Nationalism Around the World, 1919-1939

THE STORY MATTERS...

World War I slowed the push toward independence among colonies in many parts of the world, but the end of the war gave a new strength to these efforts. Mohandas Gandhi was the charismatic leader of the Indian nationalist movement against British rule. He was committed to nonviolent action as a method for political and social change. Using peaceful methods, he eventually led India to independence. His actions inspired people to seek the end of colonialism, racism, and violence.

Lesson 29-2

Nationalism in Africa and Asia

READING HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

volunteer   compensation

Content Vocabulary

Pan-Africanism   civil disobedience   *zaibatsu*

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

• How can political control lead to nationalist movements?

• How does economic exploitation lead to nationalist movements?

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

Nationalism spread throughout Africa and Asia in the early twentieth century. In Africa, calls for independence came from a new generation of Western-educated African leaders. As communism spread in Asia, Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru worked for the independence of India. Militarists gained control of the Japanese government.

African Independence Movements

GUIDING QUESTION What motivated African independence movements after World War I?

Black Africans fought in World War I in British and French armies. Many Africans hoped that independence after the war would be their reward. As one newspaper in the Gold Coast argued, if African volunteers who fought on European battlefields were "good enough to fight and die in the Empire's cause, they were good enough to have a share in the government of their countries." Most European leaders were not ready to give up their colonies.

The peace settlement after World War I was a huge disappointment. Germany was stripped of its African colonies, but these colonies were awarded to Great Britain and France to be administered as mandates for the League of Nations. Britain and France now governed a vast portion of Africa.

African Protests

After World War I, Africans became more active politically. The foreign powers that conquered and exploited Africa also introduced Western education. In educating Africans, the colonial system gave them visions of a world based on the ideals of liberty and equality. In Africa, the missionary schools taught these ideals to their pupils. The African students who studied abroad, especially in Britain and the United States, and the African soldiers who served in World War I learned new ideas about freedom and nationalism in the West. As more Africans became aware of the enormous gulf between Western ideals and practices, they decided to seek reform,

Reform movements took different forms. One of the most important issues in Kenya concerned land redistribution. Large tracts of land were given to white settlers. Black Africans received little if any compensation for this land and became squatters on the land they believed was their own.

During the 1920s, moderate protest organizations, mostly founded by the Kikuyu, emerged in Kenya. The Kikuyu Association, founded in 1920 by farmers, was intent on blocking further land confiscation. This association was willing to work for reform within the existing colonial structure.

Some of the Kenyan protesters were more radical, however. The Young Kikuyu Association, organized by Harry Thuku in 1921, challenged European authority. Thuku, a telephone operator, protested against the high taxes levied by the British rulers. His message was simple:

PRIMARY SOURCE

> "Hearken, every day you pay ... tax to the Europeans of Government. Where is it sent? It is their task to steal the property of the Kikuyu people."
>
> – quoted in *Africa: History of a Continent*

Thuku was arrested. When an angry crowd stormed the jail and demanded his release, government authorities fired into the crowd and killed at least 20 people. Thuku was sent into exile.

Libya also struggled against foreign rule in the 1920s. Forces led by Omar Mukhtar used guerrilla warfare against the Italians and defeated them a number of times. The Italians reacted ferociously. They established concentration

camps and used all available modern weapons to crush the revolt. Mukhtar's death ended the movement.

Although colonial powers typically responded to such movements with force, they also began to make some reforms. They made these reforms in an effort to satisfy African peoples. Reforms, however, were too few and too late. By the 1930s, an increasing number of African leaders were calling for independence, not reform.

New Leaders

Calls for independence came from a new generation of young African leaders. Many had been educated abroad, in Europe and the United States. Those who studied in the United States were especially influenced by the ideas of W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey.

Du Bois, an African American who was educated at Harvard University, was the leader of a movement that tried to make all Africans aware of their own cultural heritage. Garvey, a Jamaican who lived in Harlem in New York City, stressed the need for the unity of all Africans, a movement known as **Pan-Africanism**. His Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World, issued in 1920, had a strong impact on later African leaders.

Leaders and movements in individual African nations also appeared. Educated in Great Britain, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya argued in his book Facing Mount Kenya that British rule was destroying the traditional culture of the peoples of Africa.

