

Wealth and politics economies

3200 BCE Tablets record linen and oil deliveries to Egyptian kings as tithes

2500 BCE A royal edict standardizes weights and measures in Babylon; commercial goods no longer traded by number or volume

2350 BCE Sargon of Akkad, in an attempt to create a world empire, conquers Sumer to build a Mesopotamian empire in the valley of the Euphrates river

2320 BCE Sargon institutes central government

2100 BCE Mentuhotep II, the first pharaoh of Egypt's 11th dynasty, reunites Ancient Kemet (Egypt), establishes the capital at Thebes, and redefines government and religion to emphasize responsibility

2000 BCE The idea of universal equality and unity appears in Egypt

2000 BCE The Babylonians build an empire

2000 BCE The sale price of a slave in Babylon varies, but a grown man usually 20 shekels of silver, equivalent to 35 bushels of barley

2000 BCE The Minoans centralize power in Knossos, Crete

1900 BCE Power distributed through the social classes in Egypt, as religion shifts from a wealth-based system to one based on proper conduct,

1900 BCE King Melchizedek in Jerusalem charges a flat 10% tax

1763 BCE Hammurabi, the Amorite king, conquers all of Sumer

1500 BCE The Shang dynasty unites China and begins expanding into a regional super-state

1433 BCE The exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt occurs

1353 BCE Pharaoh Akhenaten in Egypt introduces a monotheistic religion

1004 BCE David, king of Israel, builds a centralized government and implements forced labor, a census, and a tax-collection mechanism

1000 BCE The Zhou dynasty invokes the Mandate of Heaven, the notion that the ruler governs by divine right

776 BCE The first Olympics occurs, during which peace prevails

750 BCE The *polis* (city-state) in Greece emerges as a community of citizens with an assembly, a council, elected magistrates, and written laws

750 BCE Greece's emphasis on debate advances people with rhetorical skills

621 BCE Statesman Dracon in Athens publishes a notoriously severe legal code known as the Draconic laws

600 BCE Lykourgos establishes the Spartan system of a controlled, militaristic society

600 BCE Rome controls most of its surrounding area through a senate and an assembly

590 BCE Solon writes new laws for Attica, cancels debts, and ranks male citizens into four classes according to income

539 BCE Cyrus the Great conquers Babylon and rules Persia, a suprate of many countries, races, and languages; at his coronation he reads a declaration of human rights, "I announce that I will respect the traditions, customs, and religions of the nations of my empire and never let any of my governors and subordinates look down on or insult them. . . . I announce that everyone is free to choose a religion. People are free to live in all regions and take up a job provided that they never violate other's rights"

500 BCE Mo Tzu replaces traditional Chinese clan mentality with ideas of universal love

500 BCE Aristotle compares monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy in *Politics*

If liberty and equality, as is thought by some are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost — Aristotle

494 BCE Victory of plebeian class (workers) over patricians (court officials) in Rome allows plebeians to elect tribunes with the power to veto unlawful acts

462 BCE Pericles leads Athens to its cultural height marking the golden age of Greece

400 BCE Hindu lawmaker Vasishtha prohibits the charging of interest on loans to prevent the higher castes of priests and warriors from exploiting the lower castes

399 BCE Socrates tried for corrupting the Athenian youth

367 BCE Plebeian tribunes Licinius Stolo and Sextius pass a law limiting the land any man may hold to 300 acres

357 BCE Rome institutes the first tax on the manumission (freeing) of slaves at 5%

336 BCE Demosthenes sets interest rates on loans at 10%; risky businesses such as lending for shipping use rates between 20% and 30%

331 BCE Alexander the Great conquers Persia, establishing an empire from Macedonia to Egypt and to the Indus river

326 BCE Nexum laws, which allow for debtors and their families to be sold into slavery, abolished

300 BCE *Book of Meng Tzu* (Mencius) emphasizes four principles: benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge, believing that society influences behavior and that unjust rulers should be overthrown

The common error of people is that they forget about their own garden and try to cultivate the other man's garden. They expect much from others and little from themselves — Meng Tzu

