The New Imperialism
1800–1914

Chapter Preview
1 A Western-Dominated World
2 The Partition of Africa
3 European Challenges to the Muslim World
4 The British Take Over India
5 China and the New Imperialism

Chapter Review and Assessment
Imports From Africa and Asia About 1870
In the late 1800s, during the Age of Imperialism, the industrial powers of Europe sought raw materials from Africa and Asia.

1805
Muhammad Ali is named governor of Egypt. This mosque in Cairo is named in his honor.

1825

1830
France begins efforts to conquer Algeria in North Africa.

1840

1870
In the United States, Robert Fulton uses a steam engine to power a ship.

1880

1900
1857
The Sepoy Rebellion breaks out in India. At the battle of Cawnpore, Indian cavalry charges a British line.

1884
European officials meet at the Berlin Conference to settle rival land claims in Africa. No Africans are invited.

1899
Boer War erupts in South Africa.

1911
Sun Yixian becomes president of Chinese republic.

1914
World War I begins in Europe.
Setting the Scene

When Edward VII inherited the British throne in 1901, his empire extended far beyond Britain. One writer boasted, “The sun never sets” on the British empire. In other words, because the empire circled the globe, the sun always shone on some part of it.

Like Britain, other western powers built overseas empires in the late 1800s. The Industrial Revolution and the growth of science and technology had transformed the West. Armed with new economic and political power, western nations set out to dominate the world.

The New Imperialism and Its Causes

European imperialism did not begin in the 1800s. Imperialism is the domination by one country of the political, economic, or cultural life of another country or region. As you have learned, European states won empires in the Americas after 1492, established colonies in South Asia, and gained toeholds on the coasts of Africa and China. Despite these gains, between 1500 and 1800, Europe had little influence on the lives of the peoples of China, India, or Africa.

By the 1800s, however, Europe had gained considerable power. Strong, centrally governed nation-states had emerged, and the Industrial Revolution had greatly enriched European economies. Encouraged by their new economic and military strength, Europeans embarked on a path of aggressive expansion that today’s historians call the “new imperialism.” Like other key developments in world history, the new imperialism exploded out of a combination of causes.

Economic Interests The Industrial Revolution created needs and desires that spurred overseas expansion. Manufacturers wanted access to natural resources such as rubber, petroleum, manganese for steel, and palm oil for machinery. They also hoped for new markets where they could sell their factory goods. In addition, colonies offered a valuable outlet for Europe's
growing population. Lord Frederick Lugard, a British empire builder, tried to justify imperialism in Africa with these words:

“The necessity that is upon us [is] to provide for our ever-growing population—either by opening new fields for emigration, or by providing work and employment … and to stimulate trade by finding new markets.”

—Lord Lugard, The Rise of Our East African Empire

**Political and Military Interests** Closely linked to economic motives were political and military issues. Steam-powered merchant ships and naval vessels needed bases around the world to take on coal and supplies. Industrial powers seized islands or harbors to satisfy these needs.

Nationalism played an important role, too. When France, for example, moved into West Africa, rival nations like Britain and Germany seized lands nearby to halt further French expansion. Western leaders claimed that colonies were needed for national security. They also felt that ruling a global empire increased a nation’s prestige around the world.

**Humanitarian Goals** Many westerners felt a genuine concern for their “little brothers” beyond the seas. Missionaries, doctors, and colonial officials believed they had a duty to spread what they saw as the blessings of western civilization, including its medicine, law, and Christian religion.

**Social Darwinism** Behind the idea of a civilizing mission was a growing sense in the West of racial superiority. Many westerners had embraced the ideas of Social Darwinism. They applied Darwin’s ideas about natural selection and survival of the fittest to human societies. European races, they argued, were superior to all others, and imperial conquest and destruction of weaker races were simply nature’s way of improving the human species!

**The Success of Western Imperialism**

In just a few decades, from about 1870 to 1914, imperialist nations gained control over much of the world. Leading the way were soldiers, merchants, settlers, missionaries, and explorers. In Europe, imperial expansion found favor with all classes, from bankers and manufacturers to workers. Western imperialism succeeded for a number of reasons.

**Weakness of Nonwestern States** While European nations had grown stronger in the 1800s, several older civilizations were in decline, especially the Ottoman Middle East, Mughal India, and Qing China. In West Africa, wars among African peoples and the draining effect of the slave trade had
undermined established empires, kingdoms, and city-states. Newer African states were not strong enough to resist the western onslaught.

**Western Advantages** Europeans had the advantages of strong economies, well-organized governments, and powerful armies and navies. Superior technology and improved medical knowledge also played a role. Quinine and other new medicines helped Europeans survive deadly tropical diseases. And, of course, advances such as Maxim machine guns, repeating rifles, and steam-driven warships were very strong arguments in persuading Africans and Asians to accept western control. As an English writer sarcastically noted: “Whatever happens, we have got the Maxim gun, and they have not.”

**Resistance** Africans and Asians strongly resisted western expansion into their lands. Some people fought the invaders, even though they had no weapons to equal the Maxim gun. As you will read, ruling groups in certain areas tried to strengthen their societies against outsiders by reforming their own Muslim, Hindu, or Confucian traditions. Finally, many western-educated Africans and Asians organized nationalist movements to expel the imperialists from their lands.

