

# Global Resistance to Established Power Structures

*What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans, and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty and democracy?*

—Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948)

**Essential Question:** What were differing reactions to existing power structures after 1900?

The conflicts of the 20th century affected newly independent states and long-established ones. Some of the most successful challenges to existing order, such as the one led by Mohandas Gandhi, used nonviolence. Other movements, such as Shining Path in Peru, used violence against civilians to achieve political results. Some leaders, such as Francisco Franco in Spain, used the military to crush resistance. The military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned about took hold in other countries, as governments increased arms supplies and traded weapons with one another.

## Nonviolent Resistance as a Path to Change

Despite the frequent wars and violent protests of the 20th century, movements around the world also used nonviolence to bring about political change. Three of these movements were particularly large and effective, in part because of their visionary leaders.

**Mohandas Gandhi** Topic 7.5 described how Mohandas Gandhi led nonviolent marches, boycotts, and fasts to oppose British colonial rule in India. In 1947, India became independent.

**Martin Luther King Jr.** The most prominent of African American civil rights leaders in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s was a Baptist minister, the Reverend **Martin Luther King Jr.** The civil rights movement used various tactics to achieve its goals:

- Court decisions, such as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, that banned forced racial segregation of schools in the United States

- A year-long boycott of public buses in Montgomery, Alabama (1955–1956), which ended segregation in public transit
- Massive marches, such as the 250,000-person March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1964

These efforts provided the foundation for the movement's biggest successes, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1965, which is covered in Topic 9.5.

**Nelson Mandela** In South Africa, the white-minority government codified a system of racial segregation, called apartheid, into law in the 20th century. Leading the black resistance to apartheid was a socialist lawyer, **Nelson Mandela** (1918–2013). Though early in his life he sometimes supported sabotage and other forms of violence, he was known for leading nonviolent protests. The victory over apartheid is described in Topic 9.5.

## Challenges to Soviet Power in Eastern Europe

In the 1950s and 1960s, reformers in Eastern European satellites of the Soviet Union sought to become less dominated by the Soviets. In most cases, the Soviets clamped down hard against dissent.

**Poland** In 1956, Polish workers demonstrated against Soviet domination and demanded better living conditions. As a result, a new secretary of the Polish Communist Party, **Wladyslaw Gomulka**, came to power. He decided to pursue an independent domestic policy in Poland but continued to be loyal to the Soviet Union, allowing the continued presence of Soviet troops in Poland. The Soviet-established forced collectivization of farms ended at this time.

**Hungary** In that same year, Hungarian protesters convinced the country's political leader **Imre Nagy** to declare Hungary's freedom from Soviet control and demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country. Nagy vowed to support free elections in which non-Communist parties would participate. He announced Hungary's neutrality in the Cold War and the withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. Soviet leaders responded by invading Hungary, gaining control of Budapest in 1956. The Soviets captured Nagy and executed him. Many Hungarians fled to the West as refugees.

**Czechoslovakia** The reform movement in Czechoslovakia reached a peak in the **Prague Spring** of 1968. **Alexander Dubcek**, first secretary of the Communist Party, acceded to the demands of the Czech people by increasing freedom of speech and the press and allowing greater freedom to travel. He also agreed to make the political system more democratic.

As with Hungary, Soviet leaders feared the Prague Spring's independence. Soon the armies of four Warsaw Pact nations crushed it. In 1968, the Soviet Union used the **Brezhnev Doctrine**, named for then-Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, to justify its actions. This doctrine stated that the Soviet Union and its allies would intervene if an action by one member threatened other socialist countries. (Connect: Explain the continuity or change between the Eastern European resistance movements in the 19th and 20th centuries. See Topic 6.3.)

## 1968: The Year of Revolt

Events in Czechoslovakia were just one of many upheavals in 1968:

- In Yugoslavia, students marched against authoritarian government.
- In Poland and Northern Ireland, people protested over religious issues.
- In Brazil, marchers demanded improvements in public education and fairer treatment of workers.
- In Japan, students protested both university financial policies and government support for the United States in the war in Vietnam.

In many countries, protests took place on university campuses. Tensions started building up after World War II, when higher education had opened up for more people in Western society and facilities were crowded. As a result, discontent was high among the student population by the 1960s, resulting in a call for university reforms. Student grievances mounted as civil rights, women's rights, workers' rights, and the war in Vietnam commanded attention.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

The student movement in Mexico was met by military resistance. Two months before the 1968 Olympics began in Mexico City, armored vehicles entered the city to suppress the social movement.

**France** In 1968, the student movement reached epic proportions in Paris, France. Hundreds of thousands of students took to the streets, resulting in violence when police forces moved in. In sympathy, some 10 million French workers went on strike. It was the largest general strike in French history. President Charles de Gaulle called new elections in France and was able to remain in office when his party won.

**The United States** In the United States, students and others demonstrated for rights for women and African Americans. However, the largest and most heated protests were against the country's involvement in the war in Vietnam. After members of the Ohio National Guard killed four unarmed students during an antiwar demonstration at **Kent State University** on May 4, 1970, students and faculty at hundreds of U.S. colleges and universities went on strike.

## An Age of Terrorism

In the post-Cold War period, large-scale open conflict between sovereign states was rare. Instead, individuals unaffiliated with any government committed terrorist acts in Western Europe, South America, the Islamic world, and the United States that intimidated and murdered civilians.

**Conflict in Northern Ireland** Most of Ireland, the portion dominated by Roman Catholics, gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1922. However, Northern Ireland, which was dominated by Protestants, remained part of the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland Catholics suffered discrimination, and many wanted their region to join the rest of the Irish Republic. Northern Ireland Protestants fiercely refused.