221 BCE Ch'in Shih Huang-Ti, the first of the Chin dynasty to which China traces its name, divides the feudal states into 36 provinces ruled by a central administration

215 BCE Confucian ethics, the study of proper behavior, replaces the cultivation and construction of knowledge during the Han dynasty

215 BCE The First Macedonian War signals Rome's rise in the Mediterranean region

173 BCE Rome bans philosophers and teachers of rhetoric

168 BCE Prices for slaves in Rome vary between \$50 and \$75 for males and up to \$1,000 for females

167 BCE Taxation of Roman citizens abolished and now falls only upon allies

146 BCE Rome annexes Greece and Macedonia as provinces; Roman culture becomes increasingly Hellenized

122 BCE Gracchus, a plebeian, passes a law to eliminate unemployment by building roads

51 BCE Marcus Tullius Cicero writes *De Republica* (On the Republic) and *De Legibus* (On Laws)

The safety of the people is the supreme law — Marcus Tullius Cicero

44 BCE Dictator Gaius Julius Caesar assassinated on the Ides of March

44 BCE In response to Caesar's assassination, Cicero writes *De Officiis* (On Duties), outlining principles of conduct for politicians and citizens
30 BCE Emperor Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (Augustus) introduces three new taxes: a general sales tax, land tax, and flat-rate poll tax
9 Emperor Wang Mang frees China's slaves; repealed three years later due to protests
39 Emperor Caligula declares himself a god and orders statues of himself at every temple
54 Paul the apostle, a Jew, states idea of universal equality

There is no Jew or Greek, servant or free, male or female: because you are all one in Jesus Christ — Galatians 3:28

98 Emperor Marcus Ulpius Nerva Traianus (Trajan) introduces *alimenta*, the use of public funds to subsidize education and food for Rome's needy
115 Jewish revolts occur in Cyrene, Cyprus, and Egypt
122 Construction of Hadrian's Wall marks the border between Roman-occupied Britain and the rest of the British Isles
201 Because of the number of deaths caused by the plague in 167, Roman citizenship granted to any free-born person
284 Emperor Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus (Diocletian) offers gladiatorial games more than 150 days a year and food supplied by Rome as a right
285 Roman empire partitioned
312 On the march to Rome, Emperor Gaius Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus (Constantine the Great), claiming to have seen the sign of a cross of light, stops Christian persecutions
313 Constantine the Great adopts Christianity and confiscates the pagan temples' treasures amassed over centuries from throughout the empire
321 Constantine the Great grants women the right to manage their estates, except in the sale of land estates
331 Capital of the Roman empire moved from Rome to Constantinople (New Rome)
341 Roman Empire splits into two
394 Emperor Theodosius declares Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire and bans pagan cults, suppressing the Olympic Games and closing the oracle at Delphi
408 Alaric, a Visigoth, demands 3,000 pounds of pepper as ransom for the city of Rome
476 The Western part of the Roman empire collapses
500 *Wergeld* (man money), payment of fines to an injured party instead of punishment by the state, introduced in Frankish culture
534 Emperor Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Iustinianus (Justinian) issues the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (Body of Civil Law) to codify Roman law
589 After unifying northern kingdoms and conquering the south, Sui Wen-Ti centralizes government, reforms tax structure, and builds the Grand Canal joining northern China with the Yangtze River
622 The Constitution of Medina guarantees religious freedom and peaceful methods of dispute resolution for Muslims and Jews
630 Mohammed captures Mecca and writes to world leaders explaining Islam

637 Umar ibn al-Khattab expands Muslim land including Jerusalem, codifies Islamic law, establishes an administration for conquered lands, and orders a census of all Muslim territories

711 The Arabs conquer Spain and constitute the emirate of Andalusia with its capital at Cordoba

717 Caliph Omar II grants tax exemption to all believers in Islam

732 Franks at the Battle of Poitiers halt the Arab advance

846 The Arabs sack Rome and damage the Vatican

877 The Edict of Quiersy declares fiefdoms hereditary in France

900 Castles become seats of the European nobility

1054 Eastern and Western churches split (The Great Schism), dividing the Christian Church into Greek and Roman orthodoxies