**Criticism at Home** In the West itself, a small group of anti-imperialists emerged. Some argued that colonialism was a tool of the rich. Others said it was immoral. Westerners, they pointed out, were moving toward greater democracy at home but were imposing undemocratic rule on other people. “The new imperialism stood,” one English critic protested, “not for a widened and ennobled sense of national responsibility, but for a hard assertion of racial supremacy and material force.”

**Forms of Imperial Rule**

The new imperialism took several forms. In some areas, imperial powers established colonies. Elsewhere, they set up protectorates and spheres of influence.

**Colonies** France and Britain, the leading imperial powers, developed different kinds of colonial rule. The French practiced direct rule, sending officials and soldiers from France to administer their colonies. Their goal was to impose French culture on their colonies and turn them into French provinces.

The British, by contrast, relied on a system of indirect rule. To govern their colonies, they used sultans, chiefs, or other local rulers. They then encouraged the children of the local ruling class to get an education in Britain. In that way, they groomed a new “westernized” generation of leaders to continue indirect imperial rule and to spread British civilization. Like France and other imperialist nations, however, Britain could still resort to military force if its control over a colony was threatened in any way.

**Protectorates** In a protectorate, local rulers were left in place but were expected to follow the advice of European advisers on issues such as trade or missionary activity. A protectorate cost less to run than a colony did, and usually did not require a large commitment of military forces.

**Spheres of Influence** A third form of western control was the sphere of influence, an area in which an outside power claimed exclusive investment or trading privileges. Europeans carved out these spheres in China and elsewhere to prevent conflicts among themselves. The United States claimed Latin America as its sphere of influence.
SECTION 2

The Partition of Africa

Reading Focus

- What forces were shaping Africa in the early 1800s?
- How did European contact with Africa increase?
- How did Leopold II start a scramble for colonies?
- How did Africans resist imperialism?

Vocabulary

- jihad
- missionary
- elite

Taking Notes

As you read, create a concept web that lists examples of African resistance against imperialism. Print out the concept web below and add as many circles as needed to complete it.

Guided Reading

By the end of the 1800s, the imperialist powers of Europe claimed control over most of Africa.

Setting the Scene

In the late 1800s, Britain, France, Germany, and other European powers swept into Africa. Chief Machemba of the Yao people in East Africa wrote in Swahili to a German officer:

“If it be friendship that you desire, then I am ready for it … but to be your subject, that I cannot be…. I do not fall at your feet, for you are God's creature just as I am.”

—Chief Machemba, Letter to Herman von Wissman

Though the Yao and others resisted, they could not prevent European conquest. Within about 20 years, the Europeans had carved up the continent and dominated millions of Africans.

Africa in the Early 1800s

To understand the impact of European domination, we must look at Africa in the early 1800s, before the scramble for colonies began. Africa is a huge continent, four times the size of Europe. Across its many regions, people spoke hundreds of languages and had developed varied governments. Some people lived in large centralized states, others in village communities.

North Africa  North Africa includes the enormous Sahara and the fertile land along the Mediterranean. Since long before 1800, the region had close ties to the Muslim world. In the early 1800s, much of North Africa remained under the rule of the declining Ottoman empire.

West Africa  On the grasslands of West Africa, an Islamic reform movement had brought change. Leaders like Usman dan Fodio preached jihad, a holy struggle, to revive and purify Islam. Under these leaders, several new Muslim states arose, built on trade, farming, and herding.
In the forest regions, strong states like the Asante kingdom had arisen. The Asante traded with Europeans and Muslims and controlled several smaller states. However, these tributary states were ready to turn to Europeans or others who might help them defeat their Asante rulers.

**East Africa** Islam had long influenced the east coast of Africa, where port cities like Mombasa and Kilwa carried on profitable trade. The cargoes were often slaves. Captives were marched from the interior to the coast to be shipped as slaves to the Middle East. Ivory and copper from Central Africa were also exchanged for goods such as cloth and firearms from India.

**Southern Africa** In the early 1800s, southern Africa was in turmoil. Shaka, you will recall, united the Zulu nation. His conquests, however, set off mass migrations and wars, creating chaos across much of the region. By the 1830s, the Zulus were also battling the Boers, who were migrating north from the Cape Colony.

**The Slave Trade** In the early 1800s, European nations began to outlaw the transatlantic slave trade, though it took years to end it. Meanwhile, the East African slave trade continued to the Middle East and Asia.

Some people in Britain and the United States helped freed slaves resettle in Africa. In 1787, the British organized Sierra Leone in West Africa as a colony for former slaves. Later, some free blacks from the United States settled in nearby Liberia. By 1847, Liberia became an independent republic.

**European Contacts Increase**

From the 1500s through the 1700s, Europeans traded along the African coast. Difficult geography and diseases kept them from reaching the interior. Medical advances and river steamships changed all that in the 1800s.

**Explorers** In the early 1800s, European explorers began pushing into the interior of Africa. Daring adventurers like Mungo Park and Richard Burton set out to map the course and sources of the great African rivers such as the Niger, the Nile, and the Congo. These explorers were fascinated by African geography, but they had little understanding of the peoples they met. All, however, endured great hardships in pursuit of their dreams.

**Missionaries** Catholic and Protestant missionaries followed the explorers. All across Africa, they sought to win people to Christianity. The missionaries were sincere in their desire to help Africans. They built schools and medical clinics alongside churches. They also focused attention on the evils of the slave trade.

Still, missionaries, like most westerners, took a paternalistic view of Africans. They saw them as children in need of guidance. To them, African cultures and religions were “degraded.” They urged Africans to reject their own traditions in favor of western civilization.

