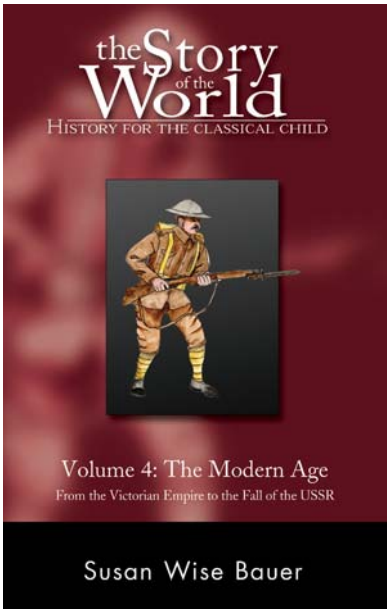
the Story of the World
History for the Classical Child
Volume 4: The Modern Age
From the Victorian Empire to the Fall of the USSR
Susan Wise Bauer

The Story of the World

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Volume 4: The Modern Age

From Victoria's Empire to the End of the USSR

Susan Wise Bauer

illustrations by Sarah Park

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Foreword

The four volumes of the Story of the World are meant to be read by children, or read aloud by parents to children. Each of the first three volumes increases slightly in difficulty. Although older students can certainly make use of them, the primary audience for Volume 1 is children in grades 1–4. For Volume 2, the primary audience is grades 2–5; and for volume 3, grades 3–6. This volume is targeted at students in grades 4–8.

The first three volumes (which cover history from roughly 5000 BC up until 1865) are designed so that siblings can use them together; so, a first grader could certainly make use of Volume 2 if her third-grade sister were using it as well.

I wouldn't study this particular volume, though, with children younger than fourth grade. The events that shaped the twentieth century—by which I mean the events that have laid down the borders of countries and dictated the ways in which those countries relate to each other—have almost all involved violence. As an academic, a writer, a historian, and the mother of children ranging in age from four to beginning high school, I have done my best to tell this history in a way that is age appropriate. Because of that attempt, this volume is less evocative than the previous three. I have always tried to tell history as a story, to bring out the color and narrative thread of events. But with this history, I have found myself veering continually toward a more matter-of-fact and less dramatic tone. The events of the twentieth century—the bombing of Hiroshima, the purges of Stalin, to name only two—are dramatic enough. Turned into story, they would be overwhelming.

Despite their violent nature, I don't think these events should be ignored by parents of young children. A fourth grader hears the news on the car radio, on the TV, or in the conversation of his elders. He hears the words ("terrorism") and senses the worry of the adults around him. A fourth or fifth grader who has a vague idea of what is going on in the world deserves to be started on the path to understanding. The shape

of the world today is not random; it has been formed by a very definite pattern of happenings. To deny a child an understanding of that pattern is truly to doom a child to fear, because war, unrest, and violence appear totally random.

Even in this book, violence is not random. It is alarming, but not random. As you read, you will see, again and again, the same pattern acted out: A person or a group of people rejects injustice by rebelling and seizing the reins of power. As soon as those reins are in the hands of the rebels, the rebels become the establishment, the victims become the tyrants, the freedom-fighters become the dictators. The man who shouts for equality in one decade purges, in the next decade, those who shout against him. Boiling history down to its simplest outline so that beginning scholars can grasp it brings this repetition into stark relief.