1055 The Turks conquer Baghdad, capital of the Islamic caliphate

1086 William the Conqueror produces *The Domesday Book*, a record of land ownership and assets, to tally his conquests

1095 Pope Urban II calls for the first of the Christian Crusades against the Muslims to take the Holy Land from the Turks

1159 Scutage tax (money paid in lieu of military service) introduced by Henry II creates mercenaries; the term *soldier* derives from the *solidus*, the king's shilling they earn

1175 Henry II establishes royal courts at Westminster and divides England into circuits to which his judges travel to try important civil and criminal cases in county courts; the judges compile traditional laws to create one common law

1184 Pope Lucius III's papal decree begins the Catholic Church's questioning of people's faith; Pope Gregory IX officially decrees the Inquisition in 1233

1188 The Saladin tithe, levied in England and France, after Saladin's capture of Jerusalem in 1187

1190 On his return from a crusade, Richard I of England taken prisoner, sold to Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI, and held for ransom

1206 Genghis Khan unites all Mongol tribes under a single ruler: "I have only one coat. I eat the same food and am dressed in the same tatters as my humble herdsman"

1215 The Magna Carta signed, restricting many rights of the king, including raising taxes without consent of the barons

1230 A "Robin Hood," described as "Robertus Hood, fugitivus" in Yorkshire, England, thought to have stolen money from the rich to give to the poor

1236 The Statute of Merton allows English lords to enclose parts of the common woods and pasture; this increases again in 1485 until Kett's rebellion in 1549

1240 Sundiata Keita, Mali's Lion Prince, unites West Africa's people with each tribe having a chief representative at court

1250 The word *wealth* first appears in the English language

1260 Kublai Khan moves Mongolia's capital from Karakorum to Beijing; by 1279 the Mongols rule all of China

1271 The last of the Christian Crusades against the Muslims begins

1273 Thomas Aquinas finishes writing *Summa Theologica*, an attempt to reconcile theology with daily life

This is the first precept of the law, that good is to be done and promoted, and evil is to be avoided. All other precepts of the natural law are based on this — Thomas Aquinas

- 1290 The Statute of Quia Emptores, one of the first laws to facilitate the demise of feudalism in England, established
- 1291 Muslims recapture territory in Syria held by the Crusaders
- 1307 Knights Templar, the largest and most powerful group of knights providing protection and credit to traveling pilgrims, arrested, and French King Philip IV and Pope Clement V seize their wealth
- 1311 Pope Clement V at the Council of Vienna condemns usury, or interest on debt, as heretical
- 1351 The Statute of Labourers in England stipulates minimum rates of pay
- 1370–1405 Tamerlane establishes rule in Central Asia, western Asia (Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Anatolia), southern Russia, and India
- 1370 King Charles V of France decrees that all Paris church bells must ring at the same time as the Royal Palace to end the Church's canonical ringing of bells for prayer
- 1381 The Peasants' Revolt in England protests the imposition of a poll tax on the peasantry
- 1403 Charging interest on loans ruled legal in Florence, Italy
- 1408 The Council of Oxford forbids translations of the Scriptures into the vernacular unless approved by Church authority
- 1450 The Incan empire levies tributes paid as a labor tax, with workers working a specified number of days each year on state projects
- 1453 Mehmed II Khan Gazi captures Constantinople; the Ottoman empire succeeds Byzantium
- 1478 King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella establish the Spanish Inquisition, a secular inquisition, to centralize their authority and achieve religious unity, targeting primarily Jews and Muslims and later Protestants
- 1493 The king of Spain initially claims the lands Christopher Columbus explored for Spain, but Pope Alexander VI divides the New World between Spain and Portugal if they convert the natives to Christianity; this is later overturned in 1529
- 1505 Enslaved Africans first brought to the New World
- 1513 Niccolò Machiavelli writes *The Prince*, advising monarchs on statecraft

I say that every prince ought to desire to be considered clement and not cruel . . . but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with — Niccolò Machiavelli

