Industrialization and Imperialism: The Making of the European Global Order

On January 22, 1879, at the height of its century-long reign as the paramount global power, Great Britain suffered one of the most devastating defeats ever inflicted by a non-Western people on an industrialized nation. The late-Victorian painting shown in Figure 24.1 depicts the Battle of Isandhlwana at which more than 20,000 Zulu soldiers outmaneuvered a much smaller but overconfident British army invading their kingdom. Taking advantage of the British commander’s foolhardy decision to divide his forces, the Zulus attacked the main British encampment from all directions and, in a fiercely fought battle lasting only a couple of hours, wiped out 950 European troops and nearly 850 African irregulars. Divided and caught off guard, the British could not form proper firing lines to repel the much larger and well-led Zulu *impi*—the equivalent of a division in a Western army. The flight of the African irregulars, who made up a sizeable portion of the British army, left gaps in the British force that were quickly exploited by the Zulu fighters. Soon after the main battle was joined, most of the British and mercenary African soldiers in the camp at Isandhlwana were dead or in desperate flight to a river nearby, where most were hunted down by *impi* positioned to block their retreat.

The well-drilled Zulu *impi* who routed the British forces at Isandhlwana skillfully wielded the cattle-hide shields and short stabbing spears, or *assegais*, that had been the Zulus’ trademark for more than half a century. In the early 1800s, warriors and weapons had provided the military power for an ambitious young leader named Shaka to forge a powerful kingdom in the southeastern portions of what would later become the Union of South Africa (Map 24.4). The Zulus’ imposing preindustrial military organization had triumphed over all African rivals and later proved the most formidable force resisting the advance of both the Dutch-descended Boers (later called Afrikaners) and British imperial armies in southern Africa.

The British defeat was shocking in large part because it seemed implausible, given the great and ever-growing disparity between the military might of the European colonial powers and the African and Asian peoples they had come to dominate in unprecedented ways. Technological innovations and mass production made it possible for European states to supply advanced weaponry and other war materiel to sizeable naval and land forces across the globe. The
enhanced firepower and mobility that resulted made it possible for Western warships and regiments to crush the preindustrial military resistance of adversaries as diverse as the armies of the vast Qing Empire in China, the revivalist religious state founded by the Mahdi in the Sudan, and the legendary Zulu impis in South Africa.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1619</td>
<td>Dutch establish trading post at Batavia in Java</td>
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<td>1620s</td>
<td>Sultan of Mataram’s attacks on Batavia fail</td>
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<td>1652</td>
<td>First Dutch settlement in South Africa at Cape Town</td>
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<td>1661</td>
<td>British port-trading center founded at Bombay</td>
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<td>1690</td>
<td>Calcutta established at center of British activities in Bengal</td>
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<td>1707</td>
<td>Death of Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb; beginning of imperial breakdown</td>
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<td>1739</td>
<td>Nadir Shah’s invasion of India from Persia</td>
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<td>1740–1748</td>
<td>War of Austrian Succession; global British–French struggle for colonial dominance</td>
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<td>1750s</td>
<td>Civil war and division of Mataram; Dutch become the paramount power on Java</td>
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<td>1756–1763</td>
<td>Seven Years War; British–French global warfare</td>
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<td>1757</td>
<td>Battle of Plassey; British become dominant power in Bengal</td>
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<td>1769–1770</td>
<td>Great Famine in Bengal</td>
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<td>1775–1783</td>
<td>War for Independence by American colonists; another British–French struggle for global preeminence</td>
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<td>1786–1780</td>
<td>Cornwallis’s political reforms in India</td>
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<td>1790–1815</td>
<td>Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleonic era</td>
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<td>1798</td>
<td>Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt</td>
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<td>1815</td>
<td>British annex Cape Town and surrounding area</td>
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<td>1830</td>
<td>Boers begin Great Trek in South Africa</td>
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<td>1835</td>
<td>Decision to give support for English education in India; English adopted as the language of Indian law courts</td>
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<td>1850s</td>
<td>Boer republics established in the Orange Free State and Transvaal</td>
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<td>1853</td>
<td>First railway line constructed in India</td>
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<td>1857</td>
<td>Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay universities founded</td>
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<td>1857–1858</td>
<td>&quot;Mutiny&quot; or Great Rebellion in north India</td>
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<td>1858</td>
<td>British parliament assumes control over India from the East India Company</td>
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<td>1867</td>
<td>Diamonds discovered in Orange Free State</td>
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<td>1869</td>
<td>Opening of the Suez Canal</td>
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<td>c. 1879–1890s</td>
<td>Partition of west Africa</td>
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<td>1879</td>
<td>Zulu victory over British at Isandlwana; defeat at Rorke’s Drift</td>
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<td>1882</td>
<td>British invasion of Egypt</td>
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<td>1885</td>
<td>Indian National Congress Party founded in India</td>
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<td>1885</td>
<td>Gold discovered in the Transvaal</td>
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<td>1890s</td>
<td>Partition of east Africa</td>
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<td>1898</td>
<td>British–French crisis over Fashoda in the Sudan</td>
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<td>1899–1902</td>
<td>Anglo-Boer War in South Africa</td>
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<td>1902</td>
<td>Anglo-Japanese Treaty</td>
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<td>1904</td>
<td>Anglo-Russian crisis at Dogger Bank</td>
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<td>1904–1905</td>
<td>First Moroccan crisis</td>
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<td>1911</td>
<td>Second Moroccan crisis; Russo-Japanese War</td>
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<td>1914</td>
<td>Outbreak of World War I</td>
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The aftermath of the Zulu triumph at Isandlwana demonstrated that the British defeat was a fluke, a dramatic but short-lived exception to what had become a pervasive pattern of European (and increasingly American) political and military supremacy worldwide. Estimates of Zulu losses at Isandlwana, for example, range from two to three times those for British units and “native” levies combined. Within hours of their utter destruction of most of the main British column, a force of some 3000 Zulu warriors was decimated in the siege of a small outpost at nearby Rorke’s Drift. There a cluster of farm buildings was successfully defended
by just over a hundred British soldiers, many of whom were wounded from earlier clashes. Not even the courageous and disciplined Zulu impis could overcome the withering firepower of well-led British battalions armed with breech-loading, repeating rifles.

As was the case in equally stunning massacres of the expeditionary forces of industrial powers in other colonial settings, most notably Custer’s last stand in the American West, revenge for the defeat inflicted by the Zulus at Isandhlwana was massive and swift. Additional troops were drawn from throughout the far-flung British Empire and, within months, a far larger British force was advancing on the Zulu capital at Ulundi. Like the coalition of Indian tribes that had joined to destroy Custer’s units of the Seventh Cavalry, the Zulu impis that had turned back the first British invasion dispersed soon after the clashes at Isandhlwana and Rorke’s Drift. By late August, the Zulu ruler, Cetshwayo, had surrendered to the British and been shipped into exile at Cape Town. Assuming a rather calculated pose of naiveté, Cetshwayo captured the sense of awe and helplessness felt by so many African and Asian leaders who sought to resist the advance of European colonizers in his much publicized admission that he was “only a child, and the British government [was] his father.”

