

## 34.5 Expansion During the Final Years of the Republic, 145 B.C.E. to 44 B.C.E.

By 145 B.C.E., Roman conquests had brought great wealth to the city of Rome. But they had also put the republican form of government under great strain. By the end of Rome's third period of expansion, the republic collapsed.

The final years of the republic were marked by still more wars. Many of Rome's allies resented having to pay Roman taxes and fight in Roman armies without enjoying the rights of citizens. In 91 B.C.E., they rebelled. To end the revolt, Rome agreed to let all free Italians become Roman citizens.

Rome also had to fight to put down slave revolts. As Romans conquered other lands, they brought hundreds of thousands of prisoners to Roman lands. They turned them into slaves who labored on farms and in the city. Romans often treated their slaves very harshly. A slave named Spartacus led a famous revolt in 73 B.C.E. After crushing his army and killing Spartacus in battle, the Romans hung thousands of the surviving rebels on crosses.

There was trouble in the city, too. With so many slaves to do the work, thousands of farmers and laborers had no jobs. They crowded into Rome, becoming a mob that an ambitious leader could turn into an army.

Rome's army was producing many such leaders. Generals used their armies to gain fame in far-off lands and then fight for power in Rome. In one civil war in the 80s B.C.E., 200,000 Romans were killed.

Forty years later, another civil war broke out between two ambitious generals, Pompey and Julius Caesar. Pompey had



Julius Caesar was stabbed 23 times and bled to death at the door of the Senate.

## Roman Conquests, About 44 B.C.E.



expanded Roman rule in such eastern lands as Syria and the island of Cyprus. Caesar had conquered much of Gaul. By 49 B.C.E., Pompey was back in Rome, while Caesar commanded an army to the north of Italy, across the Rubicon River. Both men wanted to control Rome, but Pompey had the support of the Roman Senate.

Urged on by Pompey, the Senate forbade Caesar from entering Italy with his army. Caesar disobeyed. On January 11, 49 B.C.E., he crossed the Rubicon with his army. After three years of fighting, he defeated Pompey. The frightened Senate named Caesar dictator for life. With Caesar in control, the republican form of government was at an end.

As dictator, Julius Caesar introduced many reforms. He gave work to thousands of Romans by starting projects to make new roads and public buildings. To keep the poor happy, he staged gladiator contests they could watch for free. He also adopted a new calendar that is still used today.

Caesar had a vision of Rome as a great empire. He started new colonies and granted citizenship to the people of cities in Gaul and Spain. But he did not live to see his vision come true. On March 15, 44 B.C.E., a group of enemies stabbed Caesar to death as he was entering the Senate.

The plotters who killed Caesar thought they were saving the republic. But they were wrong. Instead, a true Roman emperor soon emerged to take Caesar's place.