

EIGHTH  
EDITION



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# A HISTORY

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TO 1815

R. R. PALMER  
JOEL COLTON

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A HISTORY OF THE MODERN WORLD  
TO 1815

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# A HISTORY OF THE MODERN WORLD

TO 1815

# Contemporary Europe

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

R. R. PALMER was born in Chicago. After graduating from the University of Chicago he received his doctorate from Cornell University in 1934. From 1936 to 1963 he taught at Princeton University, was then at Washington University in St. Louis from 1963 to 1966, and at Yale from 1969 until his retirement in 1977. He now resides in Princeton, where he is affiliated with the Institute for Advanced Study. His books include *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution* (1941, 1989), and the two-volume *Age of the Democratic Revolution* (1959 and 1964), both volumes of which were History Book Club selections, and the first of which won the Bancroft Prize in 1960. He has likewise written *The World of the French Revolution* (1970) and *The Improvement of Humanity: Education and the French Revolution* (1985), and has edited the *Rand McNally Atlas of World History* (1957). He is the translator of Georges Lefebvre's *Coming of the French Revolution* (1947, 1989), Louis Bergeron's *France under Napoleon* (1981), and Jean-Paul Bertaud's *Army of the French Revolution: From Citizen-Soldiers to Instrument of Power* (1988), and editor-translator of *From Jacobin to Liberal: Marc-Antoine Jullien, 1775–1848* (1993). He was president of the American Historical Association in 1970. He has received honorary degrees from the Universities of Uppsala and Toulouse, and was awarded the Antonio Feltrinelli International Prize for History in Rome in 1990.

JOEL COLTON was born in New York City. He graduated from the City College of New York, served as a military intelligence officer in Europe in World War II, and received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1950. He joined the Department of History at Duke University in 1947, chaired the department from 1967 to 1974, received a Distinguished Teaching Award in 1986, and became emeritus professor in 1989. From 1974 to 1981, on leave from Duke University, he served with the Rockefeller Foundation in New York as director of its research and fellowship program in the humanities. In 1979 he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and was named a national Phi Beta Kappa lecturer in 1983–1984. He has received Guggenheim, Rockefeller Foundation, and National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships. He has served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Modern History* and of *French Historical Studies*, and on the advisory board of *Historical Abstracts*. He has been vice-president of the Society of French Historical Studies and co-president of the International Commission on the History of Social Movements and Social Structures. His writings include *Compulsory Labor Arbitration in France, 1936–1939* (1951); *Léon Blum: Humanist in Politics* (1966, 1987), for which he received a Mayflower Award; *Twentieth Century* (1968, 1980), in the *Time-Life Great Ages of Man* series; and numerous contributions to journals, encyclopedias, and collaborative volumes.

# PREFACE

[*Publisher's Note:* In order to provide an alternative to the hardcover edition, *A History of the Modern World* is being made available in a two-volume paperbound edition. Volume I, *To 1815*, includes chapters I–X; volume II, *Since 1815*, chapters XI–XXIV. The page numbering in these chapters remains the same as in the hardcover text, and the footnotes refer to pages in both volumes.]

THE EXTRAORDINARY events of the last few years have made this eighth edition come sooner than usual after its predecessor. It is of course too early to assess the magnitude and consequences of what has happened, but we have done much new writing, rewriting, rewording, and rearrangement to present the upheavals in Eastern Europe, the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany, the end of the Cold War, the Islamic fundamentalist movement, changes in Latin America, and much else. We now have four chapters on the half-century since the Second World War. This is more than for the similar time span from Bismarck's unification of Germany in 1871 to the First World War, or from the beginnings of the American Revolution to the fall of Napoleon in 1815. There are adjustments to maps and tables, some alterations made in response to readers' comments, and various emendations in many places. The bibliography has always been a special feature of the book. It has been brought up to date; and although reviewed and pruned, it remains very extensive, containing about 5,000 titles classified by subject according to the plan of the book as a whole. In general, we have done what we could to make so long and complex a volume more manageable and digestible. The whole structure of chapters, sections and subsections, the frequent cross-references, the chronological tables, and the detailed index are intended for this purpose. A student's Study Guide is also available for those who may wish to use it.

Since its first edition the book has been designed as a history both of Europe and of the "modern world." Given this objective, it is a source of satisfaction that the book since its second edition has been translated into seven languages, of which three are non-European. It is gratifying also that such a work, written as a textbook for American colleges and universities, has found readers not only outside the United States but in both public and private secondary schools in this country and among the general reading public.