**Livingstone** The best known explorer-missionary was Dr. David Livingstone. For 30 years, he crisscrossed Africa. He wrote about the many peoples he met with more sympathy and less bias than did most Europeans. He relentlessly opposed the slave trade, which remained a profitable business for some African rulers and foreign traders. The only way to end this cruel traffic, he believed, was to open up the interior of Africa to Christianity and trade.

Livingstone blazed a trail that others soon followed. In 1869, the journalist Henry Stanley trekked into Central Africa to find Livingstone, who had not been heard from for years. He finally tracked him down in 1871 in what is today Tanzania, greeting him with the now-legendary phrase “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”

**A Scramble for Colonies**

Shortly afterward, King Leopold II of Belgium hired Stanley to explore the Congo River basin and arrange trade treaties with African leaders. Publicly, Leopold spoke of a civilizing mission to carry the light “that for millions of men still plunged in barbarism will be the dawn of a better era.” Privately, he dreamed of conquest and profit.

King Leopold's activities in the Congo set off a scramble by other European nations. Before long, Britain, France, and Germany were pressing rival claims to the region.
To avoid bloodshed, European powers met at an international conference in 1884. It took place not in Africa but in Berlin, Germany. No Africans were invited to the conference.

At the Berlin Conference, European powers recognized Leopold's private claims to the Congo Free State but called for free trade on the Congo and Niger rivers. They further agreed that a European power could not claim any part of Africa unless it had set up a government office there. This principle led Europeans to send officials who would exert their power over local rulers and peoples.

The rush to colonize Africa was on. In the 20 years after the Berlin Conference, the European powers partitioned almost the entire continent. As Europeans carved out their claims, they established new borders and frontiers. They redrew the map of Africa with little regard for traditional patterns of settlement or ethnic boundaries.

Leopold and other wealthy Belgians, meantime, exploited the riches of the Congo, including its copper, rubber, and ivory. Soon, there were horrifying reports of Belgian overseers brutalizing villagers. Forced to work for almost nothing, laborers were savagely beaten or mutilated. The population of some areas declined drastically.

Eventually, international outrage forced Leopold to turn over his colony to the Belgian government. It became the Belgian Congo in 1908. Under Belgian rule, the worst abuses were ended. Still, the Belgians regarded the Congo as a possession to be exploited. Africans were given little or no role in either the government or the economy of the colony.

France took a giant share of Africa. In the 1830s, it had invaded and conquered Algeria in North Africa. The victory cost tens of thousands of French lives and killed many times more Algerians. In the late 1800s, France extended its influence along the Mediterranean into Tunisia. It also won colonies in West and Central Africa. At its height, the French empire in Africa was as large as the continental United States.

Britain's share of Africa was smaller and more scattered than that of France. However, it included more heavily populated regions with many rich resources. Britain took chunks of West and East Africa. It gained control of Egypt, and pushed south into the Sudan.

In southern Africa, Britain clashed with the Boers, who were descendants of Dutch settlers. Britain had acquired the Cape Colony from the Dutch in 1815. At that time, many Boers fled British rule. They migrated north and set up their own republics. In the late 1800s, however, the discovery of gold and diamonds in the Boer lands led to conflict with Britain. The Boer War, which lasted from 1899 to 1902, involved bitter guerrilla fighting. The British won, but at great cost.

In 1910, the British united the Cape Colony and the former Boer republics into the Union of South Africa. The new constitution set up a government run by whites and laid the foundation for a system of complete racial segregation that would remain in force until 1993.

Other European powers joined the scramble for colonies, in part to bolster their national image, in part to further their economic growth and influence. The Portuguese carved out large colonies in Angola and Mozambique. Italy reached across the Mediterranean to
occupy Libya and then pushed into the “horn” of Africa, at the southern end of the Red Sea. The newly united German empire took lands in eastern and southwestern Africa. A German politician, trying to ease the worries of European rivals, explained, “We do not want to put anyone in the shade, but we also demand our place in the sun.”

**Africans Resist Imperialism**

Europeans met armed resistance across the continent. The Algerians battled the French for years. Samori Touré fought French forces in West Africa, where he was building his own empire. The British battled the Zulus in southern Africa and the Asante in West Africa. When their king was exiled, the Asante put themselves under the command of their queen, Yaa Asantewaa. She led the fight against the British in the last Asante war. Another woman who became a military leader was Nehanda, of the Shona in Zimbabwe. Although a clever tactician, Nehanda was captured and executed. However, the memory of her achievements inspired later generations to fight for freedom.

In East Africa, the Germans fought wars against people like the Yao and Herero. Fighting was especially fierce in the Maji-Maji Rebellion of 1905. The Germans triumphed only after using a scorched-earth policy. To crush resistance, they burned acres and acres of farmland, leaving thousands of local people to die of starvation.

**Ethiopia Survives**  Successful resistance was mounted by Ethiopia. This ancient Christian kingdom had survived in the highlands of East Africa. But, like feudal Europe, it had been divided up among a number of rival princes who ruled their own domains.

In the late 1800s, a reforming ruler, Menelik II, began to modernize his country. He hired European experts to plan modern roads and bridges and set up a western school system. He imported the latest weapons and European officers to help train his army. Thus, when Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1896, Menelik was prepared. At the battle of Adowa, the Ethiopians smashed the Italian invaders. Ethiopia was the only African nation, aside from Liberia, to preserve its independence.