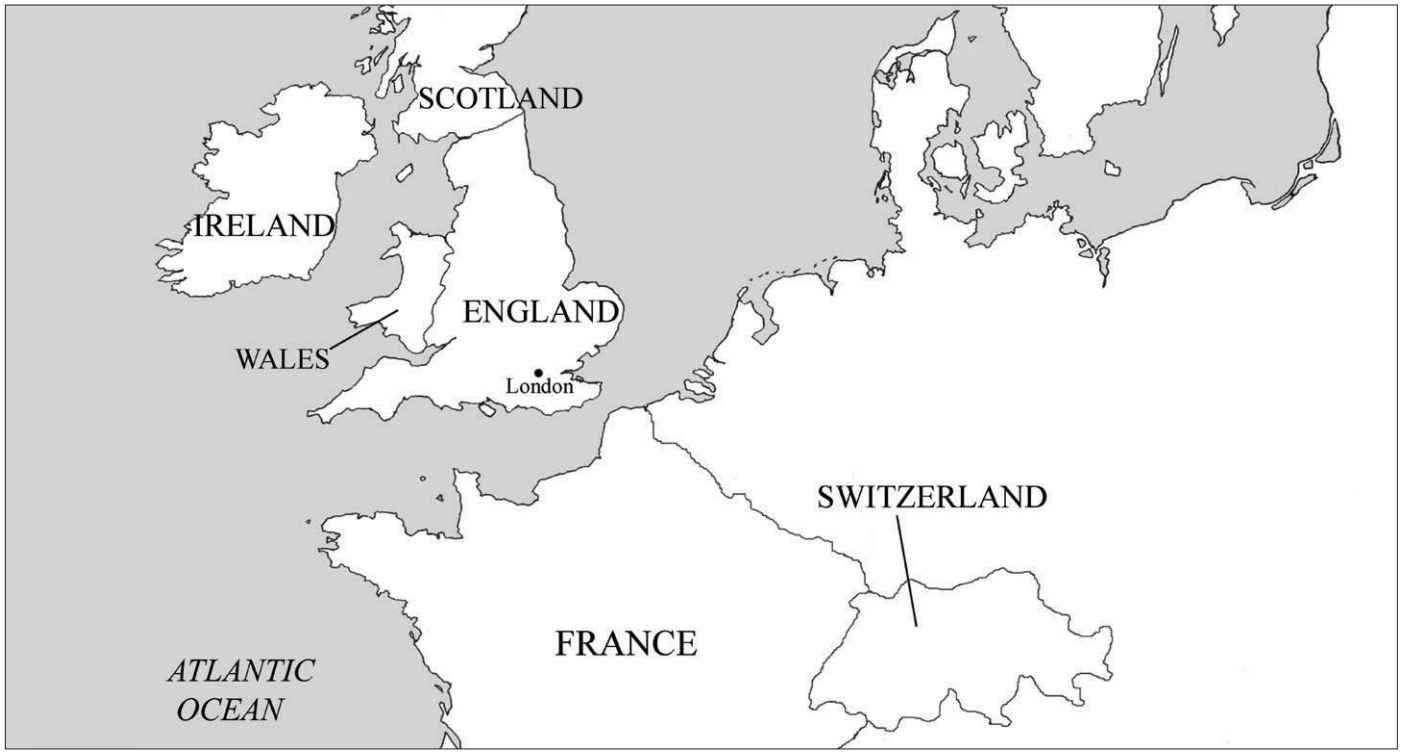
Again and again, while researching this book, I was reminded of the words of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who spent eleven years in the labor camps of the Soviet Union, and who, when he became powerless, finally understood that revolution never brings an end to oppression. Solzhenitsyn wrote, "In the intoxication of youthful successes I had felt myself to be infallible, and I was therefore cruel. In the surfeit of power I was a murderer and an oppressor. … And it was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good. … Even in the best of hearts there remains … an unuprooted small corner of evil. Since then I have come to understand the truth of all the religions of the world: They struggle with the *evil inside a human being*. … And since that time I have come to understand the falsehood of all the revolutions in history: They destroy only those carriers of evil contemporary with them."

Revolution shatters the structures; but the men who build the next set of structures haven't conquered the evil that lives in their own hearts. The history of the twentieth century is, again and again, the story of men who fight against tyrants, win the battle, and then are overwhelmed by the unconquered tyranny in their own souls.

A note on accuracy: Historians vary widely on such matters as the number of war casualties in any given conflict, the sizes of armies, and even specific dates on which treaties were signed or independence declared. Since this is a basic text for young students, I have decided (fairly arbitrarily) to use *Encyclopædia Britannica* as the final authority on dates and numbers.

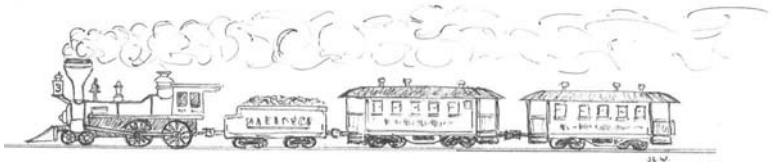
There is no single accepted method of transliteration for Arabic and Chinese names. I have chosen to use the Pinyin system for most Chinese names, unless another transliteration is extremely well known ("Manchuria" instead of the Pinyin "Dongbei," for example). I have generally followed *Britannica* for names in other languages.

— Susan Wise Bauer
Charles City, VA
March, 2005



Victoria's England

Chapter One
Britain's Empire



Victoria's England

Summer had come to England. The sun poured down on the hot, soot-covered roofs and cluttered streets of London. The Thames River shone in the morning light. In an open green space at the center of the city, a huge glass box sat like a glittering toy on the grass.

Beneath the glass roof of the box, an army troop was marching in circles, beating a path on the grass. The youngest soldier looked up at the glass ceiling nervously.

"It's going to collapse any minute!" he whispered to the soldier in front of him.

"Quiet!" bellowed the sergeant at the troop's head. "Left! Right! Left, right, left! Stamp your feet! March until it falls down on your head!"

The young soldier hunched his shoulders and tramped harder. The ceiling shook—but the walls stood firm. Finally, the sergeant called his men to a halt. They had marched for an hour, and failed to shake the glass building down. Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert, would be delighted!