The British advances into the heart of Cetshwayo’s kingdom in the last of the wars between the Europeans and the Zulus exemplified many of the fundamental shifts in the balance of world power in the turn-of-the-century decades of the great “scramble” for overseas territories that did so much to set the stage for World War I. Like their French, Dutch, Belgian, German, Russian, Japanese, and American competitors, the British plunged deep into Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. In contrast to the earlier centuries of overseas expansion, the European powers were driven in the late-19th century by rivalries with each other, and in some instances with the Japanese and Americans, rather than fears of Muslim kingdoms in the Middle East and north Africa or powerful empires in Asia.

In most of the areas they claimed as colonial possessions, the Europeans established direct rule, where they had once been mainly content to subjugate and control local rulers and their retainers. The 1879 Anglo-Zulu war had been precipitated by British demands, including the right to station a resident in the Zulu kingdom and the breakup of the Zulu military machine, that would have reduced Cetshwayo to the status of a vassal. Though the British and other colonizers would continue to govern through indigenous officials in many areas, their subordinates were increasingly recruited from new elites, both professional and commercial, who emerged from schools where the languages and customs of the imperial powers were taught to growing numbers of colonized peoples.

The Shift to Land Empires in Asia

From the mid-18th century onward, the European powers began to build true empires in Asia similar to those they had established in the Americas beginning in the 16th century. In the first phase of the colonization process, Europeans overseas were willing to adapt their lifestyles to the climates and cultures of the lands they had gone out to rule.

Although we usually use the term partition to refer to the European division of Africa at the end of the 19th century, the Western powers had actually been carving up the globe into colonial enclaves for centuries (Map 24.1). At first this process was haphazard and often quite contrary to the interests and designs of those in charge of European enterprises overseas. For example, the directors who ran the Dutch and English East India companies (which were granted monopolies of the trade between their respective countries and the East in the 17th and 18th centuries) had little interest in territorial acquisitions. In fact, they were actively opposed to involvement in the political rivalries of the Asian princes. Wars were expensive, and direct administration of African or Asian possessions was even more so. Both cut deeply into the profits gained through participation in the Asian trading system, and profits—not empires—were the chief concern of the Dutch and English directors.

Whatever policies company directors may have instructed their agents in Africa and Asia to follow, these “men-on-the-spot” were often drawn into local power struggles. And before the Industrial Revolution produced the telegraph and other methods of rapid communication, company directors and European prime ministers had very little control over those who actually ran their trading empires. In the 18th century, a letter took months to reach Calcutta from London; the reply took many months more. Thus, commanders in the field had a great deal of leeway. They could conquer whole provinces or kingdoms before home officials even learned that their armies were on the move.
Prototype: The Dutch Advance on Java

One of the earliest empires to be built in this fashion was that pieced together in the late 17th and 18th centuries by the Dutch in Java (Map 24.2). Java was then and is now the most populous of the hundreds of islands that make up the country of Indonesia. In the early years after the Dutch established their Asian headquarters at Batavia on the northwest coast of the island in 1619, it was a struggle just to survive. The Dutch were content to become the vassals of and pay tribute to the sultans of Mataram, who ruled most of Java. In the decades that followed, the Dutch concentrated on gaining monopoly control over the spices produced on the smaller islands of the Indonesian archipelago to the east. But in the 1670s, the Dutch repeatedly intervened in the wars between rival claimants to the throne of Mataram, and they backed the side that eventually won. As the price for their assistance, the Dutch demanded that the territories around Batavia be turned over to them to administer.

This episode was the first of a long series of Dutch interventions in the wars of succession between the princes of Mataram. Dutch armies were made up mainly of troops recruited from the island peoples of the
eastern Indonesian archipelago, led by Dutch commanders. Their superior organization and discipline, even more than their firearms, made the Dutch a potent ally of whichever prince won them to his side. But the price the Javanese rulers paid was very high. Each succession dispute and Dutch intervention led to more and more land being ceded to the increasingly land-hungry Europeans. By the mid-18th century, the sultans of Mataram controlled only the south central portions of Java (Map 24.2). A failed attempt by Sultan Mangkubumi to restore Mataram's control over the Dutch in the 1760s ended with a Dutch-dictated division of the kingdom that signified Dutch control of the entire island. Java had been transformed into the core of an Asian empire that would last for 200 years.

**Pivot of World Empire: The Rise of the British Rule in India**

In many ways, the rise of the British as a land power in India resembled the Dutch capture of Java. The directors of the British East India Company were as hostile as the Dutch financiers to territorial expansion. But British agents of the company in India repeatedly meddled in disputes and conflicts between local princes. In these interventions, the British, adopting a practice pioneered by the French, relied heavily on Indian troops, called sepoys (some of whom are pictured in Figure 24.2) recruited from peoples throughout the subcontinent. As had been the case in Java, Indian princes regarded the British as allies whom they could use and control to crush competitors from within India or put down usurpers who tried to seize their thrones. As had happened in Java, the European pawns gradually emerged as serious rivals to the established Indian rulers and eventually dominated the region.

Partly because the struggle for India came later, there were also important differences between the patterns of colonial conquest in India and Java as well as between the global repercussions of each. In contrast to the Dutch march inland, which resulted largely from responses to local threats and opportunities, the rise of the British Raj (the Sanskrit-derived name for the British political establishment in India) owed
much to the fierce global rivalry between the British and the French. In the 18th century, the two powers found themselves on opposite sides in five major wars. These struggles were global in a very real sense. On land and sea, the two old adversaries not only fought in Europe but also squared off in the Caribbean, where each had valuable plantation colonies; in North America; and on the coasts and bays of the Indian Ocean. With the exception of the American War of Independence (1775–1783), these struggles ended in British victories. The British loss of the American colonies was more than offset by earlier victories in the Caribbean and especially in India. These triumphs gradually gave the British control of the entire south Asian subcontinent.

Although the first victories of the British over the French and the Indian princes came in the south in the late 1740s, their rise as a major land power in Asia hinged on victories won in Bengal to the northeast (Map 24.3). The key battle at Plassey in 1757, in which fewer than 3000 British troops and Indian sepoys defeated an Indian army of nearly 50,000, is traditionally pictured as the heroic triumph of a handful of brave and disciplined Europeans over a horde of ill-trained and poorly led Asians. The battle pitted Siraj ud-Daula, the teenage nawab, or ruler, of Bengal, against Robert Clive, the architect of the British victory in the south. The prize was control of the fertile and populous kingdom of Bengal. The real reasons for Clive’s famous victory tell us a good deal about the process of empire building in Asia and Africa.

MAP 24.3 The Growth of the British Empire in India, from the 1750s to 1858

The numbers on each side and the maneuvers on the field had little to do with the outcome of a battle that in a sense was over before it began. Clive’s well-paid Indian spics had given him detailed accounts of the divisions in Siraj ud-Daula’s ranks in the months before the battle. With money provided by Hindu bankers who were anxious to get back at the Muslim prince for unpaid debts and for confiscating their treasure on several occasions, Clive bought off the nawab’s chief general and several of his key allies. Even the nawab’s leading spy was on Clive’s payroll, which somewhat offset the fact that the main British spy had been bribed by Siraj ud-Daula. The backing Clive received from the Indian bankers also meant that his troops were well paid, whereas those of the nawab were not.