**New African Elite**  During the Age of Imperialism, a western-educated African elite, or upper class, emerged. Some middle-class Africans admired western ways and rejected their own culture. Others valued their African traditions and condemned western societies that upheld liberty and equality for whites only. By the early 1900s, African leaders were forging nationalist movements to pursue self-determination and independence.

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**Biography**

**Menelik II**  1844–1913

Before becoming emperor of Ethiopia, Menelik II ruled the Shoa region in central Ethiopia. He ensured that he would succeed John IV as emperor by marrying John's daughter. After John died in 1889, Menelik took the throne.

Menelik used profits from ivory sales to buy modern weapons. He then hired European advisers to teach his soldiers how to use the new guns. Menelik's army conquered neighboring lands and won a stunning victory over the Italians at Adowa. European nations rushed to establish diplomatic ties with Ethiopia. Around the world, people of African descent hailed Menelik's victory over European imperialism.

**Theme: Impact of the Individual**

How did Menelik preserve Ethiopian independence?
Setting the Scene

“Europe is a molehill,” said Napoleon Bonaparte in 1797. He felt it offered too few chances for glory. “We must go to the East,” he declared. “All great glory has been acquired there.” In 1798, he put his thoughts into action by invading Egypt, a province of the Ottoman empire.

Napoleon's Egyptian campaign highlighted Ottoman decline and opened a new era of European contact with the Muslim world. In the early 1800s, European countries were just nibbling at the edges of the Muslim world. Before long, they would strike at its heartlands.

Stresses in the Muslim World

The Muslim world extended from western Africa to Southeast Asia. In the 1500s, three giant Muslim empires ruled much of this world—the Mughals in India, the Ottomans in the Middle East, and the Safavids in Iran.

Empires in Decline  By the 1700s, all three Muslim empires were in decline. The decay had many causes. Central governments had lost control over powerful groups such as landowning nobles, military elites, and urban craft guilds. Corruption was widespread. In some places, Muslim scholars and religious leaders were allied with the state. In other areas, they helped to stir discontent against the government.

Islamic Reform Movement  In the 1700s and early 1800s, reform movements sprang up across the Muslim world. Most stressed religious piety and strict rules of behavior. The Wahhabi movement in Arabia, for example, rejected the schools of theology and law that had emerged in the Ottoman empire. In their place, they wanted to recapture the purity and simplicity of Muhammad's original teachings. An Arab prince led the Wahhabis against Ottoman rule. Although the revolt was crushed, the Wahhabi movement
survived. Its teachings are influential in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia today.

Islamic revivals rose in Africa, too. As you have read, Usman dan Fodio led the struggle to reform Muslim practices. In the Sudan, south of Egypt, Muhammad Ahmad announced that he was the Mahdi, the long-awaited savior of the faith. In the 1880s, the Mahdi and his followers fiercely resisted British expansion into the region.

**European Imperialism** In addition to internal decay and stress, the old Muslim empires faced western imperialism. Through diplomacy and military threats, European powers won treaties giving them favorable trading terms. They then demanded special rights for Europeans residing in Muslim lands. At times, European powers protected those rights by intervening in local affairs. Sometimes, they took over an entire region.

**Problems for the Ottoman Empire**

At its height, the Ottoman empire had extended across the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeastern Europe. By the early 1800s, however, it faced serious challenges. Ambitious pashas, or provincial rulers, had increased their power. Economic problems and corruption added to Ottoman decay.

**Nationalist Revolts** As ideas of nationalism spread from Western Europe, internal revolts weakened the multiethnic Ottoman empire. Subject peoples in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa threatened to break away. In the Balkans, Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, and Romanians gained their independence. Revolts against Ottoman rule also erupted in Arabia, Lebanon, and Armenia. The Ottomans suppressed these uprisings, but another valuable territory, Egypt, slipped out of their control.

**European Pressure** European states sought to benefit from the slow crumbling of the Ottoman empire. After seizing Algeria in the 1830s, France hoped to gain more Ottoman territory. Russia schemed to gain control of the Bosporus and the Dardanelles. Control of these straits would give the Russians access to the Mediterranean Sea. Britain tried to thwart Russia's ambitions, which it saw as a threat to its own power in the Mediterranean and beyond it to India. And in 1898, the new German empire jumped onto the bandwagon, hoping to increase its influence in the region by building a Berlin-to-Baghdad railway.

**Efforts to Westernize** Since the late 1700s, several Ottoman rulers had seen the need for reform and looked to the West for ideas. They reorganized the bureaucracy and system of tax collection. They built railroads, improved education, and hired European officers to train a modern military. Young men were sent to the West to study the new sciences and technology. Many returned home with western ideas about democracy and equality.

The reforms also brought better medical care and revitalized farming. These improvements, however, were a mixed blessing. Better living conditions resulted in a population explosion. The growing population increased competition for the best land, which led to unrest.

The adoption of western ideas about government also increased tension. Many officials objected to changes that were inspired by a foreign culture. For their part, repressive sultans rejected reform and tried to rebuild the autocratic power enjoyed by earlier rulers.

**Young Turks** In the 1890s, a group of liberals formed a movement called the Young Turks. They insisted that reform was the only way to save the empire. In 1908, the Young Turks overthrew the sultan. Before they could
achieve their planned reforms, however, the Ottoman empire was plunged into the world war that erupted in 1914.