- 1516 Thomas More writes *Utopia*, a vision of what society could be
- 1517 Martin Luther's *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences Commonly Known* (95 Theses) declares an end to 1,200 years of Roman Catholic hegemony over Christian belief and practice; the Protestant Reformation begins
- 1520 Under Suleyman the Magnificent, the Ottoman empire reaches its zenith and becomes a world power
- 1524 A peasant uprising in southern Germany, repressed with Luther's support, begins the century-long religious wars
- 1529 The word *politics* (from the Greek word *polis*) first appears in the English language

1534 The dissolution of monasteries by Henry VIII funds England's defense
1542 Pope Paul III establishes trials of heresy to counter the Reformation
1571 The Battle of Lepanto, the first battle between European powers and the Ottoman empire in which the Ottomans lost, occurs
1577 Sir Francis Drake, commissioned by Queen Elizabeth, sets sail from Plymouth for the Pacific coast of the Americas
1577 Jean Bodin writes *Six Livres de la Republique*, the first systematic treatment of politics since Aristotle, and argues that property and family form the basis of society
1580 King Philip II of Spain unites Spain and Portugal to become the then-most powerful colonial power
1598 King Henry IV of France grants religious freedom to protestants
1600 King Philip III of Spain outlaws the use of Native American slaves in Spanish colonies
1601 After the dissolution of the monasteries, the Poor Law introduces a national pattern of parishes helping the poor in exchange for their labor
1610 King James VI of Scotland (James I of England), the first ruler to call himself King of Great Britain, claims the divine right of kings in *The True Law of Free Monarchies*

Kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods — James VI

1613 Francisco de Suarez in Spain criticizes the divine right of kings in *Defensio Fidei Catholicae*, which is burned in London
1620 *Novum Organum* (The New Organum) and *New Atlantis* from *Selected Works of Francis Bacon* advocates correcting government through a scientific approach
1640 Thomas Hobbes's *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* discusses the natural foundations of government
1641 Massachusetts colony outlaws slavery
1642 The English Civil Wars begin between royalists in favor of the monarchy and parliamentarians
1649 English King Charles I executed; the monarchy and the House of Lords abolished; and the commonwealth, a republican government, established
1651 Hobbes writes *Leviathan*, explaining the organization of political systems and the state as a living organism, defending absolute monarchy, and establishing the theory of the social contract
1670 Benedictus de Spinoza in *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* advocates religious tolerance, stating that freedom of thought does not undermine society but instead enhances society
1679 The Habeas Corpus Act establishes key rights in England
1688 The English parliament invites Dutch Prince William of Orange and English Princess Mary of Orange, both protestants, to become England and Scotland's king and queen
1748 *De l'esprit des lois* (The Spirit of the Laws) by Charles Secondat, baron of Montesquieu, develops a theory of republican government with separation of powers and checks and balances bound by rule of law
1755 Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* denounces private

property as root of evil: “You forget that the fruits belong to all and that the land belongs to no one”

1759 Voltaire’s *Candide* critiques Christian regimes of power, advocating the Enlightenment’s goal to create a better social structure

1762 Rousseau in *The Social Contract* argues that government must rest on the consent of the governed: “Never exceed your rights, and they will soon become unlimited”

1773 The Boston Tea Party protests the British tea tax in the U.S.

1776 Thomas Jefferson writes the Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4

1778 First of hundreds of treaties between the U.S. and American Indians

That all offences or acts of hostilities by one, or either of the contracting parties against the other, be mutually forgiven, and buried in the depth of oblivion, never more to be had in remembrance — Treaty with the Delawares

1782 The King of Siam moves the capital to Bangkok to protect it from Burma

1783 The Peace Treaty in Paris signed; the U.K. accepts U.S. independence

1788 British Captain Arthur Phillip founds a penal colony in Sydney, Australia

1788 French King Louis XVI calls the Estates-General to convene in 1789 to raise taxes for the U.S. war’s expenses

1789 French peasants revolt against feudal rights and privileges

1789 In response to bread riots Marie Antoinette is claimed to have said, “Qu’ils mangent de la brioche” often mistranslated as “Let them eat cake” instead of brioche

1789 The French Revolution begins with the storming of the Bastille, a Paris prison holding many political prisoners

1789 The French National Assembly abolishes the feudal system; votes for a constitution, a limited monarchy; and publishes the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*

1792 Mary Wollstonecraft writes *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, the first feminist treatise

1793 Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette executed

1795 Speenhamland parish creates a system of paying workers an allowance beyond their wages from public funds in England

1798 Thomas Malthus writes *Essay on the Principle of Population* predicting that population growth will exceed food supply

1798 William Pitt the Younger implements the first income tax in England to pay for weapons and equipment for the Napoleonic wars

1800 The Act of Union unites the Kingdom of Great Britain (England and Scotland united in 1707) with the Kingdom of Ireland to form the United Kingdom (U.K.)

