

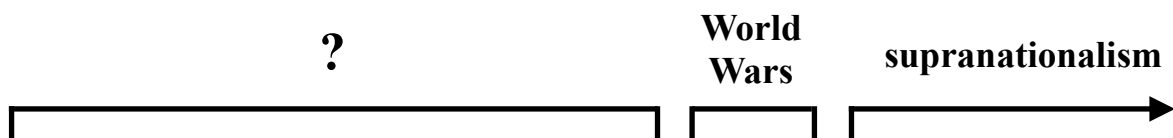
### **III. European History 1.0**

#### A. The Simple Answer

1. Why is modern Europe a culture of *supranationalism*? The explanation can only be found in its history.
2. The simple answer is: *the World Wars*.
3. European civilization experienced two successive cataclysms in the early twentieth century. These were contests between rival nations, with the major ones all possessing or seeking to establish empires.
4. When the rampant nationalism of these rivals led to this succession of catastrophes, European culture was faced with the challenge of redefining itself. Seeking a way to avoid wars between its nations, its leaders decided to try to create a set of cultural values to override nationalism. That set of values is *supranationalism*.

#### B. The Question That Follows

1. The simple idea that *supranationalism* was adopted as a way to counteract *nationalism* after the *World Wars* is fine as far as it goes. However, *all* the world's major cultures experienced the *World Wars* in one way or another, but only Europe turned to *supranationalism* afterwards. The *World Wars* are not themselves the explanation for the rise of *supranationalism*. They are merely the "trigger." The explanation is found deeper in European history.
2. The questions must thus be asked: how did Europe become the kind of culture that would almost destroy itself in the *World Wars*, leading to *supranationalism*?
3. This question can be represented in the form of a diagram:



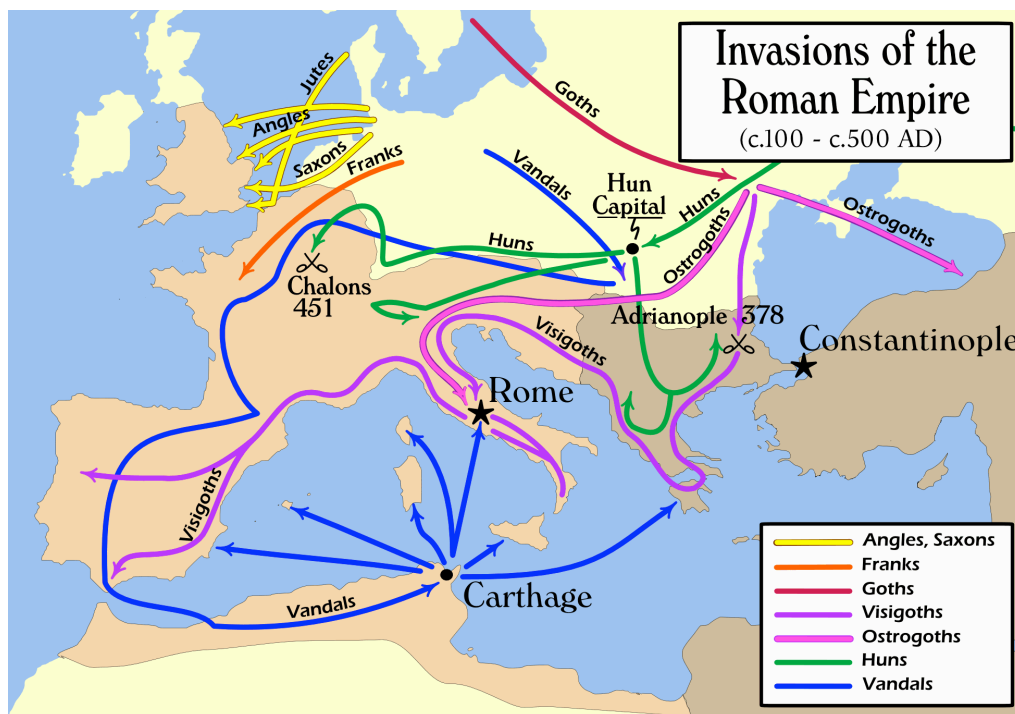
#### C. The Origin of European Civilization

1. To understand the evolution of European civilization, we must grasp the scope of its history. We know where it "ends" (today), but where does it begin?
2. The simple answer is: with the Fall of Rome.
3. The Roman Empire was a vast Mediterranean empire that encompassed much, but not all of Europe. It began in ancient times, and lasted until it was dismembered by "Germanic" barbarian tribes.

4. It took about a century for the Roman Empire to collapse, but it is useful to designate a particular year and event as the decisive moment to mark its end.
5. In the year **476 AD**, the last Roman leader to call himself an “emperor” in Rome was deposed. His name was Romulus Augustus.
6. In **476**, Romulus’s authority was mere pretense. Rome’s territory was overrun by tribes that could not be controlled.
7. The Romans had tried to recruit some of those tribes to help them deal with the problem of other tribes, which had worked in some ways and for a while, but ultimately a tribal leader named Odovacar decided that there was no point in pretending that he owed Rome’s leader any allegiance. The Romans had nothing left to offer him.
8. Romulus Augustus gave up his throne and disappeared from history. Little else is known about Odovacar either. His tribe, the Heruli, were swept up in the chaos of the period and made no further significant contributions to history.