**Massacre of Armenians** Traditionally, the Ottomans had let minority nationalities live in their own communities and practice their own religions. By the 1890s, however, nationalism was igniting new tensions, especially between Turkish nationalists and minority peoples who sought their own states. These tensions triggered a brutal genocide of the Armenians, a Christian people concentrated in the eastern mountains of the empire. Genocide is a deliberate attempt to destroy an entire religious or ethnic group.

The Muslim Turks distrusted the Christian Armenians and accused them of supporting Russian plans against the Ottoman empire. When Armenians protested repressive Ottoman policies, the sultan had tens of thousands of them slaughtered. Over the next 25 years, a million or more Armenians in the Ottoman empire were killed.

**Egypt Seeks to Modernize**

Egypt in 1800 was a semi-independent province of the Ottoman empire. In the early 1800s, it made great strides toward reform. Its success was due to Muhammad Ali, who was appointed governor of Egypt in 1805.

**Muhammad Ali** Muhammad Ali is sometimes called the “father of modern Egypt.” To strengthen Egypt, he introduced a number of political and economic reforms. He improved tax collection, reorganized the landholding system, and backed large irrigation projects to increase farm output. By expanding cotton production and encouraging the development of local industry, he increased Egyptian participation in world trade.

Muhammad Ali also brought western military experts to Egypt to help him build a well-trained, modern army. He conquered the neighboring lands of Arabia, Syria, and Sudan. Before he died in 1849, he had set Egypt on the road to becoming a major Middle Eastern power.

**The Suez Canal** Muhammad Ali’s successors lacked his skills, and Egypt came increasingly under foreign control. In 1859, a French entrepreneur, Ferdinand de Lesseps, organized a company to build the Suez Canal. This 100-mile waterway links the Mediterranean and Red seas. Europeans hailed its opening in 1869 because it greatly shortened the sea route from Europe to South and East Asia. To Britain, especially, the canal was a “lifeline” to India.

In 1875, the ruler of Egypt was unable to repay loans he had contracted for the canal and other modernization projects. To pay his debts, he was forced to sell his shares in the canal. British prime minister Disraeli quickly bought the shares, giving Britain a controlling interest in the canal.

**A British Protectorate** When Egyptian nationalists revolted against foreign influence in 1882, Britain made Egypt a protectorate. In theory, the governor of Egypt was still an official of the Ottoman government. In fact, he followed policies dictated by Britain. Under British influence, Egypt continued to modernize. At the same time, however, nationalist discontent simmered and flared into protests and riots well into the next century.

**Iran and the European Powers**

Like the Ottoman empire, Iran faced major challenges in the 1800s. The Qajar (kah jahr) shahs, who ruled Iran from 1794 to 1925, exercised absolute power like the Safavids before them. Still, they did take steps to introduce reforms. The government improved finances, sponsored the
building of telegraph lines and railroads, and even experimented with a liberal constitution.

Reform, however, did not save Iran from western imperialism. Both Russia and Britain battled for influence in the area. Russia wanted to protect its southern frontier and expand into Central Asia. Britain was concerned about protecting its interests in India.

For a time, each nation set up its own sphere of influence in Iran. Russia operated in the north and Britain in the south. The discovery of oil in the early 1900s heightened foreign interest in the region. Both Russia and Britain intrigued for control of Iranian oil fields. The two powers persuaded the Iranian government to grant them concessions, or special economic rights given to foreign powers. To protect their interests, they sent troops into Iran.

Iranian nationalists were outraged. The nationalists included two very different groups. Some Iranians, especially the urban middle class, wanted to move swiftly to adopt western ways. Others, led by Muslim religious leaders, condemned the Iranian government and western influences.

The Power of Oil

In the early 1900s, Russia and Britain competed for oil in the Middle East. Today, the vast petroleum deposits in the region are controlled by Middle Eastern countries themselves.

Oil produces enormous wealth for countries in the Middle East. Industrialized nations rely on imported oil to produce electricity, run factories, and fuel vehicles. In the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), oil-producing countries of the Middle East and other world regions try to maximize their profits through cooperation. They influence oil prices by controlling how much oil is produced.

**Theme: Global Interaction** What do you think happens to oil prices if OPEC cuts production? Explain.
### Setting the Scene

Ranjit Singh ruled the large Sikh empire in northwestern India during the early 1800s. He had cordial dealings with the British but saw only too well where their ambitions were headed. One day, he was looking at a map of India on which British-held lands were shaded red. “All will one day become red!” he predicted.

Not long after Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, the British conquered the Sikh empire. They added its 100,000 square miles to their steadily growing lands. As Singh had forecast, India was falling under British control.

#### East India Company and Sepoy Rebellion

In the early 1600s, the British East India Company won trading rights on the fringe of the Mughal empire. As Mughal power declined, the company's influence grew. By the mid-1800s, it controlled three fifths of India.

**Exploiting Indian Diversity**  The British were able to conquer such a vast territory by exploiting the diversity of India. Even when Mughal power was at its height, India was home to many people and cultures. As Mughal power crumbled, India fragmented. Indians with different traditions and dozens of different languages were not able to unite against the newcomers. The British took advantage of Indian divisions by encouraging competition and disunity among rival princes. Where British diplomacy or intrigue did not work, their superior weapons overpowered local rulers.
British Policies  The East India Company's main goal in India was to make money, and leading officials often got very rich. At the same time, the company did work to improve roads, preserve peace, and reduce banditry.