Thus, when the understandably nervous teenage ruler of Bengal rode into battle on June 23, 1757, his fate was already sealed. The nawab’s troops under French officers and one of his Indian commanders fought well. But his major Indian allies defected to the British or remained stationary on his flanks when the two sides were locked in combat. These defections wiped out the nawab’s numerical advantage, and Clive’s skillful leadership and the superiority of his artillery did the rest. The British victors had once again foiled their French rivals. As the nawab had anticipated, they soon took over the direct administration of the sizeable Bengal-Bihar region. The foundations of Britain’s Indian and global empire had been laid.

The Consolidation of British Rule

In the decades after Plassey, the British officials of the East India Company repeatedly went to war with Indian princes whose kingdoms bordered on the company’s growing possessions (Map 24.3). These entanglements
grew stronger and stronger as the Mughal Empire broke down more fully in the last decades of the century. In its ruins, regional Indian princes fought to defend or expand their territories at the expense of their neighbors. Interventions in those conflicts or assaults on war-weakened Indian kingdoms allowed the British to advance steadily inland from their three trading towns on the Indian coast: Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. These cities became the administrative centers of the three presidencies that eventually made up the bulk of the territory the British ruled directly in India. In many areas, the British were content to leave defeated or allied Indian princes on the thrones of their princely states and to control their kingdoms through agents stationed at the rulers' courts.

Because there was no sense of Indian national identity, it was impossible for Muslim or Hindu rulers to appeal to the defense of the homeland or the need for unity to drive out the foreigners. Indian princes continued to fear and fight with each other despite the ever growing power of the British Raj. Old grudges and hatreds ran deeper than the new threat of the British. Many ordinary Indians were eager to serve in the British regiments, which had better weapons, brighter uniforms, and higher and more regular pay than all but a handful of the armies of the Indian rulers. By the mid-19th century, Indian soldiers in the pay of the British outnumbered British officers and enlisted men in India by almost five to one.

From the first decades of the 19th century, India was clearly the pivot of the great empire being built by Britain on a global scale. Older colonies with large numbers of white settlers, such as Canada and Australia, contributed more space to the total square miles of empire the British were so fond of calculating. But India had by far the greater share of colonized peoples. Britain's largest and most powerful land forces were the armies recruited from the Indian peoples, and these were rapidly becoming the police of the entire British Indian empire. In the mid-19th century, Indian soldiers were sent to punish the Chinese and Afghans, conquer Burma and Malaya, and begin the conquest of south and east Africa. Indian ports were essential to British sea power east of the Cape of Good Hope. As the century progressed, India became the major outlet for British overseas investments and manufactured goods as well as a major source of key raw materials.

**Early Colonial Society in India and Java**

Although they slowly emerged as the political masters of Java and India, the Dutch and the British were at first content to leave the social systems of the peoples they ruled pretty much as they had found them. The small numbers of European traders and company officials who lived in the colonies for any length of time simply formed a new class atop the social hierarchies that already existed in Java and different parts of India. Beneath them, the aristocratic classes and often the old ruling families were preserved. They were left in charge of the day-to-day administration at all but the very highest levels. At the highest levels, the local rulers were paired with an agent of the imperial power (Figure 24.3).

To survive in the hot tropical environments of south and southeast Asia, the Dutch and English were forced to adapt to the ancient and sophisticated host

![Figure 24.3 The close alliances that the European colonizers often struck with the “native” princes of conquered areas are graphically illustrated by this photo of the Susuhunan of Surakarta, a kingdom in central Java, standing arm-in-arm with a high Dutch official. At the upper levels of the administration, Dutch leaders were paired with Javanese rulers and aristocrats. The Dutch official always had the last say in joint decisions. But his Javanese “partner” was closely linked to subordinate administrators and often had a good deal more to say about how effectively the decision was carried out.](image-url)
Western Education and the Rise of an African and Asian Middle Class

To varying degrees and for many of the same reasons as the British in India, all European colonizers educated the children of African and Asian elite groups in Western-language schools. The early 19th-century debate over education in India was paralleled by an equally hard-fought controversy among French officials and missionaries regarding the proper schooling for the peoples of Senegal in west Africa. The Dutch did not develop European-language schools for the sons of the Javanese elite until the mid-19th century, and many young Javanese men continued to be educated in the homes of the Dutch living in the colonies until the end of the century. Whatever their particular views on education, all colonial policymakers realized that they needed administrative assistants and postal clerks and that they could not begin to recruit enough Europeans to fill these posts. Therefore, all agreed that Western education for some segments of the colonized population was essential for the maintenance of colonial order.

One of the chief advantages of having Western-educated African and Asian subordinates—for they were always below European officials or traders—was that their salaries were much lower than what Europeans would have been paid for doing the same work. The Europeans had no trouble rationalizing this inequity. Higher pay for the Europeans was justified as compensation for the sacrifices involved in colonial service. Colonial officials also assumed that European employees would be more hard-working and efficient.

Beyond the need for government functionaries and business assistants, each European colonizer stressed different objectives in designing Western-language schools for the children of upper-class families. The transmission of Western scientific learning and production techniques was a high priority for the British in India. The goal of educational policymakers, such as Macaulay, was to teach the Indians Western literature and manners and to instill in them a Western sense of morality. As Macaulay put it, the British hoped that English-language schools would turn out brown English gentlemen, who would in turn teach their countrymen the ways of the West.

The French, at least until the end of the 19th century, went even further. Because they conceived of French nationalism as a matter of culture rather than birth, it was of prime importance that Africans and other colonial students master the French language and the subtleties of French cuisine, dress, and etiquette. The French also saw the process of turning colonial subjects into black, brown, and yellow French citizens as a way to increase their stagnant population to keep up with rival nations, especially Germany and Great Britain. Both of these rivals and the United States had much higher birth rates in this period.

When the lessons had been fully absorbed and the students fully assimilated to French culture, they could become full citizens of France, no matter what their family origins or skin color. Only a tiny minority of the population of any French colony had the opportunity for the sort of schooling cultures of their Asian colonies. After establishing themselves at Batavia, for example, the Dutch initially tried to create a little Holland in Java. They built high, close-packed houses overlooking canals, just like those they had left behind in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. But they soon discovered that the canals were splendid breeding grounds for insects and microbes that (though the Europeans did not make the connection until somewhat later) carried debilitating or lethal diseases such as malaria, dysentery, and typhoid. By the late 17th century, the prosperous merchants and officials of Batavia had begun to move away from the unhealthy center of the city to villas in the suburbs. Their large dwellings were set in gardens and separated by rice paddies and palm groves. The tall houses of the inner city gave way in the countryside to low, sprawling dwellings with many open spaces to catch the tropical breezes. Each was ringed with long porches with overhanging roofs to block the heat and glare of the sun. Similar dwellings, from which we get our term *bungalow*, came into fashion in India in the 18th century.

Europeans living in the tropical colonies also adopted, to varying degrees, the dress, the eating and work habits, and even the political symbols and styles of the Asian peoples they ruled. Some Englishmen refused to give up their tight-fitting woolen clothing, at least in public. But many (one suspects most of those who survived) took to wearing looser-fitting cotton clothing. Dutch gentlemen even donned the long skirt-like surongs of the Javanese aristocrats. British and Dutch officials learned to appreciate the splendid cuisines of India and Java—a taste that the Dutch would never lose and the British would revive at home in the post-independence era. Englishmen smoked Indian *hookahs*, or water pipes, and delighted in performances of Indian “dancing girls.” Adjusting to the
that would qualify them for French citizenship. But by the early 20th century, there were thousands of Senegalese and hundreds of Vietnamese and Tunisians who could carry French passports, vote in French elections, and even run for seats in the French parliament. Other European colonial powers adopted either the British or the French approach to education and its aims. The Dutch and the Germans followed the British pattern, whereas the Portuguese pushed assimilation for even smaller numbers of the elite classes among the peoples they colonized.

