman Empire occupied the entire Mediterranean world, and thus nearly half of Europe, and even England for a time. The primitive European people who were never incorporated into the Roman Empire eventually brought about its downfall and began to build a civilization of their own.
4. The final end of Rome, and thus the beginning of Europe proper came in 476 AD, when the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus, was deposed by a Germanic leader named Odovacar. Never again would there be an emperor in Rome claiming to control a Roman Empire. Much had happened to lead to this outcome, but it serves well as a symbolic marker for the transition from Roman civilization to its European successor.



The Roman Empire at its maximum extent, c.117 AD.

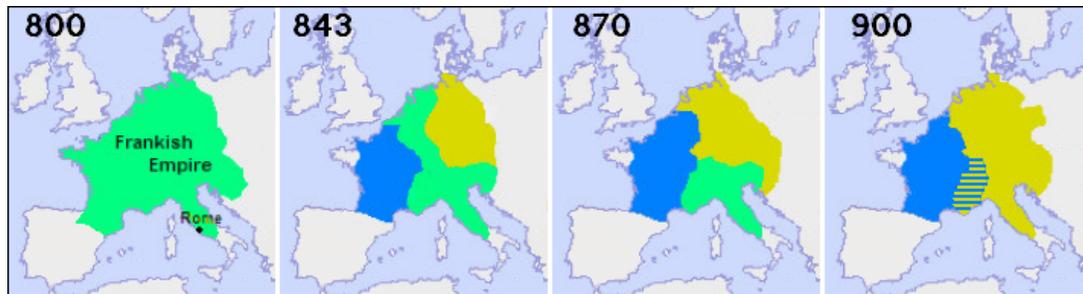
#### B. 800-843 AD: A Europe of Separate Nations

1. The fall of the Roman world was marked by the migration of many different tribal peoples through Europe for centuries on end. Various tribes fought the Romans and each other in order to be able to call some corner of Europe their own.
2. At the end of this torturous phase of history, often rightly referred to as the "Dark Ages," one tribe—the Franks—had become dominant, forging emerging European civilization into its first union in 800 AD under the leadership of the Frankish king, Charlemagne.
3. Frankish tradition stipulated that a king should share his property equally among his sons, however, and the Frankish empire was soon passed on to Charlemagne's three



Charlemagne - the first emperor of a European union, c.800 AD.

grandsons, who fought each other for supremacy, and whose extended dynastic contest caused the permanent division of East Francia (Germany) from West Francia (France).



The evolution of the Frankish empire from its peak, under the rule of Charlemagne—through to its disintegration under his heirs into separate French and German domains.

### C. The Rise of Nations

1. In the time of Charlemagne, Europe was still clawing its way upwards from its tribal beginnings. The Franks and other tribes had not yet coalesced into nations. This would take centuries, as the borders between various countries became fairly permanent, and the people within separate kingdoms developed communities closed off from each other, living in a distinctive, isolated way within those communities.
2. The evolution of each separate nation, such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain, etc. is a complex and winding story that will require careful treatment as we proceed through the year. For the time being, the key point to retain is the basic recognition that we all have of how different the people of each European country are from one another. It is helpful to associate this difference with language, since that is overtly different. But refer back to various aspects of our definitional discussions on the concept “nation” in class and above (Section II - Subsection B) and try to summon whatever you can for now (such as examples of different kinds of food & music, to reinforce this idea.)

### D. 1517-1648: The Reformation and Religious Wars

1. There was one aspect of European culture from the time of Charlemagne onward that offered the possibility of unity, and that was the common acceptance of Christianity across Europe.
2. All Christians of Western Europe accepted the leadership of the bishop of Rome, a.k.a. the “papa” (father) or, in English, “pope.” This version of Christianity is known as “Roman Catholic” Christianity, because it was based in Rome, and “Catholic” means “universal.”
3. The rise and fall of papal authority is a theme we will pursue in depth this year. For now, it will suffice to assert that the pope was the leader of Christianity, and this was

one unifying aspect of European culture across national boundaries, until the breakup of Christendom (the community of Christians) during the extended period known as the “Reformation and Religious Wars.”

4. In this time, various groups—often divided along national lines—broke away from papal authority. People in countries such as Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, adopted the views of Martin Luther (*Lutheranism*) in place of those of the pope. The people of England embraced the idea of a “Church of England” (a.k.a. “*Anglicanism*”) in response to a conflict between their king Henry VIII and the pope. People in new, small, but fiercely independent nations like Switzerland and Netherlands accepted *Calvinism* (the teachings of John Calvin) as the only correct interpretation of Christianity.
5. The contribution of these religious schisms to the shape of modern-day Europe was manifold. First, it added religious differences to the already long list of differences between nations. Second, because European Christians were intolerant of religious differences, it contributed to a long series of wars between those nations, which contributed to the alienation of those nations from each other. Thirdly, it contributed to the telling of stories of religious heroism, independence, nation-building and combinations thereof in each nation that reinforced increasingly long-standing differences between the people of Europe.
6. By the end of the Reformation and Religious Wars (1517-1648) most of Europe’s nations had been forged into their permanent forms.