Victoria was queen of Great Britain, a country made up of four smaller countries (England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales) all allied together. In less than a year, Victoria and Albert planned to invite the entire world to Great Britain's capital city, London, for the biggest fair ever held: "The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations." Countries from all across the globe would bring their inventions, their machines,

and their goods to this fair. But such a huge fair needed an enormous building to hold all those exhibits.

Prince Albert had looked at 245 different plans for buildings—and had rejected all of them. Finally, he found the perfect exhibition hall: a glass building made out of almost a million feet of glass, attached to four thousand tons of iron columns and beams. This glass building had been designed by a man named Joseph Paxton, a gardener who had spent years building greenhouses. It was bigger than any building in England, and it would shine in the sun like a jewel.

But when the people of London heard about the glass building, they objected. If huge crowds milled around underneath the glass ceiling, shaking the ground with their feet, the building might collapse and kill everyone beneath.

So Joseph Paxton made a smaller model of his glass building and asked the troop of soldiers to jump and stamp around underneath it, shaking the ground. The model remained standing. Plans to build the giant greenhouse could go ahead!

There was no time to waste. The Great Exhibition was due to open in less than nine months. Every glassmaker in England was called upon to help. Thousands of sheets of glass and hundreds of iron bars and columns were brought to an open green space in the center of London called Hyde Park. There, the iron and glass were put together into a huge greenhouse that covered nineteen acres—the same space as seventeen football fields. A huge dome rose from it, big enough so that the towering elm trees in the park could fit right into the building. Paxton's building, the Crystal Palace, was ready for the fair.

Countries from all over the world brought thirteen thousand different exhibits. Vases and hats from Russia, furniture from Austria, farming tools from the United States, rich clothing and embroidery made in Prussia, fine cloth and weapons from France, and Swiss watches filled the halls. There were statues and pictures, a life-sized lead mine, the first gigantic models of dinosaurs, cuneiform tablets just discovered in the ancient land of Assyria, and a fountain hundreds of feet high.

On May 1, 1851, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert arrived in their state carriage to open the very first day of the Great Exhibition. The Crystal Palace shone in the sun. Flags waved from the roof. Sunshine flooded through the glass walls and illuminated the queen as she walked into the central dome. As she entered, a huge choir began to sing the Hallelujah Chorus.

Victoria and Albert walked through the Crystal Palace, admiring the beautiful clothing and furniture and the ingenious inventions from other countries. Later, Queen Victoria wrote in her diary, "We were quite dazzled by the most splendid [Indian] shawls and tissues … [and] charming Turkish stuffs,

Queen Victoria, ruler of the British Empire

including very fine silks. … [And] there were 'Bowie' knives in profusion, made entirely for Americans, who never move without one."

But Albert and Victoria were the most pleased by exhibits from all parts of the British Empire—an empire that stretched around the world. Australian convicts from the British colony of Australia had sent bonnets made out of palm leaves. British New Zealand sent carved wood. British-run factories in India sent beautiful silks and cottons. The British colony of Canada sent a brand-new kind of fire engine. Throughout the Crystal Palace, visitors marveled at British machines: a huge locomotive engine, a diving bell, models of steamships, cranes, pumps, plows and reapers, and architects' models of bridges and buildings.

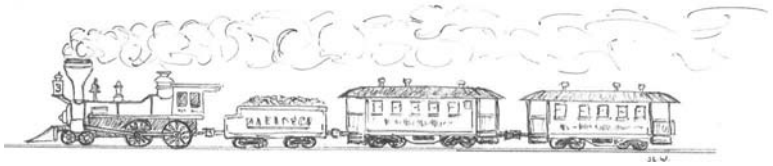
The *real* reason for the Great Exhibition was to show the entire world how powerful and modern the British Empire was. Britain itself was just a tiny island off the coast of Europe. But British governors were in charge of British colonies and territories in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, and many more places. Victoria's empire was so big that the British said, "The sun never sets on the British Empire!" No matter where the sun's light fell as the Earth travelled around it, the rays would warm land governed by the British.

British colonies sent coal, silk, furs, and other valuable goods back to Britain itself. But the British didn't spread their empire just for money. They were sure that they could improve every part of the world—if they could just take control of it. Englishman Cecil Rhodes wrote, "We are the first [best] race in the world, and … the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race."

The Great Exhibition made this clear! Only half of the Crystal Palace was given over to exhibits from the rest of the world. The other half was filled entirely with British goods. The six million visitors who came to the Great Exhibition could see exactly what the British thought of themselves: Britain was as powerful as the rest of the world, put together. The British historian and writer Thomas Babington Macaulay exclaimed,

"[The Great Exhibition was] a most gorgeous sight. … I cannot think that the Caesars ever exhibited a more splendid spectacle." Just like the Caesars of the Roman Empire, the kings and queens of Britain had spread their laws, their customs, and their language across the world.