Western education in the colonies succeeded in producing clerks and railway conductors, brown Indian gentlemen, and black French citizens. It also had effects that those who shaped colonial educational policy did not intend, effects that within a generation or two would produce major challenges to European colonial dominance. The population of most colonized areas was divided into many different ethnic, religious, and language groups with separate histories and identities. Western-language schools gave the sons (and, in limited instances, the daughters) of the leading families a common language in which to communicate. The schools also spread common attitudes and ideas and gave the members of diverse groups a common body of knowledge. In all European colonial societies, Western education led to similar occupational opportunities: in government service, with Western business firms, or as professionals (e.g., lawyers, doctors, journalists). Thus, within a generation after their introduction, Western-language schools had created a new middle class in the colonies that had no counterpart in precolonial African or Asian societies.

Occupying social strata and economic niches in the middle range between the European colonizers and the old aristocracy on one hand and the peasantry and urban laborers on the other, Western-educated Africans and Asians became increasingly aware of the interests and grievances they had in common. They often found themselves at odds with the traditional rulers or the landed gentry, who, ironically, were often their fathers or grandfathers. Members of the new middle class also felt alienated from the peasantry, whose beliefs and way of life were so different from those they had learned in Western-language schools.

For more than a generation they clung to their European tutors and employers. Eventually, however, they grew increasingly resentful of their lower salaries and of European competition for scarce jobs. They were also angered by their social segregation from the Europeans, which intensified in the heightened racist atmosphere of the late 19th century. European officials and business managers often made little effort to disguise their contempt for even the most accomplished Western-educated Africans and Asians. Thus, members of the new middle class in the colonies were caught between two worlds: the traditional ways and teachings of their fathers and the modern world of their European masters. Finding that they would be fully admitted to neither world, they rejected the first and set about supplanting the Europeans and building their own versions of the second, or modern, world.

Questions Why did the Europeans continue to provide Western-language education for Africans and Asians once it was clear they were creating a class that might challenge their position of dominance? What advantages did Western-educated Africans and Asians have as future leaders of resistance to the European colonial overlords? Do you think the European colonial rule would have lasted longer if Western-language education had been denied to colonized peoples?

heat of the colonies, both the Dutch and the English worked hard in the cool of the morning, took a long lunch break (often with a siesta), and then returned to the office for the late afternoon and early evening.

Because the Europeans who went to Asia until the mid-19th century were overwhelmingly male, Dutch and British traders and soldiers commonly had liaisons with Asian women. In some cases these involved little more than visits to the local brothel. But very often European men lived with Asian women, and sometimes they married them. Before the end of the 18th century, mixed marriages on the part of prominent traders or officers were widely accepted, particularly in Java. Examples of racial discrimination against the subject peoples on the basis of their physical appearance can certainly be found during the early decades of European overseas empire. But the frequency of liaisons that cut across racial boundaries suggests a social fluidity and a degree of inter racial interaction that would be unthinkable by the last half of the 19th century, when the social distance between colonizers and colonized was consciously marked in a variety of ways.

Social Reform in the Colonies

Until the early 19th century, neither the Dutch nor the British had much desire to push for changes in the social or cultural life of their Asian subjects. The British enforced the rigid divisions of the Hindu caste system, and both the British and the Dutch made it clear that they had little interest in spreading Christianity among the Indians or the Javanese. In fact, for fear of offending Hindu and Muslim religious sentiments, the British refused to allow Christian missionaries to preach in their territories until the second decade of the 19th century.
Beginning in the 1770s, however, rampant corruption on the part of company officials forced the British parliament to enact significant reforms in the administration of the East India Company and its colonies. By that time most of those who served in India saw their brief tenure as a chance to strike it rich quickly. They made great fortunes by cheating the company and exploiting the Indian peasants and artisans. The bad manners and conspicuous consumption of these upstarts, whom their contemporaries scornfully called nabobs, were satirized by leading English novelists of the age.

When the misconduct of the nabobs resulted in the catastrophic Bengal famine of 1770, in which as much as one-third of the population of that once prosperous province died, their abuses could no longer be ignored. The British parliament passed several acts that restructured the company hierarchy and made it much more accountable to the British government. A succession of political reforms culminated in sweeping measures taken in the 1790s by the same Lord Charles Cornwallis whose surrender at Yorktown had sealed Britain's loss of the American colonies. By cleaning up the courts and reducing the power of local British administrators, Cornwallis did much to check widespread corruption. Because of his mistrust of Indians, his measures also severely limited their participation in governing the empire.

In this same period, forces were building, in both India and England, that caused a major shift in British policy toward social reform among the subject peoples. The Evangelical religious revival, which had seen the spread of Methodism among the English working classes, soon spilled over into Britain's colonial domains. Evangelicals were in the vanguard of the struggle to put an end to the slave trade, and their calls for reforms in India were warmly supported by Utilitarian philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. These prominent British thinkers believed that there were common principles by which human societies ought to be run if decent living conditions were to be attained by people at all class levels. Mill and other Utilitarians were convinced that British society, though flawed, was far more advanced than Indian society. Thus, they pushed for the introduction of British institutions and ways of thinking in India, as well as the eradication of what they considered Indian superstitions and social abuses.

Both Utilitarians and Evangelicals agreed that Western education was the key to revitalizing an ancient but decadent Indian civilization. Both factions were contemptuous of Indian learning. Influential British historian Thomas Babington Macaulay put it most bluntly when he declared in the 1830s that one shelf of an English gentleman's library was worth all the writings of Asia. Consequently, the Evangelicals and the Utilitarians pushed for the introduction of English-language education for the children of the Indian elite. These officials also pushed for major reforms in Indian society and advocated a large-scale infusion of Western technology.

At the center of the reformers' campaign was the effort to put an end to sati, the ritual burning of Hindu widows on the funeral pyres of their deceased husbands. This practice, which was clearly a corruption of Hindu religious beliefs, had spread fairly widely among upper-caste Hindu groups by the era of the Muslim invasions in the 11th and 12th centuries. In fact, the wives of proud warrior peoples, such as the Rajputs, had been encouraged to commit mass suicide rather than risk dishonoring their husbands by being captured and molested by Muslim invaders. By the early 19th century, some brahman castes and even lower-caste groups in limited areas had adopted the practice of sati.

In the 1830s, bolstered by the strong support and active cooperation of Western-educated Indian leaders, such as Ram Mohun Roy, the British outlawed sati. One confrontation between the British and those affected by their efforts to prevent widow burnings illustrates the confidence of the reformers in the righteousness of their cause and the sense of moral and social superiority over the Indians that the British felt in this era. A group of brahmans complained to a British official, Charles Napier, that his refusal to allow them to burn the widow of a prominent leader of their community was a violation of their social customs. Napier replied,

The burning of widows is your custom. Prepare the funeral pyre. But my nation also has a custom. When men burn women alive, we hang them and confiscate all their property. My carpenters shall therefore erect gibbets on which to hang all concerned when the widow is consumed. Let us all act according to our national customs.