Political Economy, you think, is an enquiry into the nature and causes of wealth — I think it should rather be called an enquiry into the laws which determine the division of produce of industry amongst the classes that concur in its formation — David Ricardo

1801 Napoléon establishes the rule of law in France through the *Code Napoléon*, straightforward civil laws

1803 The Louisiana Purchase, sold by Napoléon, doubles the size of the U.S.

1804 Haiti established as the first free, black republic after years of fighting led by slave Toussaint L'Ouverture

1807 The British parliament votes to abolish the slave trade

1809 Ecuador revolts against Spain, fuelling other countries' independence movements

1813 Venezuelan Simon Bolivar leads independence movements liberating South America from Spanish rule, eventually freeing Venezuela in 1821 and Ecuador in 1822

1816 The U.K.'s economic crisis causes large-scale emigration to Canada and the U.S.

1817 Robert Owen presents to the U.K. parliament his *Plan for the General Relief of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor*, which provides for employment in cooperative villages

1817 David Ricardo writes *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, arguing that rents allow landlords to enrich themselves at the expense of society yet laws aiding the poor pervert the market, undermine incentive, reduce the mobility of labors, and encourage overpopulation

1830 The Indian Removal Act cedes Native American land east of the Mississippi for payment and land in the west

1835 The Treaty of New Echota grants land and money to five Indian tribes; this treaty and an 1831 treaty results in the Cherokee and Choctaw Trail of Tears

1839 Slaves aboard the ship *Amistad* revolt and secure their freedom

1848 Karl Marx publishes *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*

1848 John Stuart Mill suggests that society can alter the existing distribution of income in *Principles of Political Economy*

1849 In *Civil Disobedience* Henry David Thoreau discusses the individual's duty to resist government excesses

1851 The U.S. Indian Appropriations Act creates Indian reservations in Oklahoma

1852 Auguste Comte coins the term *altruism* from *autrui* (French for other people), later used in sociobiology and population biology

1855 The Treaty of 1855 sets aside a reservation for the Nez Perce nation in the U.S.

1856 Australia becomes the first nation to introduce the secret ballot for elections

1861 The Emancipation Manifesto in Russia attempts to free the serfs

1863 President Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring U.S. slaves free

1865 The Salvation Army in London collects, sorts, and recycles unwanted goods

1865 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon writes *What is Property?*, declaring "What is property? . . . It is theft"

1865 The 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolishes slavery and involuntary servitude

1866 The Isle of Man grants equal voting rights to men and women based on property ownership; women in the U.S. and the U.K introduce suffragist movements

1867 Karl Marx critiques capitalism's effects on the distribution of income in *Das Kapital (Capital) vol. I*

1867 Canada peacefully begins independence from the U.K.

1871 William II, emperor of Germany, abdicates; Germany unites

1871 The Indian Appropriation Act makes Indians wards of the U.S. federal government

1871 The U.S. Civil Rights Act, enacted to prosecute the Ku Klux Klan, allows individuals to sue state actors in federal courts for civil rights violations

1877 Railway workers stage the first nationwide strike in the U.S.

1878 The Austrian empire, France, and the U.K. meet at the Congress of Berlin regarding the decline of the Ottoman Empire and Russia's expansion in southern Europe, and France's and the U.K.'s colonization of Egypt and Palestine

1889 The Haymarket Strike becomes the first May Day as labor unions organize a strike for an eight-hour work day in Chicago