But just like the Romans of old, the British would soon have to fight to keep their empire together.



The Sepoy Mutiny

Not long after the close of the Great Exhibition, Britain found itself fighting a war in India—a war in which the eighty-two-year-old emperor of India, Bahadur Shah, would be forced to hide in a tomb while fighting raged outside.

Long before Bahadur Shah was born, English merchants who wanted to buy rare silks, cotton, and tea from India asked the emperor of India, Jahangir, for permission to build little settlements called *trading posts* along the Indian coast. These settlements would be safe places for their ships to land.

Jahangir agreed. So the merchants, joining together into a group called the East India Company, began to build their trading posts. For a hundred years, the East India Company went on building trading posts throughout India. More and more Englishmen and women settled around the trading posts. The trading posts put guns on their walls to defend the settlers. The trading posts began to look more like English cities!

One of the largest of these "English cities," Calcutta, lay on India's northeast coast, in the province of Bengal. The governor of Bengal began to grow nervous about this large settlement of Englishmen with guns, right in the middle of his country. He decided that it was time for the English to leave—so he assembled an army and marched out to fight against them.

India During the Sepoy Mutiny

But the merchants of the East India Company didn't want to leave Calcutta. They hired an army of English soldiers and an English general and fought back. When they defeated the Indian army, the East India Company took control of the government of Bengal.

The merchants had become governors.

By the time Bahadur Shah was born, the East India Company had seized control of more and more parts of India. In some places, British officials actually ran the government of India. In others, they allowed local rulers to control their courts and their ceremonies—but British "advisors" told the rulers what to do. And the taxes paid by Indians on their land went to the British.

Many Indians were displeased by life under British rule. They could see that British soldiers and officers treated Indians with scorn. The British tore down Indian temples to make room for British railroad tracks. Sometimes they forced Indian Muslims to shave their beards, which symbolized their faith. And both Hindus and Muslims in India were afraid that the British were out to convert them, by force, to Christianity.

When Bahadur Shah's father finally died, as a very old man, Bahadur Shah became the emperor of India. He was already sixty years old. Even though he was emperor, he had to do exactly as the East India Company told him. The Company even paid his salary!

In 1856, when Bahadur Shah was eighty-one years old and had "ruled" India for twenty-one years, the East India Company made a very big mistake.

The Company had three large armies to help control the three hundred million people of India. The army officers were all British, but many of the soldiers were native Indians, both Hindu and Muslims, who had agreed to work for the East India Company. These native soldiers were called *sepoys*.

In 1856, the British passed a law declaring that any soldier who belonged to the British army in India could be put on a ship and sent to fight in another country. The Hindu soldiers were appalled. A devout Hindu could only keep himself

ceremonially clean if he could cook his own food and draw his own water for bathing—and this was impossible on board a ship. A Hindu soldier who went on a British ship and then came home often found that his relatives and friends refused even to eat with him.

Then something even more disturbing happened. The East India Company bought a new, modern kind of rifle called the Enfield rifle, and announced that the army would begin using it. Soon, word spread through the ranks of the sepoys: "Don't use the rifle! They are trying to make us into Christians once more!"

To understand this, you have to know that in those days, when a soldier loaded a rifle, he first had to load the powder, and then the bullets. This took time! But in an Enfield rifle, the bullets and powder were folded up together in a greased-paper package called a cartridge. All the soldier had to do was bite off the end of the cartridge, pour the powder into the rifle, and slide the bullet in.

Now, the sepoys whispered to each other that the grease used to coat the cartridges had been made out of animal fat. Devout Hindus were horrified by the thought that the fat of cows might touch their lips. Cows were sacred animals, never to be eaten. The Muslims were just as sickened by the idea that they might have to put pig fat into their mouths. In Islam, hogs were unclean.

At once, the British government announced that Hindu and Muslim soldiers could make their own grease out of vegetable oil. But it was too late. The sepoys were already angry at their British superiors, who called them "pigs" and other demeaning names. Now they were convinced that the cartridges were a deliberate attempt to destroy their Hindu and Muslim faith.