Leopold Senghor, who studied in France and wrote poetry about African culture, organized an independence movement in Senegal. Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria began a newspaper, The West African Pilot, in 1937 and urged nonviolence as a method of gaining independence. These are just a few of the leaders who worked to end colonial rule in Africa. Success, however, would not come until after World War II.

> **READING PROGRESS CHECK**
> **Listing** Name four African leaders and discuss their motivations for African independence.

Revolution in Southeast Asia

GUIDING QUESTION *Why was communism more accepted in Asia after World War I?*

Before World War I, the Marxist doctrine of social revolution had no appeal for Asian intellectuals. After all, most Asian societies were still agricultural and hardly ready for revolution. That situation changed after the revolution in Russia in 1917. Lenin and the Bolsheviks showed that a revolutionary Marxist party could overturn an outdated system – even one that was not fully industrialized – and begin a new one.

In 1920 Lenin adopted a new revolutionary strategy aimed at societies outside the Western world. He spread the word of Karl Marx through the Communist International, or Comintern, a worldwide organization of Communist parties formed in 1919 to advance world revolution. Agents were trained in Moscow and then returned to their

countries to form Marxist parties. By the end of the 1920s, almost every colonial society in Asia had a Communist party.

How successful were these new parties? In some countries, the local Communists established a cooperative relationship with nationalist parties to struggle against Western imperialism. This was true in French Indochina. Moscow-trained Ho Chi Minh organized the Vietnamese Communists in the 1920s. The strongest Communist-nationalist alliance was formed in China. In most colonial societies, though, Communist parties of the 1930s failed to gain support among the majority of the population.

> **READING PROGRESS CHECK**
> **Summarizing** How did communism spread to Asia after World War I?

Analyzing Primary sources

Colonialism in Africa

"By driving [the African] off his ancestral lands, the Europeans have . .. reduced him to a state of serfdom incompatible with human happiness. The African is conditioned, by the cultural and social institutions of centuries, to a freedom of which Europe has little conception, and it is not in his nature to accept serfdom for ever. He realizes that he must fight unceasingly for his own complete emancipation [freedom]."

– Jomo Kenyatta, from *Facing Mount Kenya*

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS
Why does Kenyatta equate colonialism with serfdom?

Indian Independence

GUIDING QUESTION *Who and what shaped India's independence movement?*

Mohandas Gandhi was active in the Indian National Congress and the movement for Indian self-rule before World War I. The Indian people began to refer to him as India's "Great Soul," or Mahatma. After the war, Gandhi remained an important figure, and new leaders also arose.

Protest and Reform

Gandhi left South Africa in 1914. When he returned to India, he organized mass protests against British laws. A believer in nonviolence, Gandhi used the methods of civil disobedience to push for Indian independence.

In 1919 British troops killed hundreds of unarmed protesters in Amritsar, in northwestern India. Horrified at the violence, Gandhi briefly retreated from active politics but was later arrested and imprisoned for his role in protests.

In 1935 Britain passed the Government of India Act, which expanded the role of Indians in governing. Before, the Legislative Council could give advice only to the British governor. Now, it became a two-house parliament, and two-thirds of its Indian members were to be elected. Five million Indians (still a small percentage of the total population) were given the right to vote.

A Push for Independence

The Indian National Congress (INC), founded in 1885, sought reforms in Britain's government of India. Reforms, however, were no longer enough. Under its new leader, Motilal Nehru, the INC wanted to push for full independence from Britain.

Gandhi, now released from prison, returned to his earlier policy of civil disobedience. He worked hard to inform ordinary Indians of his beliefs and methods. It was wrong, he said, to harm any living being. He believed that hate could be overcome only by love, and love, rather than force, could win people over to one's position.

Nonviolence was central to Gandhi's campaign of noncooperation and **civil disobedience**. To protest unjust British laws, Gandhi told his people: "Don't pay your taxes or send your children to an English-supported school .... Make your own cotton cloth by spinning the thread at home, and don't buy English-made goods. Provide yourselves with home-made salt, and do not buy government-made salt."

Britain had increased the salt tax and prohibited Indians from manufacturing or harvesting their own salt. In 1930 Gandhi led a protest. He walked to the sea with his supporters in what was called the Salt March. On reaching the coast, Gandhi picked up a pinch of salt. Thousands of Indians followed his act of civil disobedience. Gandhi and many other members of the INC were arrested.