1892 Sierra Club established to defeat encroachment on Yosemite National Park

1892 Labor unrest erupts in the U.S. when workers strike the Carnegie Steel Company

1894 Federal troops intervene in the Pullman labor strike against the Chicago Pullman Palace Car Company

1894 The Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act establishes the income tax, with "gains, profits and incomes" in excess of \$4,000 taxed at 2%

1896 *Plessy vs. Ferguson* declares doctrine of separate-but-equal accommodations

1896 The Olympics, stopped in 393, begin again

1900 Women compete in Olympics for the first time

1905 The Russian Revolution begins on Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg, Russia, followed by workers' strikes across the country

1907 Russia and the U.K. negotiate the status of Afghanistan, Persia, and Tibet

1911 The Chinese Revolution ends Chinese dynasties

1911 A two-year famine begins in Russia though the country continues exporting 20% of its annual grain production

1912 The African National Congress founded to unify all Africans

1914 World War I begins

1915 The Armenian genocide occurs in the Ottoman empire

1917 The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia overthrows the monarchy

1918 Canadian women gain the right to vote

1919 The Treaty of Versailles ends WWI and provides for the creation of the League of Nations, a precursor to the United Nations (U.N.)

1920 The 19th amendment guarantees women the right to vote in U.S.

1920 The first Red Scare and witch hunt for communists begins in the U.S.

1920 John Maynard Keynes argues against German war reparations and in favor of mutual cancellation of Allied war debts in *Economic Consequences of the Peace*

1923 Adolf Hitler's Munich beer hall putsch fails; he writes *Mein Kampf* during his 1924 jail sentence

1925 The Monkey Trial of John Scopes in Tennessee begins after he teaches evolution in his classroom

1928 After Vladimir Lenin dies in 1924, Joseph Stalin leads the U.S.S.R.

1929 The U.S. stock market crashes; the Depression begins in the U.S. and worldwide

1930 Mahatma Gandhi marches to the sea in India protesting the U.K.'s salt tax; he pioneers *Satyagraha* (nonviolent resistance through mass civil disobedience)

1933 President Franklin Roosevelt begins New Deal government spending programs, including Revenue Act, which increases taxes for wealthy from 25 % to 63%; Social Security Act, which establishes social security; and Works Progress Administration, which provides more than 8.5 million jobs

1934 Mao Zedong flees from southern China to northern China and walks 6,000 miles during the Long March

1934 The Indian Reorganization Act reverses some privatization of Indian holdings and encourages tribal land management and government
1936 National Wildlife Federation established in the U.S.
1936 Keynes advocates government spending to ease depressions in *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*
1936 General Francisco Franco leads a coup, starts the Spanish Civil War, seizes private land, and creates agricultural collectives
1941 The U.S. joins the Allied Powers, the Soviet Union and China in WWII against the Axis Powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan
1942 The name United Nations (U.N.) first used officially
1945 The Allies liberate concentration camps

The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty, and bestiality were . . . overpowering. . . . I made the visit deliberately in order to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to “propaganda” — General Dwight D. Eisenhower

1945 The U.N. convenes and signs its charter in 1946
1945 UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) formed in London
1945 The Fifth Pan-African Congress meets to discuss an independent and united Africa
1947 U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall proposes the Marshall Plan to assist war-torn Europe reconstruction
1947 India gains independence from the U.K.
1948 The U.N. adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1948 Israel becomes a state; the Arab-Israeli War begins
1948 World Health Organization (WHO) established
1949 The Communist-led Chinese Revolution under Chairman Mao overthrows the Nationalist Party and establishes the People’s Republic of China
1953 Cease-fire begins between North and South Korea after three years of fighting
1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* makes segregation in U.S. schools illegal
1955 Rosa Parks refuses to give her seat on a bus to a white man, which triggers the Montgomery Bus Boycott
1956 The Suez Crisis begins when Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalizes the Suez Canal after Western countries withdraw aid to build the Aswan Dam
1957 Lester Pearson, prime minister of Canada, wins the Nobel Peace Prize for defusing the Suez Crisis through the U.N.