The range and magnitude of the reforms the British enacted in India in the early 19th century marked a watershed in global history. During these years, the alien British, who had become the rulers of one of the oldest centers of civilization, consciously began to transmit the ideas, inventions, modes of organization, and technology associated with western Europe's scientific and industrial revolutions to the peoples of the non-Western world. English education, social reforms, railways, and telegraph lines were only part of a larger project by which the British tried to remake Indian society along Western lines. India's crop lands were measured and registered, its forests were set aside for "scientific" management, and its people were drawn more and more into the European-dominated global market economy. British officials promoted policies that they believed would teach the
Indian peasantry the merits of thrift and hard work. British educators lectured the children of India’s rising middle classes on the importance of emulating their European masters in matters as diverse as being punctual, exercising their bodies, and mastering the literature and scientific learning of the West. Ironically, the very values and ideals that the British preached so earnestly to the Indians would soon be turned against colonizers by those leading India’s struggle for independence from Western political domination.

**Industrial Rivalries and the Partition of the World, 1870–1914**

The spread of the Industrial Revolution from the British Isles to continental Europe and North America resulted in ever higher levels of European and American involvement in the outside world. Beginning in the 1870s, the Europeans indulged in an orgy of overseas conquests that reduced most of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Ocean region to colonial possessions by the time of the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

Although science and industry gave the Europeans power over the rest of the world, they also heightened economic competition and political rivalries between the European powers. In the first half of the 19th century, industrial Britain, with its seemingly insurmountable naval superiority, was left alone to dominate overseas trade and empire building. By the last decades of the century, Belgium, France, and especially Germany and the United States were challenging Britain’s industrial supremacy and actively building (or in the case of France, adding to) colonial empires of their own. Many of the political leaders of these expansive nations saw colonies as essential to states that aspired to status as great powers. Colonies were also seen as insurance against raw material shortages and the loss of overseas market outlets to European or North American rivals.

Thus, the concerns of Europe’s political leaders were both political and economic. The late 19th century was a period of recurring economic depressions in Europe and the United States. The leaders of the newly industrialized nations had little experience in handling the overproduction and unemployment that came with each of these economic crises. They were deeply concerned about the social unrest and, in some cases, what appeared to be stirrings of revolution that each phase of depression created. Some political theorists argued that as destinations to which unemployed workers might migrate and as potential markets for surplus goods, colonies could serve as safety valves to release the pressure built up in times of industrial slumps.

In the era of the scramble for colonial possessions, political leaders in Europe played a much more prominent role in decisions to annex overseas territories than they had earlier, even in the first half of the 19th century. In part, this was because of improved communications. Telegraphs and railways made it possible to transmit orders much more rapidly from the capitals of Europe to their representatives in the tropics. But more than politicians were involved in late 19th-century decisions to add to the colonial empires. The development of mass journalism and the extension of the vote to the lower middle and working classes in industrial Europe and the United States made public opinion a major factor in foreign policy. Although stalwart explorers might on their own initiative make treaties with local African or Asian potentates who assigned their lands to France or Germany, these annexations had to be ratified by the home government. In most cases, ratification meant fierce parliamentary debates, which often spilled over into press wars and popular demonstrations. Empires had become the property and pride of the nations of Europe and North America.

**Unequal Combat: Colonial Wars and the Apex of European Imperialism**

Industrial change not only justified the Europeans’ grab for colonial possessions but made them much easier to acquire. By the late 19th century, scientific discoveries and technological innovations had catapulted the Europeans far ahead of all other peoples in the capacity to wage war. The Europeans could tap mineral resources that most peoples did not even know existed, and European chemists mixed ever more deadly explosives. Advances in metallurgy made possible the mass production of light, mobile artillery pieces that rendered suicidal the massed cavalry or infantry charges that were the mainstay of Asian and African armies. Advances in artillery were matched by great improvements in hand arms. Much more accurate and faster firing, breech-loading rifles replaced the clumsy muzzle-loading muskets of the first phase of empire building. By the 1880s, after decades of experimentation, the machine gun had become an effective battlefield weapon. Railroads gave the Europeans the mobility of the swiftest African or Asian cavalry and the ability to supply large armies in
the field for extended periods of time. On the sea, Europe's already formidable advantages (amply illustrated in Figure 24.4) were increased by industrial transformations. After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, steam power supplanted the sail, iron hulls replaced wood, and massive guns, capable of hitting enemy vessels miles away, were introduced into the fleets of the great powers.

The dazzling array of new weaponry with which the Europeans set out on their expeditions to the Indian frontiers or the African bush made the wars of colonial conquest very lopsided. This was particularly true when the Europeans encountered resistance from peoples such as those in the interior of Africa or the Pacific islands (Maps 24.4 and 24.5). These areas had been cut off from most preindustrial advances in technology, and thus their peoples were forced to fight European machine guns with spears, arrows, and leather shields. One African leader, whose followers struggled with little hope to halt the German advance into east Africa, resorted to natural imagery to account for the power of the invaders' weapons:

On Monday we heard a shuddering like Leviathan, the voice of many cannon; we heard the roar like waves of the rocks and rumble like thunder in the rains. We heard a crashing like elephants or monsters and our hearts melted at the number of shells. We knew that we were hearing the battle of Pangi; the guns were like a hurricane in our ears.

Not even peoples with advanced preindustrial technology and sophisticated military organization, such as the Chinese and the Vietnamese, could stand against, or even comprehend, the fearful killing devices of the Europeans. In advising the Vietnamese emperor to give in to European demands, one of his officials, who had led the fight against the French invaders, warned, "Nobody can resist them. They go wherever they choose. . . . Under heaven, everything is feasible to them, save only the matter of life and death."

Despite the odds against them, African and Asian peoples often fiercely resisted the imposition of colonial rule. West African leaders, such as Samory and Ahmoudou Sekou, held back the European advance for decades. When rulers such as the Vietnamese emperors
MAP 24.4 The Partition of Africa Between c. 1870 and 1914

MAP 24.5 The Partition of Southeast Asia and the Pacific to 1914
refused to fight, local officials organized guerrilla resistance in defense of the indigenous regime. Martial peoples such as the Zulus in south Africa had the courage and discipline to face and defeat sizable British forces in conventional battles such as that at Isandlwana in 1879 (depicted in Figure 24.1). But conventional resistance eventually ended in defeat. The guerrilla bands in Vietnam were eventually driven to the ground. Even at Isandlwana, 3000 Zulus lost their lives in the massacre of 800 British and 500 African troops. In addition, within days of the Zulu victory, a tiny force of 120 British troops at a nearby outpost held off an army of thousands of Zulus.

Given European advantages in conventional battles, guerrilla resistance, sabotage, and in some cases banditry proved the most effective means of fighting the Europeans' attempts to assert political control. Religious leaders were often in the forefront of these struggles, which occurred across the globe, from the revivalist Ghost Dance religion in the late 19th-century American West to the Maji Maji uprisings in German East Africa in 1907 and the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1898. The magic potions and divine assistance they offered to protect their followers seemed to be the only way to offset the demoralizing killing power of the Europeans' weapons.