New Leaders and Problems

In the 1930s, Jawaharlal Nehru entered the movement. The son of Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal studied law in Great Britain. He was a new kind of Indian politician – upper class and intellectual.

The independence movement in India split into two paths. The one identified with Gandhi was religious, anti-Western, and traditional. The other, identified with Nehru, was secular, pro-Western, and modern. The two approaches created uncertainty about India's future path.

In the meantime, another problem arose in the independence movement. Hostility between Hindus and Muslims had existed for centuries. Muslims were dissatisfied with the Hindu dominance of the INC and raised the cry "Islam is in danger."

By the 1930s, the Muslim League was under the leadership of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. The league believed in the creation of a separate Muslim state of Pakistan ("the land of the pure") in the northwest.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Identifying What was Gandhi's role in the Indian independence movement?

A Militarist Japan

GUIDING QUESTION *What triggered the rise of militarism in Japan?*

Japanese society developed along a Western model. Meiji Era reforms led to increasing prosperity and a modern industrial and commercial sector.

A *Zaibatsu* Economy

In the Japanese economy, various manufacturing processes were concentrated within a single enterprise called the ***zaibatsu***, a large financial and industrial corporation. These vast companies controlled major segments of the Japanese industrial sector. By 1937, the four largest zaibatsu (Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda) controlled 21 percent of the banking, 26 percent of the mining, 35 percent of the shipbuilding, and more than 60 percent of the paper manufacturing and insurance industries.

The concentration of wealth led to growing economic inequalities. City workers were poorly paid and housed. Economic crises added to this problem. After World War t inflation in food prices led to food riots. A rapid increase in population led to food shortages. (The population of the Japanese islands increased from 43 million in 1900 to 73 million in 1940.) Later, when the Great Depression struck, workers and farmers suffered the most.

With hardships came calls for a return to traditional Japanese values. Traditionalists especially objected to the growing influence of Western ideas and values on Japanese educational and political systems. At the same time, many citizens denounced Japan's attempt to find security through cooperation with the Western powers. Instead, they demanded that Japan use its strength to dominate Asia.

Japan and the West

In the early twentieth century, Japan had difficulty finding sources of raw materials and foreign markets for its manufactured goods. Until World War I, Japan fulfilled these needs by seizing territories, such as Taiwan (Formosa), Korea, and southern Manchuria. This policy succeeded but aroused the concern of the Western nations, especially the United States.

In 1922 the United States held a conference of nations with interests in the Pacific. This conference created a nine-power treaty that recognized the territorial integrity of China and the maintenance of the Open Door policy. Japan agreed, in return for recognition of its control of southern Manchuria. However, this agreement did not prove popular. Heavy industry, mining, and manufacture of appliances and automobiles require resources that are not found in abundance in Japan. The Japanese government came under pressure to find new sources for raw materials abroad.

The Rise of Militarism

During the early 1900s, Japan had moved toward a more democratic government. The parliament and political parties grew stronger. The influence of the old ruling oligarchy, however, remained strong.

At the end of the 1920s, a militant group within the ruling party gained control of the political system. Some militants were civilians who were convinced that Western ideas had corrupted the parliamentary system. Others were military members who were angered by the cuts in military spending and the government's pacifist policies of the early 1920s.

During the early 1930s, civilians formed extremist patriotic organizations such as the Black Dragon Society. Members of the army and navy created similar societies. One group of middle-level army officers invaded Manchuria without government approval in 1931. Within a short time, all of Manchuria had been conquered. The Japanese government opposed the conquest, but the Japanese people supported it. Unable to act, the government was soon dominated by the military.

Japanese society was put on wartime status. A military draft law was passed in 1938. Economic resources were placed under strict government control. All political parties were merged into the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, which called for Japanese expansion abroad. Labor unions were disbanded, and education and culture were purged of most Western ideas.

READING PROGRESS CHECK
Making Connections Explain the relationship between the *zaibatsu* and militarism.

REVIEWING VOCABULARY

Pan-Africanism   the unity of all black Africans, regardless of national boundaries

civil disobedience   refusal to obey laws that are considered to be unjust

zaibatsu   in the Japanese economy, a large financial and industrial corporation