The 20th century will not be remembered as an era of political conflict and violence, or as an age of technical invention, but rather as an era in which we dared to imagine the welfare of the entire human race as a practical objective — Lester Pearson, quoting Arnold Toynbee

1958 John Kenneth Galbraith writes *The Affluent Society*, urging the U.S. government to check rising disparities in wealth by investing in highways and education
1958 The Treaty of Rome establishes the European Economic Community

1958 Ché Guevara leads last battle of the Cuban Revolution at Santa Clara against U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista

1959 Fidel Castro becomes prime minister of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba and establishes a communist state

1959 The Dalai Lama exiled in India after China occupies Tibet

1960 The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development created to achieve high sustainable economic growth in the U.S.

1961 The U.S. ceases diplomatic relations with Cuba

1961 The Berlin Wall constructed, dividing East and West Germany

1961 President John F. Kennedy establishes the Peace Corps to assist developing countries

1962 The Cuban Missile Crisis occurs between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.

1962 The Second Vatican Council, announced by Pope John XXIII, modernizes the Roman Catholic Church

1963 The first modern Islamic bank following Islamic law established in Egypt

1963 President Kennedy assassinated

1963 Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. marches on Washington and delivers the “I Have a Dream” speech

1964 U.N. Conference on Trade and Development established

1965 Malcolm X assassinated

1968 Zero population growth in the U.S.

1968 Students and workers revolt against Charles de Gaulle’s government in France

1968 Martin Luther King assassinated, triggering riots in Chicago and other cities

1969 The Woodstock Music Festival occurs and later symbolizes the countercultural, hippie movement

1969 Carol Hanisch in “The Personal is Political” essay in the *Feminist Revolution* refutes feminist consciousness-raising as therapy

One of the first things we discover in these groups is that personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time — Carol Hanisch

1971 Greenpeace established to document the U.S. government’s underground nuclear tests

1971 John Rawls explains distributive justice, theorizing how a just society should distribute primary goods, in *A Theory of Justice*

1972 Violence erupts between Hutu and Tutsi tribes in Rwanda

1973 *Roe vs. Wade* legalizes abortion

1975 The U.S. pulls troops out of Vietnam

1979 The Iranian Revolution overthrows U.S.-backed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, resulting in an Islamist cleric-led theocracy

1979 Mother Teresa wins the Nobel Peace Prize

1980 President Ronald Reagan elected

1982

We don’t have a trillion-dollar debt because we haven’t taxed enough; we have a trillion-dollar debt because we spend too much — Ronald Reagan

1982 Milton Friedman writes *Capitalism and Freedom*, describing political freedom as necessary for capitalism

1985 Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev calls for greater openness in public statements, including criticism of government policy, using the word *glasnost* (publicity)

1987 Gorbachev launches *perestroika* (economic restructuring)

1988 15 countries have debts greater than their GNP, including Mozambique at 3,997% of its GNP

1989 Berlin Wall falls, symbolizing the end of the Cold War

1989 Andrei Sakharov calls for observance of human rights in the U.S.S.R.

1989 Student protests in Tiananmen Square demanding democratic and political reforms repressed in Beijing

1989 Pope John Paul II criticizes the burden of debt in *Sollicitude Rei Socialis*: “Capital needed by the debtor nations to improve their standard of living now has to be used for interest payments on their debts”

1990 Joint declaration of non-aggression between NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and Warsaw Pact nations

1991 U.S.S.R. dissolved

1991 Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia declare independence from Yugoslavia; war in Croatia begins

1992 The war in Bosnia begins

1994 Nelson Mandela elected president of South Africa

1994 The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda established to prosecute those responsible for Rwanda’s genocide and begin reconciliation

1995 The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a process of establishing the causes, nature, and extent of the human rights violations under apartheid, established to bring unity to South Africa

1996 The Taliban begins Islamic rule in Afghanistan

1997 Ted Turner pledges \$1 billion to U.N.-run programs

1997 Control of Hong Kong returned to China

1998 Almost three billion people — half the world’s population — live on less than two dollars a day

1999 Y2K fears prompt millions of dollars to be spent on precautionary measures

1999 Melinda and Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, donate \$6 billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and \$25 million to AIDS and HIV research