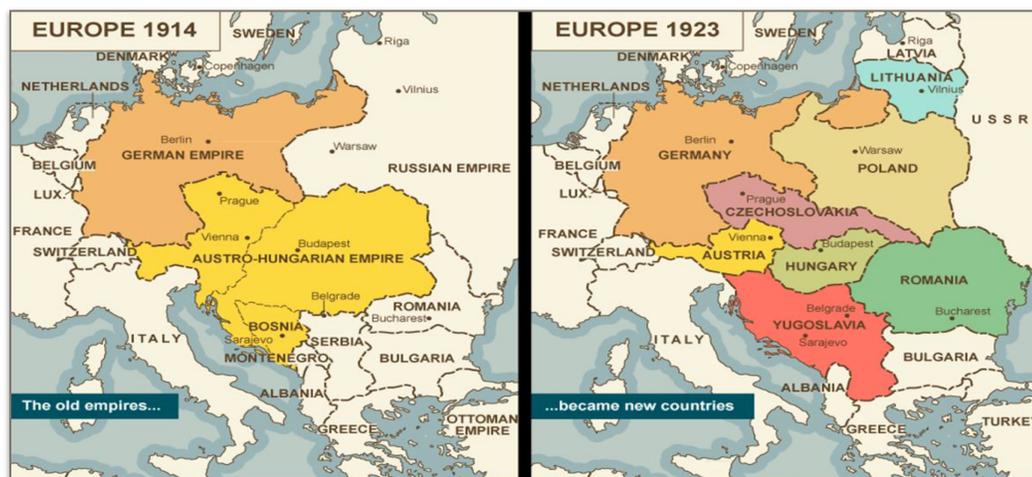
#### E. 1789-99: The Rise of the *Modern* Europe of Nations

1. Apart from the breakup of Christendom, the largest transformation of European culture from its origin to today was the overthrow of monarchy and its replacement by “democratic socialism.” This transformation was triggered by the French Revolution (1789-99).
2. The various nations of Europe were ruled by kings, as people throughout history have been ruled in the absence of an alternative.
3. After the American Revolution, however, the people of France were inspired to rebel against their king, Louis XVI, and create a government of the people.
4. Whereas the Founding Fathers of the United States created a *republic* in place of monarchy—where the individual’s natural rights to “*life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*” are protected—the French (and gradually, all Europeans) adopted a different approach, which is best termed “democratic socialism.”
5. This term comes from a famous book by French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau entitled “*The Social Contract*.” Rousseau explained that he believed that societies were formed when individuals abandon their “natural” rights (the ones they have in a state of nature) and agree to a *socially* determined set of rights in an ordered society. How does a society generate such a set of rules? Ideally the “general will” is expressed by vote, i.e. democratically—hence the concept “democratic socialism.”

6. The contribution of the French Revolution to the shape of modern Europe was complex. First, it created the archetype of modern European government. Democratic socialism is now as natural to Europeans and monarchy once was. Second, it exacerbated the conflicts between Europe's nations (especially France and Germany) because France's neighboring monarchies refused to tolerate the rise of yet another anti-monarchical regime right next door, in light of the precedent in America. The wars of the French Revolution hardened the national identities of many nations, and their mutual antagonism. (A powerful example of this is found in the French national anthem, *the Marseillaise*, which refers to the fields of French farms being watered with impure blood—the blood of the *other*, *hated* people of Europe.)

#### F. 1914-19: World War I and Hope for Nationalism

1. *Nationalism*, as we have already noted, is a set of ideas about nations. Nationalists proposes that human social life (including the creation of a “social contract”) is best conducted by people within their respective nations.
2. When World War I (1914-19) erupted in Europe, it was noted that the two countries most responsible for the war were two *empires* (Germany and Austria-Hungary) that were both still *monarchies*. Thus the outbreak of war was attributed to their outdated form of governments. If all Europeans were allowed to embrace their national identity and forge their own democratic governments, it was believed, Europe could achieve a lasting peace.



The response to the crisis of World War I (1914-19) was driven largely by *nationalism*. Europeans sought to re-arrange their borders and governments to allow each *nation's* people (such as those of Poland, Lithuania, and others) to direct their own affairs.

### G. World War II (1939-45) and the Failure of National Socialism

1. After World War I, the German monarchy collapsed, and the people were allowed to remake their own government.
2. They perceived the post-war settlement to be unfair. They believed that the German *nation* was being suppressed by rival nations that were afraid of its great potential.
3. The German people were convinced by Adolf Hitler that they could achieve their national aim of a “*grossDeutschland*” (a greater Germany) only at the expense of their national enemies, and they accepted his ideology of *Nazionalismus* (“Nationalism,” or *Nazism*).
4. The rest of Europe was paralyzed by the rise of Hitler. In theory, every nation was supposed to be able to generate its own social contract. Who were the people of France or England to complain, if a nation like Germany democratically chose Hitler as their leader, and if Hitler seemed to be merely asking for the same national status as other nations.
5. The unprecedented catastrophe of World War II was necessary for the rejection of national socialism in European thinking.
6. Under the protection of the United States, Europeans could rethink their way of life.
7. Seeking to avoid Russian-imposed communism, the people of Europe still wished for a way to practice the fundamental tenets of socialism regarding the ordering of life by a social contract, only now that contract was envisioned on a *supranational* scale.