The Catholic-Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland became more violent in the 1960s, with Catholics fighting as part of the **Irish Republican Army (IRA)** and Protestants with the **Ulster Defence Association**. Between 1969 and 1994, some 3,500 people died in the conflict. Some members of the IRA took their independence campaign to England by engaging in acts of terrorism, the use of violence to achieve political ends. These acts included setting off bombs in London and other cities. In 1994, the two sides reached a cease-fire. Later the IRA renounced violence and turned to politics to achieve its goals.

**Separatists in Spain** Another group that used terrorist tactics to advance a political agenda was the **Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA)** organization, founded in 1959, which wanted independence for the Basque region in northern Spain. ETA actions killed more than 800 people and injured many others. In 1973, members of ETA killed the hand-picked successor to longtime dictator Francisco Franco. (See Topic 7.4.) Over the years, ETA announced several cease-fires. In 2011 it declared an end to violent actions and promised to work within the political system to achieve Basque independence.

**Peru's Shining Path** During the 1970s, former philosophy professor **Abimael Guzmán** built a revolutionary organization called **Shining Path** based on the ideas of Mao Zedong and Cambodia's Khmer Rouge. In 1980, the Shining Path began decades of bombings and assassinations in Peru in order to overthrow the existing government and replace it with a communist one. Shining Path's 20 years of terrorism caused an estimated 37,000 deaths. Guzmán was arrested and sentenced to life in prison in 1992, though the Shining Path continued its attacks through the late 1990s. In 2011 one of the group's top leaders admitted defeat and began negotiations with the Peruvian government.

**Islamic Terrorism** Several small groups used a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, one widely condemned by mainstream Muslims, to justify terrorism. Among these groups were the Boko Haram in West Africa, al-Shabaab in East Africa, the Islamic State of Iraq, the Levant (ISIL) in the Middle East, and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Most victims were Muslims. Some high-profile attacks occurred in European cities such as Madrid, London, and Paris.

One of the deadliest groups was al-Qaeda. Financed by Saudi billionaire Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda carried out attacks in many countries, including one in the United States on September 11, 2001. In this attack, terrorists killed themselves and more than 3,000 people when they hijacked and crashed planes in New York City, near Washington, D.C., and in rural Pennsylvania. Most of the world, even bitter foes of the United States such as Iran, rallied to support the United States. Focused efforts by the United States and its allies severely weakened al-Qaeda. Bin Laden was killed in a raid on his home in 2011.

**Terrorism in the United States** While the September 11 attack was the deadliest act of terrorism in the United States, it was not the only one. Acts of terrorism in the United States come from different sources and groups, including domestic groups, some of which are associated with white-nationalist or extreme right-wing views. One of the largest of these occurred when two anti-government extremists bombed a federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995, killing 168 people. Other attacks targeted Muslims, Jews, and blacks.

## Response of Militarized States

States in which military dictators ran the government tended to respond to internal conflicts in ways that made the conflicts even worse. Spain under Franco and Uganda under Idi Amin are two prominent examples.

**The Franco Dictatorship in Spain** The dictator Francisco Franco ruled Spain from 1939 to 1975. (See Topic 7.4.) He had come to power by overthrowing a popularly elected government that included many leftists. Franco's fervent anti-communism made him an ally of the United States. It also led his government to execute, imprison, or send to labor camps hundreds of thousands of political dissenters. However, opposition to his authoritarianism remained. When Franco died, Spain took the opportunity to move toward democracy.

**Intensified Conflict in Uganda under Idi Amin** Few countries in the 1970s suffered as much as Uganda, a small country in eastern Africa ruled from 1971 to 1979 by Idi Amin, a military dictator so brutal he was known as the "Butcher of Uganda." Although he was aligned with Western democracies early on, he was later backed by the Soviet Union and East Germany. He declared himself president for life and set policies that worsened ethnic tensions, denied people basic human rights, and undermined economic stability. Amin was unpredictable. He was for a time the chairman of the



Organization of African Unity and even a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. But in 1972 he forcefully expelled 60,000 Asians from Uganda, most of whom were of Indian descent, and turned over their businesses to his supporters. He is believed to be responsible for up to 500,000 deaths among targeted ethnic groups during his reign. When he threatened neighboring Tanzania with attack, Ugandan nationalists joined forces with Tanzanian troops and forced Amin into exile.

## The Military-Industrial Complex

Conflicts around the world intensified because of fear and economic pressure. Countries that felt threatened, including the United States and the Soviet Union, built strong militaries to defend themselves. These military forces required large factories to build planes, tanks, and other goods. Since many countries lacked facilities to make their own weapons, the international weapons trade expanded greatly.

As the defense industries expanded, so did the number of people who relied on them for jobs. Cutting back on defense spending, then, became very difficult. In 1961, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower, a highly decorated general in World War II, called this combination of government defense departments and private businesses supplying their demands the military-industrial complex. He warned that it could grow powerful enough to threaten the country's democracy.

KEY TERMS BY THEME		
<p><b>GOVERNMENT: Europe</b>            Wladyslaw Gomulka            Imre Nagy            Prague Spring            Alexander Dubček            Brezhnev Doctrine            Irish Republican Army (IRA)</p>	<p>Ulster Defence Association            Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA)    <b>GOVERNMENT: South America</b>            Abimael Guzmán            Shining Path</p>	<p><b>SOCIETY: Protests</b>            Martin Luther King Jr.            Nelson Mandela            Kent State University</p>