By the early 1800s, British officials introduced western education and legal procedures. Missionaries tried to convert Indians to Christianity, which they felt was far superior to Indian religions. The British also pressed for social change. They worked to end slavery and the caste system and to improve the position of women within the family. One law outlawed sati, a Hindu custom practiced mainly by the upper classes. It called for a widow to join her husband in death by throwing herself on his funeral fire.

Causes of Discontent  In the 1850s, the East India Company made several unpopular moves. First, it required sepoys, or Indian soldiers in its service, to serve anywhere, either in India or overseas. For high-caste Hindus, however, overseas travel was an offense against their religion. Second, it passed a law that allowed Hindu widows to remarry. Hindus viewed both moves as a Christian conspiracy to undermine their beliefs.

Then, in 1857, the British issued new rifles to the sepoys. Troops were told to bite off the tips of cartridges before loading them into the rifles. The cartridges, however, were greased with animal fat—either from cows, which Hindus considered sacred, or from pigs, which were forbidden to Muslims. When the troops refused the order to “load rifles,” they were sent home without pay.

Rebellion and Aftermath  Angry sepoys rose up against their British officers. The Sepoy Rebellion swept across northern and central India. Several sepoy regiments marched off to Delhi, the old Mughal capital. There, they hailed the last Mughal ruler as their leader.

The sepoys brutally massacred British men, women, and children in some places. But the British soon rallied and crushed the revolt. They then took terrible revenge for their earlier losses, torching villages and slaughtering thousands of unarmed Indians.

The Sepoy Rebellion left a bitter legacy of fear, hatred, and mistrust on both sides. It also brought major changes in British policy. In 1858, Parliament ended the rule of the East India Company and put India directly under the British crown. It sent more troops to India, taxing Indians to pay the cost of these occupying forces. While it slowed the “reforms” that had angered Hindus and Muslims, it continued to develop India for Britain's own economic benefit.

British Colonial Rule

After 1858, Parliament set up a system of colonial rule in India. A British viceroy in India governed in the name of the queen, and British officials held the top positions in the civil service and army. Indians filled most other jobs. With their cooperation, the British made India the “brightest jewel” in the crown of their empire.

British policies were designed to fit India into the overall British economy. At the same time, British officials felt they were helping India to modernize. In their terms, modernizing meant adopting not only western technology but also western culture.

An Unequal Partnership  Britain saw India as a market and as a source of raw materials. To this end, the British built roads and an impressive
railroad network. Improved transportation let the British sell their factory-made goods across the subcontinent and carry Indian cotton, jute, and coal to coastal ports for transport to factories in England. New methods of communication, such as the telegraph, also gave Britain better control of India.

After the Suez Canal opened in 1869, British trade with India soared. But it remained an unequal partnership, favoring the British. The British flooded India with inexpensive, machine-made textiles, ruining India's once-prosperous hand-weaving industry.

Britain also transformed Indian agriculture. It encouraged nomadic herders to settle into farming and pushed farmers to grow cash crops, such as cotton and jute, that could be sold on the world market. Clearing new farmlands led to massive deforestation, or cutting of trees.

Population Growth and Famine The British introduced medical improvements and new farming methods. Better health care and increased food production led to rapid population growth. The rising numbers, however, put a strain on the food supply, especially as farmland was turned over to growing cash crops instead of food. In the late 1800s, terrible famines swept India.

Benefits of British Rule On the positive side, British rule brought peace and order to the countryside. The British revised the legal system to promote justice for Indians regardless of class or caste. Railroads helped Indians move around the country, while the telegraph and postal system improved communication. Greater contact helped bridge regional differences and opened the way for Indians to develop a sense of national unity.

The upper classes, especially, benefited from some British policies. They sent their sons to British schools, where they were trained for posts in the civil service and military. Indian landowners and princes, who still ruled their own territories, grew rich from exporting cash crops.

Different Views on Culture

During the Age of Imperialism, Indians and British developed different views of each other's culture. Both the British and the Indians were divided in their opinions.

Indian Attitudes Some educated Indians were impressed by British power and technology and urged India to follow a western model of progress. These mostly upper-class Indians learned English and adopted western ways. Other Indians felt that the answer to change lay with their own Hindu or Muslim cultures.

In the early 1800s, Ram Mohun Roy combined both views. A great scholar, he knew Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic classics, as well as English, Greek, and Latin works. Roy felt that India could learn from the West. At the same time, he wanted to revitalize and reform traditional Indian culture.

Roy condemned some traditions, such as rigid caste distinctions, child marriage, sati, and purdah, the isolation of women in separate quarters. But he also set up educational societies that helped revive pride in Indian culture. Because of his influence on later leaders, he is often hailed today as the founder of Indian nationalism.
Western Attitudes  The British disagreed among themselves about India. A few admired Indian theology and philosophy. As western scholars translated Indian classics, they acquired respect for India's ancient heritage. Western writers and philosophers borrowed ideas from Hinduism and Buddhism.

However, most British people knew little about Indian achievements and dismissed Indian culture with contempt. In an essay on whether Indians should be taught in English or their own languages, the English historian Thomas Macaulay wrote that “a single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.”

Indian Nationalism

During the years of British rule, a class of western-educated Indians emerged. In the view of Macaulay and others, this elite class would bolster British power:

“We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.”

—Thomas Macaulay, quoted in Sources of Indian Tradition (deBary)

As it turned out, exposure to European ideas had the opposite effect. By the late 1800s, western-educated Indians were spearheading a nationalist movement. Schooled in western ideals such as democracy and equality, they dreamed of ending imperial rule.