Patterns of Dominance: Continuity and Change

The Europeans' sense of their own uniqueness and superiority, heightened by their unparalleled scientific and technological achievements, led to major changes in their economic, social, and cultural relations with colonized peoples. The demand for Western learning on the part of the elite and middle classes of colonized peoples in Africa and Asia rose sharply, eventually creating a counterforce to European domination.

By the end of the 19th century, the European colonial order was made up of two different kinds of colonies. The greater portion of the European empires consisted of the so-called tropical dependencies in Africa, Asia, and the South Pacific. In these colonies, small numbers of Europeans ruled large populations of non-Western peoples. The tropical dependencies were a vast extension of the pattern of dominance the British, Dutch, and French had worked out earlier in India, Java, and African enclaves such as Senegal. Most of these colonies had been brought, often quite suddenly, under European rule in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Settlement colonies were the second major type of European overseas possession, but within this type there were different patterns of European occupation and indigenous response. One pattern was exhibited by colonies such as Canada and Australia, which the British labeled the White Dominions and are discussed in Chapter 23. White Dominions accounted for a good portion of the land area but only a tiny minority of the population of Britain's global empire. In these areas, as well as in some parts of Latin America, such as Chile and Argentina (see Chapter 25), the descendants of European settlers made up most of the population in colonies in which small numbers of native inhabitants had been decimated by diseases and wars of conquest. These patterns of European settlement and the sharp decline of the indigenous population were also found in the portions of North America that came to form the United States, which won its independence in the late 18th century.

In some of the areas where large numbers of Europeans had migrated, a second major variation on the settlement colony developed. Both in regions that had been colonized as early as North America, such as south Africa, and in most of the areas Europeans and Americans had begun to occupy only in the mid- or late 19th century, such as Algeria, Kenya, Southern Rhodesia, New Zealand, and Hawaii, key characteristics of tropical dependencies and the settler colonies were combined. Temperate climates and mild disease environments in these areas made it possible for tens or hundreds of thousands of Europeans to settle permanently. Despite the Europeans' arrival, large indigenous populations survived and then began to increase rapidly. As a result, in these settlement colonies, which had been brought under colonial rule for the most part in the age of industrialization, Europeans and indigenous peoples increasingly clashed over land rights, resource control, social status, and cultural differences.

Colonial Regimes and Social Hierarchies in the Tropical Dependencies

As the Europeans imposed their rule over tens of millions of additional Africans and Asians in the late 19th century, they drew heavily on precedents set in older colonies, particularly India, in establishing administrative, legal, and educational systems. As in India (or in Java and Senegal), the Europeans exploited longstanding ethnic and cultural divisions between the peoples of their new African or Asian colonies to put down resistance and maintain control. In west and east Africa in particular, they used the peoples who followed animist religions (those that focused on nature or ancestral spirits) or who had converted to Christianity against the Muslim communities that existed in most colonies. In official reports and censuses,
Capitalism and Colonialism

In the century since the European powers divided up much of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific into their colonial fiefdoms, historians have often debated how much this process had to do with capitalism. They have also debated, perhaps even more intensely, over how much economic benefit the European colonial powers and the United States were able to garner from their colonies. The table shown here compares Great Britain, the premier industrialized colonial power, with Germany, Europe, the United States, and key areas of the British Empire. For each Western society and colonized area, various indices of the amount or intensity of economic interaction are indicated. A careful examination of each set of statistics and a comparison among them should enable you to answer the questions that follow on the connections between capitalism and colonialism.

### Questions
To which areas did the bulk of British foreign investment flow? Which areas invested most heavily in Great Britain? With which areas did the British have the highest volume of trade? On which was it the most dependent for outlets for its manufactured goods? On which was it the most dependent for raw materials? On which for raw materials that had strategic importance? Do these patterns suggest that colonized areas were more or less important than independent nations; great power rivals, such as Germany and the United States; or settler colonies, such as Canada and Australia? On the basis of this information, would you say that Britain's "true" colonies (e.g., India, Malaya, sub-Saharan Africa) were vital to its economic well-being and defense? Which were the most important?

### British Investment Abroad on the Eve of the First World War (1913)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circa 1913</th>
<th>% of Total British Investment</th>
<th>% of Total British Imports</th>
<th>Main Products Exported to GB</th>
<th>% of Total British Exports</th>
<th>Main Products Imported fr. GB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>Manufactures</td>
<td>9.82</td>
<td>Manufactures, Textiles, Machinery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Europe</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Foodstuffs, Manufactures</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Textiles, Machinery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;White&quot; Dominions (ANZAC)</td>
<td>24.75</td>
<td>10.93</td>
<td>Wool, Foodstuffs, Ores, Textiles, Manufactures, Foodstuffs</td>
<td>12.28</td>
<td>Macros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>20.05</td>
<td>16.95</td>
<td>Cotton, Jute, Narcotics, Tea, Other Comestibles</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India (may include Caynon)</td>
<td>10.07</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>11.29</td>
<td>Coal, Comestibles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>Foodstuffs, Plant Oils, Ores, Timber Diamonds, Gold Wool, Other Ores</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Textiles, Machinery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>9.84</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colonial administrators strengthened existing ethnic differences by dividing the peoples in each colony into "tribes." The label itself, with its connotations of primitiveness and backwardness, says a great deal about general European attitudes toward the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa. In southeast Asia, the colonizers attempted to use hill-dwelling "tribal" minorities against the majority populations that lived in the lowlands. In each colonial area, favored minorities, often Christians, were recruited into the civil service and police.

As had been the case in India, Java, and Senegal, small numbers of Europeans lived mainly in the capital city and major provincial towns. From these urban centers they oversaw the administration of the African and Asian colonies, which was actually carried out at the local level mainly by hundreds or thousands of African and Asian subordinates. Some of these subordinates, normally those in positions of the greatest authority, were Western educated. But the majority were recruited from indigenous elite groups, including village leaders, local notables, and regional lords (Figure 24.5). In Burma, Malaya, and east Africa, thousands of Indian administrators and soldiers helped the British to rule new additions to their empire.

In contrast to Java and India, where schools were heavily state supported, Western-language education in Africa was left largely to Protestant and Catholic...
missionaries. As a result of deep-seated racial prejudices held by nearly all the colonizers, higher education was not promoted in Africa. As a result, college graduates were few in Africa compared with India, the Dutch East Indies, or even smaller Asian colonies such as Burma and Vietnam. This policy stunted the growth of a middle class in black Africa, a consequence that European colonial officials increasingly intended. As nationalist agitation spread among the Western-educated classes in India and other Asian colonies, colonial policymakers warned against the dangers posed by college graduates. According to this argument, those with advanced educations among the colonized aspired to jobs that were beyond their capacity and were disgruntled when they could not find employment.

Changing Social Relations Between Colonizer and Colonized

In both long-held and newly acquired colonies, the growing tensions between the colonizers and the rising African and Asian middle classes reflected a larger shift in European social interaction with the colonized peoples. This shift had actually begun long before the scramble for colonies in the late 19th century. Its causes are complex, but the growing size and changing makeup of European communities in the colonies were critical factors. As more and more Europeans went to the colonies, they tended to keep to themselves on social occasions rather than mixing with the "natives." New medicines and increasingly segregated living quarters made it possible to bring to the colonies the wives and families of government officials and European military officers (but not of the rank and file until well into the 20th century). Wives and families further closed the social circle of the colonized, and European women looked disapprovingly on liaisons between European men and Asian or African women. Brothels were off limits for upper-class officials and officers, and mixed marriages or living arrangements met with more and more vocal disapproval within the constricted world of the colonial communities and back home in Europe. The growing numbers of missionaries and pastors for European congregations in the colonies obviously strengthened these taboos.