1999 Anticorporate-globalization protesters in Seattle block meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO), an international organization which regulates trade

1999 NATO bombing of Serbia and clashes in Kosovo; the term *collateral damage*, or unintended, civilian casualties, coined

2000 Singapore’s prime minister Goh Chok Tong receives \$1.1 million salary

2000 The U.S. taken off the U.N. Commission on Human Rights and Narcotic Control Board

2000 The U.N. unanimously rules to end the role of diamonds in fueling conflict

2000 Out of a world population of approximately 6.1 billion, more than 1 billion lack access to potable water

2000 The World Health Organization estimates approximately five million people die each year from poor drinking water, faulty sanitation, or other water-storage problems

2000 The Millennium Assembly of the U.N. sets forth a plan to decrease suffering and increase sustainability worldwide

2001 The Irish Republican Army (IRA) announces it has begun to dismantle its arsenal

2001 Congo President Laurent Kabila assassinated

2001 President George W. Bush sworn in under controversial conditions

2001 Rioting in Argentina after an economic crisis causes change in government

2001 Terrorists crash airplanes into World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon building in Washington D.C., and a field in Pennsylvania

2001 Passed after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. Patriot Act broadens law enforcement powers

2001 In response to the Taliban not releasing Osama bin Laden, the U.S. invades Afghanistan

2002 The Bush administration authorizes the National Security Agency (NSA) to engage in domestic eavesdropping without court warrants

2002 Former Ku Klux Klansman convicted of a 1963 bombing Birmingham, Alabama, church

2002 Slobodan Milosevic's trial for crimes against humanity begins at The Hague; he dies in 2006 before being sentenced

2002 Queen Elizabeth II marks 50 years as monarch

2002 The U.N. Security Council approves a resolution to send weapons inspectors to Iraq

2002 The International Criminal Court created

2002 The euro becomes legal tender in Europe

2003 The U.S. Secret Service integrated into the Department of Homeland Security

2003 U.S.-led troops invade Iraq, capture Saddam Hussein, and find no weapons of mass destruction

2003 Israel ceases construction of security barrier dividing Israeli and Palestinian areas

2003 Mahmoud Abbas becomes the first Palestinian prime minister sworn into office

2003 The White House announces deficits of more than \$200 billion

2003 North Korea abandons the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

2003 Suicide bombings destroy the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad

2003 The Supreme Court upholds affirmative action in higher education

2003 The Rose Revolution, the first of five color revolutions, displaces Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze and calls for new elections

2004 The E.U. expands by ten nations

2004 President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti deposed

2005 Iraq has its first democratic elections in 50 years

2005 House Majority Leader Tom DeLay resigns after being indicted for campaign-finance violations

2005 Lewis Libby, chief of staff to Vice President Dick Cheney, charged with perjury and obstruction of justice in the investigation into the leak of CIA agent Valerie Plame's name

2006 The Supreme Court rules private property can be transferred to private developers to promote economic development in *Kelo vs. City of New London*

2006 American search engine Google cooperates with the Chinese government in censoring the Web

2006 The Supreme Court declares military commissions against detainees in Guantanamo Bay's Camp Delta illegal in *Hamdan vs. Rumsfeld*

2006 Hundreds of thousands, mostly immigrants, rally for U.S. immigration reform

2006 Hamas, a militant Islamic organization, wins the majority of seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections

2006 Warren Buffett donates more than \$30 billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

2006 A U.N. report calls for closing the prisons housing enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay and to "refrain from any practice amounting to torture"

2006 More than one million protest proposed a French labor law allowing employers to fire workers under age 26 without reason; violence breaks out in Paris

2006 After the displacement of nearly 2 million people, the Sudanese government signs an accord with the Sudan Liberation Army in Darfur

2006 Nobel Peace Laureate José Ramos-Horta appointed prime minister of East Timor to restore the country's stability

2006 A U.N. Security Council resolution calls for Israel and Lebanon to support a permanent ceasefire after violence erupted due to Hizbollah's attack on Israel; the resolution stresses the need to achieve a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East

2006 The Iraq war, according to the Congressional Research Service, estimated to cost \$318.5 billion by the end of 2006