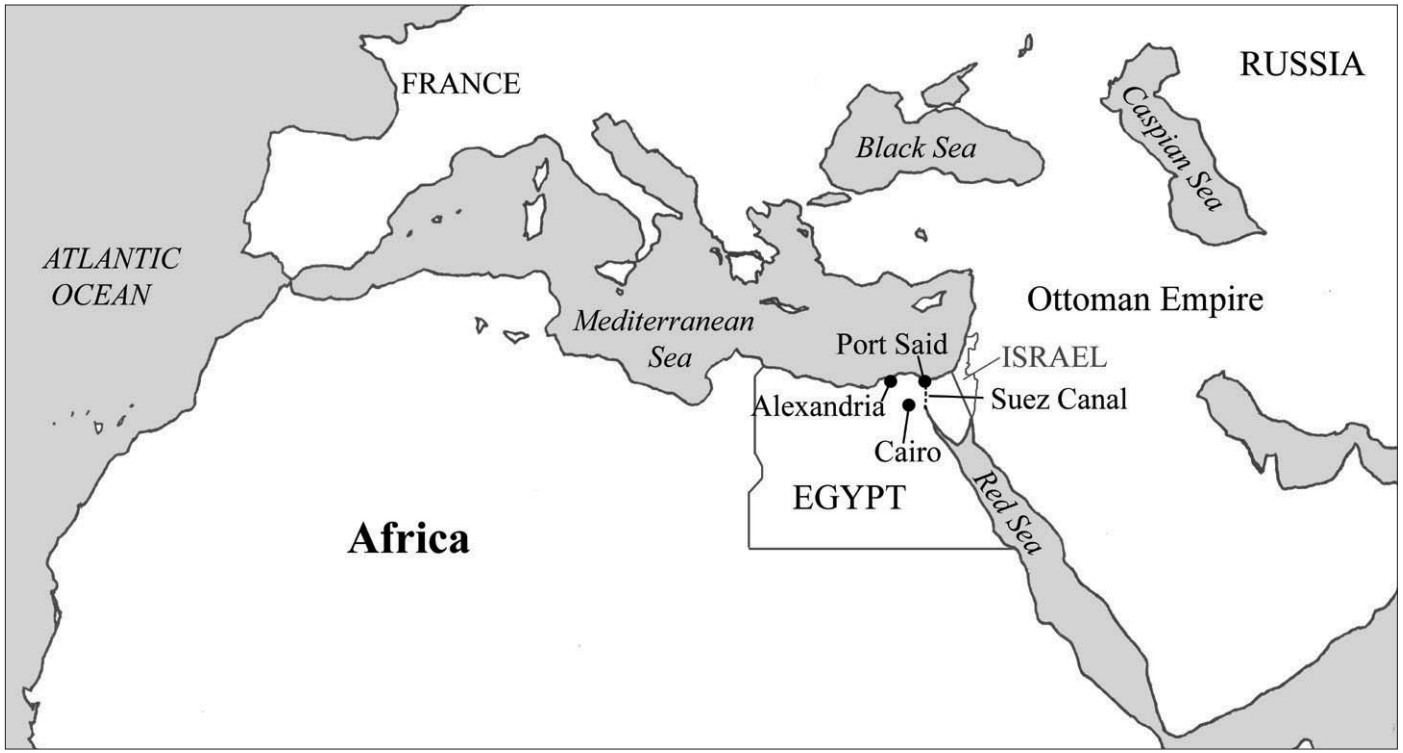
The sepoys began to rebel all over the northwest of India. They announced that Bahadur Shah, now eighty-two, was their commander in chief. Bahadur Shah was too old to fight—but he watched as the rebels took control of Delhi, drove the British out of the city of Cawnpore, and then laid siege to the city of Lucknow.

But the British had no intention of losing India. The East India Company marched new divisions of well-trained British soldiers into India, and laid siege to Delhi. The rebels fought desperately to keep their city. One out of every three British soldiers who besieged Delhi was killed. But finally the British flooded over the walls. They found Bahadur Shah hiding in the tomb of his great ancestor Humayan and dragged him out to stand trial for treason. Bahadur Shah was found guilty and sent away to live, under guard, in a distant city—where he died, five years later, at the age of eighty-seven.

The British government declared that India would no longer have an emperor. But the East India Company wouldn't govern India anymore, either. Britain was fed up with the incompetent rule of the East India Company. If the Company had not treated the sepoys so poorly, perhaps the Sepoy Mutiny would never have happened.

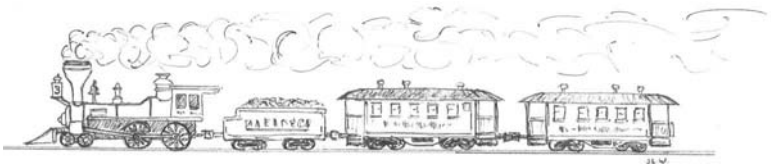
So Queen Victoria took India away from the East India Company and announced that India was now a colony of Britain, governed directly by the Queen and Parliament with the help of a head official called the Viceroy of India. Queen Victoria promised that all the British would work to make India a better place for the Indians.

But India didn't belong to the Indians any more. It had become British. All over India, Indians went on hoping for the day when they would get their own country back.



The Suez Crisis

Chapter Thirty-One
Western Bullies and American Money



The Suez Crisis

When Egypt helped invade the new country of Israel, it did so under the rule of King Faruk, Egypt's second king.

The first king of Egypt, King Fu'ad I, had died a few years earlier. His son Faruk, only sixteen years old, inherited the throne in his father's place. Egyptians hoped that Faruk would manage to bring some agreement between the three powers jostling each other for control of Egypt—the king, the Wafd, and the British.