Historians of colonialism once put much of the blame on European women for the growing social gap between colonizer and colonized. But recent research has shown that male officials bore much of the responsibility. They established laws restricting or prohibiting miscegenation and other sorts of interracial liaisons. They also pushed for housing arrangements and police practices designed specifically to keep social contacts between European women and the colonized at a minimum. These measures locked European women in the colonies into an almost exclusively European world. They had many "native" servants and "native" nannies for their children. But they rarely came into contact with men or women of their own social standing from the colonized peoples. When they did, the occasions were highly public and strictly formal.

The trend toward social exclusivism on the part of Europeans in the colonies and their open disdain for the culture of colonized peoples were reinforced by notions of white racial supremacy, which peaked in acceptance in the decades before World War I. It was widely believed that the mental and moral superiority of whites over the rest of humankind, usually divided into
Contry Images: The Colonizer Versus the Colonized on the "Civilizing Mission"

Each of the following passages from novels written in the colonial era expresses a different view of the reasons behind European colonization in Africa and Asia and its consequences. The first is taken from an adventure story written by John Buchan titled *Prester John*, a favorite in the pre-World War I decades among English schoolboys, many of whom would go on to be administrators in the colonies. Davie, the protagonist in the story, is a "tall, square-set lad ... renowned [for his] prowess at Rugby football." In the novel, Davie summarizes key elements of the "civilizing mission" credo by which so many European thinkers and political leaders tried to justify their colonization of most of the rest of the world.

I knew then [after his struggle to thwart a "native" uprising in South Africa] the meaning of the white man's duty. He has to take all the risks, reckon nothing of his life or his fortunes and well content to find his reward in the fulfillment of his task. That is the difference between white and black, the gift of responsibility, the power of being in a little way a king; and so long as we know this and practice it, we will rule not in Africa alone but wherever there are dark men who live only for the day and their own bellies. Moreover the work made me pitiful and kindly, I learned much of the untold grievances of the natives and saw something of their strange, twisted reasoning.

The second passage is taken from René Maran’s *Batouala*, which was first published in 1921 just after World War I. Though a French colonial official in west Africa, Maran was an African American, born in Martinique, who was highly sensitive to the plight of the colonized in Africa. Here his protagonist, a local African leader named Batouala, complains of the burdens rather than the benefits of colonial rule and mocks the self-important European agents of the vaunted civilizing mission.

But what good does it do to talk about it? It's nothing new to us that men of white skin are more delicate than men of black skin. One example of a thousand possible. Everyone knows that the whites, saying that they are “collecting taxes,” force all blacks of a marriageable age to carry voluminous packages from when the sun rises to when it sets. Those trips last two, three, five days. Little matter to them the weight of those packages which are called “sandoukous.” They don't sink under the burden. Rain, sun, cold? They don't suffer. They suffer no attention. And long live the worst weather, provided the whites are sheltered.

Whites fret about mosquito bites. They fear mason bees. They are also afraid of the "pran Kongo," the scorpion who lives, black and venomous, among decaying roofs, under rubble, or in the midst of debris.

In a word, everything worries them. As if a man worthy of the name would worry about everything which lives, crawls, or moves around him.

Questions What sorts of roles does Davie assume that the Europeans must play in the colonies? What benefits accrue to colonized peoples from their rule? What impression does he convey of the thinking and behavior of the colonized peoples? In what ways do Batouala’s views of the Europeans conflict with Davie’s assumptions about himself and other colonizers? Does Batouala agree with Davie’s conviction that colonial rule is beneficial for the Africans? What sorts of burdens does Batouala believe it imposes? According to Batouala, what advantages do Africans have over Europeans?

racial types according to the crude criterion of skin color, had been demonstrated by what were then thought to be scientific experiments. Because the non-Europeans supposedly inferior intelligence and weak sense of morality were seen as inherent and permanent, there seemed to be little motivation for Europeans to socialize with the colonized. There were also new reasons to fight the earlier tendency to adopt elements of the culture and lifestyle of subject peoples. As photos from the late 19th century reveal, stiff collars and ties for men and corsets and long skirts for women became obligatory for respectable colonial functionaries and their wives. The colonizers’ houses were filled with the overstuffed furniture and bric-a-brac that the late Victorians loved so dearly. European social life in the colonies revolved around the infamous clubs, where the only “natives” allowed were the servants. In the heat of the summer, most of the administrators and nearly all of the colonizers’ families retreated to hill stations, where the cool air and quaint architecture made it seem almost as if they were home again, or at least in a Swiss mountain resort.

Shifts in Methods of Economic Extraction

The relationship between the colonizers and the mass of the colonized remained much as it had been before.
District officers, with the help of many “native” subordinates, continued to do their paternal duty to settle disputes between peasant villagers, punish criminals, and collect taxes. European planters and merchants still relied on African or Asian overseers and brokers to manage laborers and purchase crops and handicraft manufactures. But late 19th-century colonial bureaucrats and managers tried to instruct African and Asian peasants in scientific farming techniques and to compel the colonized peoples more generally to work harder and more efficiently. These efforts involved an important extension of dependant status in the Western-dominated world economy.

A wide range of incentives was devised to expand export production. Some of them benefited the colonized peoples, such as cheap consumer goods that could be purchased with cash earned by producing marketable crops or working on European plantations. In many instances, however, colonized peoples were simply forced to produce, for little or no pay, the crops or raw materials that the Europeans wanted. Head and hut taxes were imposed that could be paid only in ivory, palm nuts, or wages earned working on European estates. Under the worst of these forced-labor schemes, such as those inflicted on the peoples of the Belgian Congo in the late 19th century, villagers were flogged and killed if they failed to meet production quotas, and women and children were held hostage to ensure that the men would deliver the products demanded on time (Figure 24.6).

As increasing numbers of the colonized peoples were involved in the production of crops or minerals intended for export markets, the economies of most of Africa, India, and southeast Asia were reorganized to serve the needs of the industrializing European economies. Roads and railways were built primarily to move farm produce and raw materials from the interior of colonized areas to port centers from which they could be shipped to Europe. Benefiting from Europe’s technological advances, mining sectors grew dramatically in most of the colonies. Vast areas that had previously been uncultivated or (more commonly) had been planted in food crops were converted to the production of commodities such as cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and hemp that were in great demand in the markets of Europe and, increasingly, the United States.

The profits from the precious metals and minerals extracted from Africa’s mines or the rubber grown in Malaya went mainly to European merchants and industrialists. The raw materials themselves were shipped to Europe to be processed and sold or used to make industrial products. The finished products were intended mainly for European consumers. The African and Asian laborers who produced these products were generally poorly paid, if they were paid at all. The laborers and colonial economies as a whole were steadily reduced to dependence on the European-dominated global market. Thus, economic dependence complemented the political subjugation and social subordination of colonized African and Asian peoples in a world order loaded in favor of the expansionist nations of western Europe.