### C. The Era of Musical Kingdoms

1. The anarchy of the period continued for centuries, with many barbarian tribes competing to claim some part of the map for themselves.
2. This period is often usefully designated as the “Dark Ages.” Since it was characterized by the dominance of illiterate barbarians at war with one another, this is a legitimate characterization, especially when compared to the time of the Roman empire, which boasted a complex governmental apparatus, relative stability, and technology such as running water.

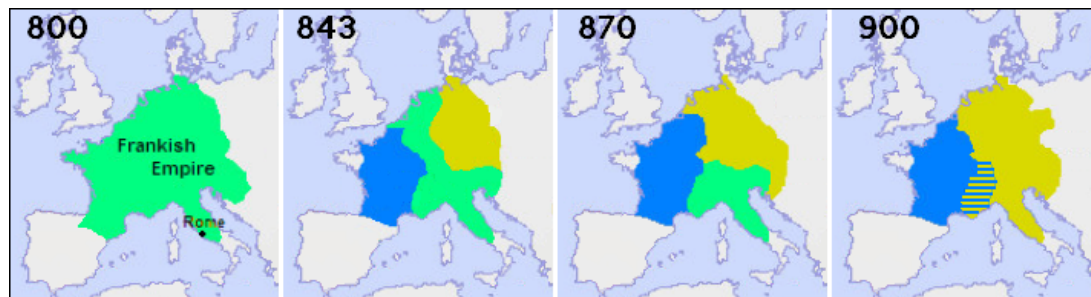


During the extended anarchy of the “Dark Ages,” barbarian tribes migrated continually and fought one another for control over the carcass of the Roman Empire.

3. In terms of its wider significance for European history, however, I prefer to give the period after the **Fall of Rome** the name “The Era of Musical Kingdoms,” because it resembles a giant game of musical chairs.
4. When the game came to an end, one tribe—the Franks—had achieved primacy, and one leader—Charlemagne—had become the undisputed leader of a newly united Europe.
5. Having united what are France and Germany, and everything in between, Charlemagne entered Italy and liberated the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, the pope, from the power of the other tribes there. Here was rewarded with the title “Emperor of the Romans” in **800 AD**.
6. Charlemagne’s empire did not last, however. His was a charismatic monarchy, meaning a monarchy powered by his “charisma” (an undefinable “gift” of leadership ability).
7. After Charlemagne died, his own son passed on the empire to *three grandsons*. It was a Frankish tradition that the king passed on his land to *all* his male heirs, not just the oldest. The result in **843 AD** was the breakup of a united Europe into at first three kingdoms, and then after wars between the brothers, just two: *essentially France and Germany*.



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

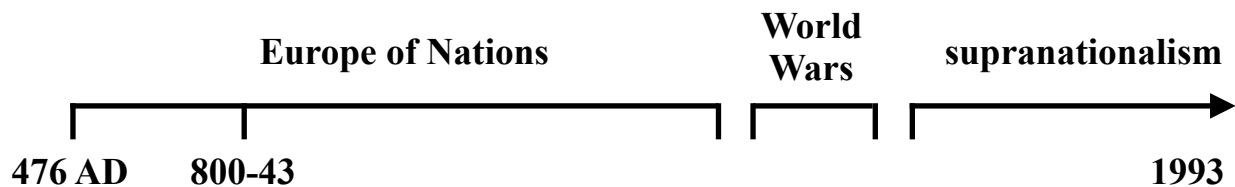


The evolution of the Frankish empire from its peak, under the rule of Charlemagne—through to its disintegration under his heirs into separate French and German domains.

#### D. A Story 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 that the root of the separate nationhood of France and Germany is the **Failed Frankish Union (800-43 AD)**.

3. France and Germany are the countries at the heart of the story of the *Europe of Nations*, the two great rivals in the *World Wars*, and the two indispensable partners that make up the **European Union** today. The story of Europe thus revolves around a set of conditions created long ago.
4. We can designate the outcome of this highly selective first pass through history as “European History 1.0,” which can be represented by the following diagram.



#### E. An Integrated Awareness

1. The final and crucial step in taking this sweep through European history and turning it into a powerful foundation for learning more is to integrate it into a single awareness. Simply put, this requires “reading” the diagram *as a single sentence*.
2. Because the proper goal of history is to understand *the world we live in*, the sentence begins “here and now.” It then reaches into the past for the revelation and explanation of that “here and now,” where it also ends. Here is the formulation:

*“The Europe of today revolves around the European Union, which emerged only after the long history of the Europe of Nations culminated in the devastation of the World Wars, and the perceived need to redefine European culture according to the idea of supranationalism.”*