But Faruk wasn't a skilled ruler—or even a moral one. He spent a lot of money travelling to Europe, where he gambled away still more money and went to parties at disreputable clubs. He also kept getting Egypt involved on the losing side of wars. When World War II broke out, Faruk tried to keep Egypt neutral. This was foolish, since Egypt had actually signed a treaty to fight on Britain's side in any war. It also annoyed the British, who forced Faruk to change his mind. Then, when Egypt lost the 1948 war with Israel, Faruk's people blamed him.

In 1952, an Egyptian military officer named Gamal Abdel Nasser threw Faruk off his throne.

Nasser grew up in a household that was respectable, but not rich. His father was a postal clerk. Nasser was able to go away to school, as poorer boys couldn't—but he said, later in life, that he often came home from school to discover that there was nothing to eat at home!

Nasser was a reckless boy, full of fight. He got into more than one street brawl, where Egyptian boys did their best to punch each other out. So it isn't surprising that Nasser decided as a young man

to join the army. When the 1948 war with Israel began, Nasser was an army officer of thirty, tough and experienced.

During the war, Nasser learned a lesson that stayed with him for the rest of his life. One evening, he was sitting beside one of his friends, a man named Kamal. Kamal was telling Nasser about another officer, a colonel they had both known, who had just died. "Do you know what the Colonel said to me, before he died?" Kamal said to Nasser. When Nasser remained silent, Kamal went on, "He said that *the real battlefield is Egypt*."

Nasser thought about this—and took it to heart. As an Egyptian, his future would not be spent fighting wars in other countries. He would put his energy into defending and shaping his own homeland.

Four years after the war ended, ninety army officers, led by Nasser, took over the Egyptian government. The officers, like most of Egypt, were fed up with Faruk's weak, useless leadership. They seized control of the government offices (almost no one tried to stop them), ordered Faruk to leave the country, and set up an eleven-man council to run Egypt.

The rest of the world watched carefully to see what Nasser would do with the Suez Canal. Remember, the Suez Canal made it cheaper and much quicker to travel from Europe to India and the east. No one wanted Nasser to close the canal, or to put restrictions on who might be able to use it.

During World War II, both the Italians and the Germans had tried to invade Egypt and take over the canal. But when Nasser came to power in 1952, the canal was still under Egyptian control—which meant that it was also under the control of the British, who still had soldiers stationed in Egypt.

Nasser wanted all of the Arabs in the world to unify into a powerful country that would, he hoped, become known as the United Arab Republic. Above all, he wanted Egypt to be free and independent of any European influence.

Still, Nasser knew that it would be very bad for Egypt if he were to challenge the British over control of the Suez Canal.

The canal made a lot of money for Egypt. Ships that used the canal had to pay a fee, and in the 1950s, 122 million tons of cargo (over half of which was oil) were ferried through the canal each year.

But in 1956, Nasser got angry enough to close the canal. This became known as the "Suez Crisis."

The crisis began when Nasser tried to borrow enough money from the United States to build a dam across the Nile River. The dam would be huge—365 feet high, and 3 miles across. It would catch the Nile waters, and allow the Egyptians both to irrigate their fields and to generate electricity from the power of the running water.

But the president of the United States, Dwight Eisenhower, didn't trust Nasser. He thought that Nasser was too friendly with the Soviet Union. Even though the Soviets and the Americans had ended up on the same side by the end of World War II, Americans feared the growing power of the USSR. So Eisenhower refused to give Nasser a loan.

Nasser was furious. On July 26, 1956, he gave a rousing speech to a gathering of Egyptians. In this speech, Nasser said that the history of the Arabs had been, for a hundred years, the history of a struggle to get out from under the thumb of Western countries like the United States. He declared that from now on, Egypt would show its independence by taking full control of the Suez Canal. Egypt had the right to decide who could use the canal, and who couldn't. And the first country that would be banned from using the canal was Israel.

Actually, Egypt still owed France and Great Britain a great deal of money that Said Pasha and Ismail Pasha had borrowed in order to build the canal in the first place. Technically speaking, the canal belonged, in part, to French and British banks. But Nasser didn't let this bother him. He claimed control over the canal anyway.

The prime minister of France and the prime minister of England worried that Nasser was a dictator in the making. They knew Nasser wanted to unite all the Arabs together.

Didn't that sound a little bit like Hitler's plan to make Europe into one German Empire? What if Nasser tried to take over the whole Middle East? The European countries should stop him before he grew more powerful.

The leaders of Israel were willing to help out. They believed that Israel needed to show that Arab countries couldn't bully the Israelis. If they reacted to Nasser's closing the canal to Israeli ships with force, other Arab states would be more likely to leave Israel in peace.