To obtain breadth, emphasis falls on situations and movements of international scope, on what Europeans and their descendants in other continents have done in common, and on the gradual convergence of the European and non-European worlds into a global economy and an interdependent political system. National histories are therefore somewhat subordinated, and in each national history the points of contact with a larger civilization are emphasized. Historic regional differences within Europe, as between western and eastern Europe, are brought out, and the history of the Americas is woven into the story at various points, as are developments of the past two centuries in Asia and Africa. A good deal



of institutional history is included. Considerable space is given to the history of ideas, not only in special sections devoted to ideas, but throughout the book in close connection with the account of institutions and events. Social and economic development bulks rather large, as does the impact of wars and revolutions. Since our own age is one in which much depends on political decision, we think of this volume as political history in the broadest sense, in that matters of many kinds, such as religion, economics, social welfare, and international relations, have presented themselves as public questions requiring public action by responsible citizens or governments. It seems to us that many subjects of current research interest, such as women's history, family history, the history of the laboring classes, the history of minorities, or demographic and quantitative studies, are best understood when seen within a wider framework such as this book attempts to provide.

We are again pleased to thank all those who have helped with the book over the years. We are indebted to McGraw-Hill, Inc., and its staff, publisher of the book since its seventh edition, and especially to Pamela Gordon, Caroline Izzo, Nancy Blaine, and Sarah Touborg, who have provided invaluable assistance in making this edition possible. We are grateful also to Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., our earlier publisher, for continuing to make the book available in a trade edition for the general public. Since they have left the important decisions to us, and all the actual writing is ours, we assume all responsibility for errors, imperfections, questionable judgments, and other possible shortcomings. Esther Howard Palmer and Shirley Baron Colton have contributed in innumerable ways to the newest edition of this history, which can stand as some kind of continuing monument to marriage, friendship, and intellectual collaboration.

R. R. PALMER  
JOEL COLTON

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# A FEW WORDS ON GEOGRAPHY

HISTORY IS THE experience of human beings in time, but it takes place also in space, on the planet Earth, so that geography always underlies it. It is the business of geography not merely to describe and map the earth and its various areas, but to study the changing relationships between human activities and the surrounding environment.

The earth is over four billion years old. The entire history of mankind since the Middle Stone Age has occupied less than a hundred-thousandth of the time in which the earthly habitat has been developed. Some minerals now put to human use were formed in the earliest ages of the planet, others such as coal and petroleum were not laid down until a few hundred million years ago, but none that are now being consumed in a flicker of geologic time can ever be replaced. Oceans and continents have moved about, changing in size, shape, and location with respect to one another and to the North and South Poles. There was a time when dinosaurs could walk from North America to Europe (as we now call them) on solid land in a warm climate. The continents as we now know them became fully distinct less than a hundred million years ago. It is only a few thousand years since the end of the most recent glacial age, which may not be the last. The melting back into the ocean of water frozen over a mile thick in Antarctica and in large parts of North America and Europe produced the coastlines, offshore islands, inland seas, straits, bays, and harbors that we see on a map today, as well as some of the largest river systems and lakes. It is only about three hundred years since the first French explorers saw Niagara Falls, which then looked quite different, because by eating away the underlying rock the falls have receded several hundred feet since that time.

At present, the oceans cover more than two-thirds of the surface of the globe. By no means is all the remaining third suited for occupation by human beings, or indeed by most other animal or vegetable organisms, for much of the land still lies under perpetual ice in Antarctica and Greenland, much is tundra, much is desert, and some is along the windswept ridges of high mountains. Like the oceans, these desolate regions have been important in human history, first in earlier times by acting as barriers. Man, as the anthropologists call him (and her), is now thought to have originated in Africa. He (and she) eventually spread to every continent except Antarctica. In doing so, human groups became isolated from each other for thousands of years, separated by oceans, deserts, or

mountains, and so became differentiated into the modern races, though all are derived from the same source and belong to the same species. The same is true of cultures or civilizations over a time period measured in centuries rather than millennia. It is such separation that accounts for the historic cultural differences between Africa, pre-Columbian America, China, India, the Middle East, and Europe. On a smaller scale it explains the differences in languages and dialects.

Separation has also produced differences in flora and fauna, and hence in the plants and animals by which humans live. Wheat became the most usual cereal in the Middle East and Europe, millet and rice in East Asia, sorghum in tropical Africa, maize in pre-Columbian America. The horse, first domesticated in central Asia, was for centuries a mainstay of Europe for muscle power, transportation, and combat, while the less versatile camel was adopted later and more slowly in the Middle East, and America had no beasts of burden except the llama. Not until Europeans began to cross the oceans, taking plants and animals with them, and bringing others back, did these great differences begin to diminish.