Indian National Congress  In 1885, nationalist leaders organized the Indian National Congress, which became known as the Congress party. Its members were mostly professionals and business leaders who believed in peaceful protest to gain their ends. They called for greater democracy, which they felt would bring more power to Indians like themselves. The Indian National Congress looked forward to eventual self-rule but supported western-style modernization.

Muslim League  At first, Muslims and Hindus worked together for self-rule. In time, however, Muslims grew to resent Hindu domination of the Congress party. They also worried that a Hindu-run government would oppress Muslims. In 1906, Muslims formed the Muslim League to pursue their own goals. Soon, they were talking of a separate Muslim state.

Looking Ahead

By the early 1900s, protests and resistance to British rule increased. Some Indian nationalists urged that Indian languages and cultures be restored. More and more Indians demanded not simply self-rule but complete independence. Their goal finally would be achieved in 1947, but only after a long struggle against the British and a nightmare of bloody conflict between Hindus and Muslims.
SECTION 5  China and the New Imperialism

Reading Focus

- What trade rights did westerners seek in China?
- What internal problems did Chinese reformers try to solve?
- How did the Qing dynasty come to an end?

Vocabulary

- trade surplus
- trade deficit
- indemnity
- extraterritoriality

Taking Notes

As you read, create a concept web to show key events and developments in the decline of Qing China. Print out this partially completed model and add as many circles as you need to finish the web.

Setting the Scene

By the 1830s, British merchant ships were arriving in China loaded with opium to sell to the Chinese. One Chinese official complained bitterly to Britain's Queen Victoria. "I have heard that smoking opium is strictly forbidden in your country," he wrote. "Why do you let this evil drug be sent to harm people in other countries?"

For centuries, Chinese regulations had ensured that China had a favorable balance of trade with other nations. The phrase balance of trade refers to the difference between how much a country imports and how much it exports. By the 1800s, however, western nations were using their growing power to gain more influence over East Asia.

The Trade Issue

Prior to the 1800s, Chinese rulers placed strict limits on foreign traders. European merchants were restricted to a small area in southern China. China sold them silk, porcelain, and tea in exchange for gold and silver. Under this arrangement, China enjoyed a trade surplus, exporting more than it imported. Westerners, on the other hand, had a trade deficit with China, buying more from the Chinese than they sold to them.

By the late 1700s, two developments were underway that would transform China's relations with the western world. First, China entered a period of decline. Second, the Industrial Revolution created a need for expanded markets for European goods. At the same time, it gave the West superior military power.

The Opium War  During the late 1700s, British merchants began making huge profits by trading opium grown in India for Chinese tea, which was
popular in Britain. Soon, many Chinese had become addicted to the drug. Silver flowed out of China in payment for the drug, disrupting the economy.

The Chinese government outlawed opium and executed Chinese drug dealers. They called on Britain to stop the trade. The British refused, insisting on the right of free trade.

In 1839, Chinese warships clashed with British merchants, triggering the Opium War. British gunboats, equipped with the latest in firepower, bombarded Chinese coastal and river ports. With outdated weapons and fighting methods, the Chinese were easily defeated.

**Unequal Treaties** In 1842, Britain made China accept the Treaty of Nanjing. Britain received a huge indemnity, or payment for losses in the war. The British also gained the island of Hong Kong. China had to open five ports to foreign trade and grant British citizens in China extraterritoriality, the right to live under their own laws and be tried in their own courts.

The treaty was the first of a series of “unequal treaties” that forced China to make concessions to western powers. During the mid-1800s, under pressure from the West, China agreed to open more ports to foreign trade and to let Christian missionaries preach in China.

**Internal Problems**

By the 1800s, the Qing dynasty was in decline. Irrigation systems and canals were poorly maintained, leading to massive flooding of the Huang He valley. The population explosion that had begun a century earlier created a terrible hardship for China's peasants. An extravagant court, tax evasion by the rich, and widespread official corruption added to the peasants' burden. Even the honored civil service system was rocked by bribery scandals.

**The Taiping Rebellion** As poverty and misery increased, peasants rebelled. The Taiping Rebellion, which lasted from 1850 to 1864, was probably the most devastating peasant revolt in history. The leader, Hong Xiuquan (howng shyoo chwahn), was a village schoolteacher. Inspired by religious visions, he set himself up as a revolutionary prophet. He wanted to establish a “Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace”—the Taiping (tē pēihng).

Influenced by the teachings of Christian missionaries, Hong endorsed social ideas that Chinese leaders considered radical. These included land reform, community ownership of property, and equality of women and men. Above all, he called for an end to the hated Qing dynasty.

The Taiping rebels won control of large parts of China. They held out for 14 years. However, with the help of loyal regional governors and generals, the government crushed the rebellion in the end.

**Effects** The Taiping Rebellion almost toppled the Qing dynasty. It is estimated to have caused the deaths of between 20 million and 30 million Chinese. The Qing government survived, but it had to share power with regional commanders. During the rebellion, Europeans kept up pressure on China. Russia seized lands in northern China.
were driven to join them because we were desperate. Given the chance, we would have returned gladly to our normal way of life.”

—Kwangsi Bandit Group, quoted in *Chinese Civilization and Society* (Ebrey)

**Reform Efforts**

By the mid-1800s, educated Chinese were divided over the need to adopt western ways. Most scholar-officials saw no reason for new industries because China's wealth and taxes came from land. Although Chinese merchants were allowed to do business, they were not seen as a source of prosperity.