Officials from Israel, Britain, and France held a secret meeting in a suburb of Paris. Huddled in a tile-roofed villa, the officials hatched a plan called "Operation Musketeer"—all for one and one for all! Afterwards, they toasted each other with champagne.

The plan was a little bit complicated, but here's what Operation Musketeer (*Operation Mousquetaire* in French) involved:

First, Israel would invade Egypt.

Then, France and Britain would step in and offer to help. They would tell Nasser, "Turn the control of the Suez Canal over to the French and British, and we'll tell Israel to leave you alone."

Then, after Nasser agreed, the Israelis (who never really intended to conquer Egypt at all) would retreat. France and Britain would get the canal, Israel would be able to use it, and Israel's invasion of Egypt would show that the Israeli army was strong and ready to fight.

Although Israeli officials didn't realize it, France and Britain actually hoped that Nasser would turn down their offer to help. That way, French and British soldiers would have a good excuse to invade Egypt and take the Suez Canal over by force—permanently.

The plan went into action on October 29, 1956. The Israeli army began to march into Egyptian territory. British and French officials at once sent a message to Nasser, offering to help. If Egypt would just let England and France supervise the Canal for a little while, they would convince Israel to back out of Egypt.

Nasser laughed at this offer, and refused. So British and French soldiers joined the invasion. Fighting began between Israeli and Egyptian soldiers. Several thousand Egyptians were killed. When French and British soldiers arrived at the Egyptian city of Port Said, another battle began. Almost three thousand more Egyptians died.

The fighting ended only because the United States decided to get involved. American officials objected that France and Great Britain were breaking one of the rules that all of the countries in the United Nations had agreed to: Every country has the right to control its own territory. The French and the British were trying to take this right away from Egypt.

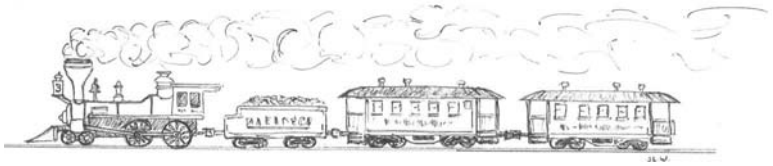
The United Nations agreed, and ordered Great Britain and France to leave the Egyptians alone.

This was terribly embarrassing for both countries. The French and British had been accused, in front of the whole world, of acting like bullies. Both governments ordered their troops out, with as much dignity as possible, and tried to act as though they had never really intended to take over the canal by force. The British prime minister was so humiliated that he resigned just a few months later.

The Suez Crisis had two other results. In the United States, President Eisenhower asked the U.S. Congress to pass a new law called the "Eisenhower Doctrine." This new law said that U.S. soldiers could go and fight on the side of any Middle Eastern country that asked the United States for help against an attacking army. Congress agreed to pass the law.

And in the Middle East, Nasser became a hero. He had defied the orders of European countries—and particularly Great Britain, which had so long ordered Egypt around. Arab leaders all around the world cheered for Nasser, who had shown himself to be strong, decisive, and ready to stand up to bullies.

Germany Divided



The Marshall Plan

In the same year that the United States refused to lend Nasser money for his dam, millions of American dollars went to the war-destroyed countries of Europe.

Imagine that you were born in London, in the year 1930. When you are four, Adolf Hitler becomes the leader of Germany. Maybe you notice that your parents frown and furrow their brows when they read about this in the newspaper. They don't know much about Hitler, but what they know, they don't like. But for the most part, you don't pay much attention. You're four years old, after all.

By the time your ninth birthday rolls around, though, you are more and more aware that things happening in the far away country of Germany *do* matter to you in England. Just after your birthday, England declares war on Germany. The very next day a German ship sinks a British ship with 1,418 people on it. Most of the people are saved—but the event is terrifying anyway. Your parents say that you won't be travelling anywhere on a ship, not until the war is over.

In 1940, the year you turn ten, the government declares that most English sugar, butter, and meat needs to go to the army, to feed soldiers. Your family is issued a *ration book*, which has coupons in it for each of the scarce items. You have to turn over a coupon every time you want to buy sugar, butter, or meat. When the coupons are gone, you can't buy any more of those foods. There's not enough sugar to make you a birthday cake, so you get "war cake"—cake made without eggs, butter, or sugar in it.

It doesn't taste much like cake, and it doesn't feel much like a birthday.

Next, clothes are rationed. Then soap. Your mother learns to make casserole out of chicken bones. The German air force starts to bomb London. When you walk to school, you see that houses nearby have been flattened during the night. Everyone in them was killed.

Soon the government announces that all children must leave London, because it is too dangerous for them. Your parents put you on a train that takes you out to Wales, a country place where distant cousins of your mother have a farm. You live in their spare bedroom, learn to milk cows, and help in the garden. You miss your mother, you're sick of bone casserole, and you want to go home.