The present book is concerned primarily with Europe, and with the last few hundred years. And as a traveler setting out on a journey may obtain a map, study it, and keep its contents as much as possible in mind, so the reader is invited to examine the map of Europe on pages 4 and 5, and keep it in mind while reading the following history. The map shows the topographical features that have remained unchanged in historic times.

Europe is physically separated from Africa by the Mediterranean Sea, which however has been as much a passageway as a barrier. A more effective barrier was created when the Sahara Desert dried up only a few thousand years ago. The physical separation of Europe from Asia has always been less clear; the conventional boundary has long been the Ural Mountains in Russia, but the Russians recognize no such official distinction. The Urals are in any case low and wide, and it can be argued that Europe is not a continent at all, but a cultural conception arising from felt differences from Asia and Africa. Europe, even with European Russia, contains hardly more than 6 percent of the land surface of the earth. It has about the same area as the United States including Alaska. It is a little larger than Australia, and a little smaller than Antarctica.

If we consider only its physical features, Europe is indeed one of several peninsulas jutting off from Asia. It is altogether different, however, from the Arabian and Indian peninsulas, which also extend from the mass of Asia, as shown on the back end papers of the present book. For one thing, the Mediterranean Sea is unique among the world's bodies of water. Closed in by the Strait of Gibraltar, which is only eight miles wide, it is more shielded than the Caribbean or East Asian seas from the open ocean. Hence it has very little tide, and is protected from the most violent ocean storms. Though over two thousand miles long, it is subdivided by islands and peninsulas into lesser seas with an identity of their own, such as the Aegean and the Adriatic, and it gives access also to the Black Sea. It is possible to travel for great distances without being far from land, so that navigation developed from early times, and one of the first civilizations appeared on the island of Crete. It is possible also to cross between Europe and Asia at the Bosphorus and between Europe and Africa at Gibraltar, so that populations became mixed by early migrations, and various historic empires—Carthaginian, Roman, Byzantine, Arabic, Spanish, Venetian, and Turkish—have

used the Mediterranean as an avenue between their component parts. After the Suez Canal was built the Mediterranean became a segment in the "lifeline of empire" for the British Empire in its heyday.

In southern Europe, north of the Mediterranean and running for its whole length, is a series of mountains, produced geologically by the pushing of the gigantic mass of Africa against this smaller Eurasian peninsula. The Pyrenees shut off Spain from the north, as the Alps do Italy; the Balkan Mountains have always been difficult to penetrate; and the only place where one can go at water level from the Mediterranean to the north is by the valley of the Rhone River, so that France, since it came together in the Middle Ages, is the only country that clearly belongs both to the Mediterranean and to northern Europe. North of the mountains is a great plain, with branches in England and Sweden, extending from western France through Germany and Poland into Russia and on into Asia, passing south of the Urals through what is called the Caspian Gate, north of the landlocked Caspian Sea. One might draw a straight line from Amsterdam eastward through the Caspian Gate as far as the borders of western China, and although this line would reach the distance from New York to a point five hundred miles west of San Francisco, one would never in traveling along it be higher above sea level than central Kansas. The continuity of this level plain has at various times opened Europe to Mongol and other invasions, enabled the Russians to move east and create a huge empire, and made Poland a troubled intermediary between Western Europe and the Russians and other peoples.

The rivers as shown on the map are worth particular attention. Until quite recent times rivers offered an easier means of transportation than any form of carriage by land. The principal rivers also give access to the sea. Most are navigable, especially in the north European plains. With their valleys, whether in level country or confined between mountains, they provided areas where intensive local development could take place. Thus we see that some of the most important older cities of Europe are on rivers—London on the Thames, Paris on the Seine, Vienna and Budapest on the Danube, Warsaw on the Vistula. In northern Europe it was often possible to move goods from one river to another, and then in the eighteenth century to connect them by canals; and the networks of rivers and canals still carry much heavy traffic by barges. The importance of water is shown again by the location of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) on the Baltic, which is a kind of inland lake, and of Amsterdam and Lisbon, which grew up after the ocean could be traversed by Europeans.

There are many important geographical conditions that a topographic map cannot show. One is climate, which depends on latitude, ocean currents, and winds that bring or withhold rainfall. In latitude Europe lies as far north as the northern United States and southern Canada, with Madrid and Rome in the latitude of New York, and with Stockholm and St. Petersburg as far north as the middle of Hudson Bay. All Europe thus is within what is called the temperate zone, somewhat misleadingly, since the temperate zone is by definition the region of pronounced difference between winter and summer. But the parts of Europe that are near the sea have less extreme temperatures than the corresponding northerly regions of America, and the Mediterranean countries have more sunshine and less severe winters than either northern Europe or the northern