Scholar-officials also disapproved of the ideas of western missionaries, whose emphasis on individual choice challenged the Confucian order. They saw western technology as dangerous, too, because it threatened Confucian ways that had served China successfully for so long.

The imperial court was a center of conservative opposition. By the late 1800s, the empress Ci Xi (tsee shyee) had gained power. A strong-willed ruler, she surrounded herself with advisers who were deeply committed to Confucian traditions.

**Self-Strengthening Movement** In the 1860s, reformers launched what became known as the “self-strengthening movement.” They imported western technology, setting up factories to make modern weapons. They developed shipyards, railroads, mining, and light industry. The Chinese translated western works on science, government, and the economy. However, the movement made limited progress because the government did not rally behind it.

**War With Japan** Meanwhile, the western powers and nearby Japan moved rapidly ahead. Japan began to modernize after 1868. It then joined the western imperialists in the competition for a global empire.

In 1894, Japanese pressure on China led to the Sino-Japanese War. It ended in disaster for China, with Japan gaining the island of Taiwan off the coast of China. When the two powers met at the peace table, there was a telling difference. Japanese officials were dressed in western clothes, the Chinese in traditional robes.

**Spheres of Influence** The crushing defeat revealed China's weakness. Western powers moved swiftly to carve out spheres of influence along the Chinese coast. The British took the Yangzi River valley. The French acquired the territory near their colony of Indochina. Germany and Russia gained territory in northern China.

The United States, a longtime trader with the Chinese, did not take part in the carving up of China. It feared that European powers might shut out American merchants. A few years later, in 1899, it called for a policy to keep Chinese trade open to everyone on an equal basis. The imperial
powers more or less accepted the idea of an Open Door Policy, as it came to be called. No one, however, consulted the Chinese about the policy.

**Hundred Days of Reform** Defeated by Japan and humiliated by westerners, the Chinese looked for a scapegoat. Reformers blamed conservative officials for not modernizing China. They urged conservative leaders to stop looking back at China's past golden ages and instead to modernize as Japan had.

In 1898, a young emperor, Guang Xu (gwawng shyoo), launched the Hundred Days of Reform. New laws set out to modernize the civil service exams, streamline government, and encourage new industries. Reforms affected schools, the military, and the bureaucracy. Conservatives soon rallied against the reform effort. The emperor was imprisoned, and the aging empress Ci Xi reasserted control. Reformers fled for their lives.

**The Qing Dynasty Falls**

As the century ended, China was in turmoil. Anger grew against Christian missionaries who belittled Chinese thinkers like Confucius. The presence of foreign troops was another source of discontent. Protected by extraterritoriality, foreigners ignored Chinese laws and lived in their own communities.

**Boxer Uprising** Antiforeign feeling finally exploded in the Boxer Uprising. In 1899, a group of Chinese had formed a secret society, the Righteous Harmonious Fists. Westerners watching them train in the martial arts dubbed them Boxers. Their goal was to drive out the “foreign devils” who were polluting the land with their un-Chinese ways, strange buildings, machines, and telegraph lines.

In 1900, the Boxers attacked foreigners across China. In response, the western powers and Japan organized a multinational force. It crushed the Boxers and rescued foreigners besieged in Beijing. The empress Ci Xi had at first supported the Boxers but reversed her policy as they retreated.

**Aftermath of the Uprising** China once again had to make concessions to foreigners. The defeat, however, forced even Chinese conservatives to support westernization. In a rush of reforms, China admitted women to schools and stressed science and mathematics in place of Confucian thought. More students were sent abroad to study.

China expanded economically, as well. Mining, shipping, railroads, banking, and exports of cash crops grew. With foreign capital, small-scale Chinese industry developed. A Chinese business class emerged, and a new urban working class began to press for rights as western workers had done.

**Three Principles of the People** Although the Boxer Uprising failed, the flames of Chinese nationalism spread. Reformers wanted to strengthen China's government. By the early 1900s, they had introduced a constitutional monarchy. Some reformers called for a republic.

A passionate spokesman for a Chinese republic was Sun Yixian (soon yee shyahn). Sun had studied in the West. In the early 1900s, he organized the Revolutionary Alliance. His goal was to rebuild China on “Three Principles of the People.” The first principle was nationalism, freeing China from foreign domination. The second was democracy, or representative government. The third was “livelihood,” or economic security for all Chinese.

**Biography**

Sun Yixian
1866–1925

Sun Yixian was not born to power. His parents were poor farmers. Sun's preparation for leadership came from his travels, education, and personal ambitions. In his teen years, he lived with his brother in Hawaii and attended British and American schools. Later on, he earned a medical degree.

Sun left his career in medicine to struggle against the Qing government. After a failed uprising in 1895, he went into exile. Sun visited many nations, seeking support against the Qing dynasty. When revolution erupted in China, Sun was in Denver, Colorado. He returned to China to begin his leading role in the new republic.

Theme: **Impact of the Individual** How did Sun's background prepare him to lead?
Birth of a Republic  When Ci Xi died in 1908 and a two-year-old boy inherited the throne, China slipped into chaos. In 1911, uprisings in the provinces swiftly spread. Peasants, students, local warlords, and even court politicians helped topple the Qing dynasty.

Sun Yixian hurried home from a trip to the United States. In December 1911, he was named president of the new Chinese republic. From the outset, the republic faced overwhelming problems. For the next 37 years, China was almost constantly at war with itself or fighting off foreign invasion.