Finally in 1945, when you are fifteen, the war ends. Everyone in England is ecstatic. There are even parties in the streets! No more bone casserole, no more ration books, and no more bombs. You can go home! Your parents greet you at the train station with big smiles. Now, they say, everyone can go back to normal.

But, after six years of war, what is normal?

The Allied Powers—especially England and France—had made huge sacrifices to fight, and win, World War II. Many English and French citizens were dead. People were tired. Businesses and banks were out of money. Many buildings, from churches to schools, had been bombed and needed to be repaired or rebuilt.

America had made sacrifices to win the war too. American soldiers had died. But the closest place to America that had been attacked was Pearl Harbor, and that was in Hawaii—still far away. No battles had been fought on American soil. American schools didn't need to be rebuilt. After 1945, life could get back to "normal" in America pretty quickly.

America knew it needed to help its allies in Western Europe get back on their feet. The job fell to the secretary of state, a man named George Marshall.

The secretary of state is an advisor to the president. His job is to help America keep its friendship with other countries

around the world. On June 5, 1947, Secretary of State Marshall made a speech at Harvard University, explaining that America had an obligation to help Europe recover from the war. He said, "I need not tell you, gentlemen, that the world situation is very serious. . . . It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace."

The United States very much wanted stability and peace! George Marshall had a plan to bring this stability and peace. In his speech at Harvard, he went on to explain what the plan was. The United States would give twenty billion dollars to the countries of Europe so that they could rebuild. This plan became known as the Marshall Plan.

The United States offered some of this money to Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union. Stalin refused to take the money. He had been willing to fight on the side of the United States during the war, but if he took money from the U.S., America might one day ask him for a favor. He was sure he didn't want to do whatever the United States might ask, so he decided that the Soviets would do without the American money.

The other countries in Europe accepted the help. Now, George Marshall had to convince the people of the United States that Europe *needed* twenty billion dollars of American money. So, as the money began to go out to the countries of western Europe, the government made a series of movies about the Marshall Plan. These movies helped persuade Americans that the Marshall Plan was a good idea.

One movie, made in 1950, was called *The Home We Love*. It was about a real town in southern France called Mazamet. Mazamet was shattered by the war—but because of the Marshall Plan money, life in Mazamet was finally getting better. The movie showed the people of Mazamet buying food, going back to school, and working in the factories that had been reopened with the help of American dollars.

Another movie, called *The Extraordinary Adventures of a Quart of Milk*, was made in 1951. The hero of this film was a container of milk that made its way from a farm in Normandy to a factory that transformed the liquid milk into a can of powdered milk. What did the adventures of this quart of milk have to do with the Marshall Plan? Without American aid to France, the roads would not have been good enough to get the milk from farm to factory—and, indeed, there might not have been any factory at all! Thanks to the Marshall Plan, the French people had roads, factories, and milk—liquid *and* powdered.

The Marshall Plan even gave money to Germany.

After World War I, Germany had been forced to pay huge amounts of money to the rest of the world. The Allies weren't going to repeat this mistake after World War II. Instead of saddling Germany with a huge debt, America, France, England, and the Soviet Union wanted to help Germany rebuild its government.

But while America, France, and England wanted Germany to become a democracy, the Soviet Union wanted to turn it into a communist country. The four countries couldn't come to an agreement about Germany's government—so they divided Germany in half. England, America, and France got to re-organize the western half of Germany. They helped set up a new German democracy, and used Marshall Plan money to rebuild Germany's roads and buildings.

Meanwhile, the Soviets turned the eastern half of Germany into a communist country. They decreed that the other Allies could have nothing to do with East Germany. No shipments could go back and forth between communist East Germany and democratic West Germany.

For several years, people could travel back and forth between East Germany and West Germany. People went across the border to visit relatives or friends. Shops in West Germany were often better stocked, so East Germans crossed the border to buy everything from food to pantyhose!

Often, they didn't come back. Life in West Germany was easier and freer than life under the communist government of

East Germany. Over two million East Germans went west and never returned. The East German government realized that it was losing too many scientists, university professors, doctors, and lawyers to the west.

So in the middle of the night on August 12, 1961, East German soldiers put up a fence right through the middle of the city of Berlin, and also along the border between the two Germanies. People got up in the morning to discover that barbed wire and cinder blocks now cut them off from the other half of Berlin. People visiting relatives were caught and couldn't go back home. Families were divided. No one was allowed to cross the fence without government permission.

Over the next few years, concrete walls fifteen feet high, lined with electric wire, topped with guard towers, and surrounded by guns and land mines, were built to replace the fence. It was illegal to sneak across this wall, which became known as the Berlin Wall. Almost two hundred people were killed by East German guards or by land mines, trying to get from one side of the Berlin Wall to the other. The Wall would stay up, dividing East from West, for almost thirty years.