**Settler Colonies in South Africa and the Pacific**

The settlement colonies where large numbers of Europeans migrated intending to make permanent homes exhibited many of the patterns of political control and economic exploitation found in the tropical dependencies. But the presence of substantial numbers of European settlers and indigenous peoples considerably altered the dynamic of political and social domination in this type of colony in comparison with societies like India or the Belgian Congo, where settlers were few and overwhelmingly outnumbered by colonized peoples.

![Image](image_url)
From Algeria to Argentina, settler colonies varied widely. But those settled in the 19th century, with the exception of Australia, tended to be quite different from those occupied in North and South America in the early centuries of European overseas expansion. In these early settler colonies, which included areas that eventually formed the nations of Canada, the United States, Argentina, and Chile, conquest and especially diseases transmitted unwittingly by incoming European migrants had devastating effects on the indigenous peoples, whose numbers in most of these regions were sparse to begin with. By the end of the 19th century in all of these areas, including Australia, which had been settled late but very thinly populated when the Europeans arrived, the surviving indigenous peoples had been displaced to the margins both geographically and socially. As discussed in Chapter 23, several of these older settler societies—and particularly the United States, Canada, and Australia—imported so many people, institutions, and beliefs from Europe that they now became a part of Western history.

In most of the settler colonies established in the 19th century, the indigenous peoples were both numerous when the Europeans arrived and, in north and sub-Saharan Africa at least, largely resistant to the diseases the colonizers carried with them. Even Pacific islands, such as New Zealand and Hawaii, which had been largely isolated until their first sustained contacts with the Europeans in the late-18th century, were quite densely populated by peoples who were able over time to build up immunities to the diseases the Europeans transmitted. As a result, the history of the newer settler colonies that were formed as the result of large-scale migrations from industrializing societies has been dominated by enduring competition and varying degrees of conflict between European settlers and indigenous peoples. As these divisions were hardened by ethnic, racial, and national identities, settlers also clashed with local representatives of the European powers and in many instances sought to forcibly gain independence from meddling missionaries and transient colonial officials.

South Africa

The initial Dutch colony at Cape Town was established to provide a way station where Dutch merchant ships could take on water and fresh food in the middle of their long journey from Europe to the East Indies. The small community of Dutch settlers stayed near the coast for decades after their arrival. But the Boers (or farmers), as the descendants of the Dutch immigrants in south Africa came to be called, eventually began to move into the vast interior regions of the continent. There they found a temperate climate in which they could grow the crops and raise the livestock they were accustomed to in Europe. Equally important, they encountered a disease environment they could withstand.

Like their counterparts in North America and Australia, the Boers found the areas into which they moved in this early period of colonization sparsely populated. Boer farmers and cattle ranchers enslaved the indigenous peoples, the Khoikhoi, while integrating them into their large frontier homesteads. Extensive miscegenation between the Boers and Khoikhoi produced the sizeable “colored” population that exists in South Africa today. The coloreds have historically been seen as distinct from the black African majority.

The arrival of the British overlords in south Africa in the early 19th century made for major changes in the interaction between the Boers and the indigenous peoples and transformed the nature of the settlement colony in the region. The British captured Cape Town during the wars precipitated by the French Revolution in the 1790s, when Holland was overrun by France, thus making its colonies subject to British attack. The British held the colony during the Napoleonic conflicts that followed, and they annexed it permanently in 1815 as a vital sea link to their prize colony, India. Made up mainly of people of Dutch and French Protestant descent, the Boer community differed from the British newcomers in almost every way possible. The Boers spoke a different language, and they lived mostly in isolated rural homesteads that had missed the scientific, industrial, and urban revolutions that transformed British society and attitudes. Most critically, the evangelical missionaries who entered south Africa under the protection of the new British overlords were deeply committed to eradicating slavery. They made no exception for the domestic pattern of enslavement that had developed in Boer homesteads and communities. By the 1830s, missionary pressure and increasing British interference in their lives drove a handful of Boers to open but futile rebellion, and many of the remaining Boers fled the Cape Colony.

In the decades of the Great Trek that followed, tens of thousands of Boers migrated in covered wagons pulled by oxen, first east across the Great Fish River and then over the mountains into the veld—the rolling grassy plains that make up much of the south African interior. In these areas, the Boers collided head-on with populous, militarily powerful, and well-organized African states built by Bantu peoples such as the Zulus and the Xhosa. The ever multiplying contacts that resulted transformed the settler society in south Africa from one where the indigenous peoples were marginalized, typical of those founded in the early centuries of expansion, into a deeply contested colonial realm akin to those established in the age of industrialization. Throughout the mid-19th century, the migrating Boers clashed again and again with Bantu peoples, who were determined to resist the seizure of the lands where they pastured their great herds of cattle and grew subsistence foods.
The British followed the Boer pioneers along the southern and eastern coast, eventually establishing a second major outpost at Durban in Natal. Tensions between the Boers and Britain remained high, but the imperial overlords were often drawn into frontier wars against the Bantu peoples, even though they were not always formally allied to the Boers.

In the early 1850s, the hard-liners among the Boers established two Boer Republics in the interior, named the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, which they tried to keep free of British influence. For more than a decade, the Boers managed to keep the British out of their affairs. But when diamonds were discovered in the Orange Free State in 1867, British entrepreneurs, including most famously Cecil Rhodes, and prospectors began to move in, and tensions between the Boers and the British began to build anew. In 1886-1881, these tensions led to a brief war in which the Boers were victorious. But the tide of British immigration into the republics rose even higher after gold was discovered in the Transvaal in 1885.

Although the British had pretty much left the Boers to deal as they pleased with the African peoples who lived in the republics, British miners and financiers grew more and more resentful of Boer efforts to limit their numbers and curb their civil rights. British efforts to protect these interlopers and bring the feisty and independent Boers into line led to the republics' declaration of war against the British in late 1899. Boer assaults against British bases in Natal, the Cape Colony, and elsewhere initiated the Boer War (1899-1902) that the British ultimately won but only at a very high cost in lives and resources. British guilt over their brutal treatment of the Boers—men, women, and children—during the war also opened the way for the dominance of this settler minority over the black African majority that would prove to be the source of so much misery and violence in South African history through most of the 20th century.

**Pacific Tragedies**

The territories the Europeans, Americans, and Japanese claimed throughout the South Pacific in the 19th century were in some cases outposts of true empire and in others contested settler colonies. In both situations, however, the coming of colonial rule resulted in demographic disasters and social disruptions of a magnitude that had not been seen since the first century of European expansion into the Americas. Like the Native American peoples of the New World, the peoples of the South Pacific had long lived in isolation. This meant that, like the Native Americans, they had no immunities to many of the diseases European explorers and later merchants, missionaries, and settlers carried to their island homes from the 1760s onward. In addition, their cultures were extremely vulnerable to the corrosive effects of outside influences, such as new religions, different sexual mores, more lethal weapons, and sudden influxes of cheap consumer goods. Thus, whatever the intentions of the incoming Europeans and Americans—and they were by no means always benevolent—their contacts with the peoples of the Pacific islands almost invariably ushered in periods of social disintegration and widespread human suffering.

Of the many cases of contact between the expansive peoples of the West and the long-isolated island cultures of the South Pacific, the confrontations in New Zealand and Hawaii are among the most informative. Sophisticated cultures and fairly complex societies had developed in each of these areas. In addition, at the time of the European explorers' arrivals, the two island groups contained some of the largest population concentrations in the whole Pacific region. Both areas were subjected to European influences carried by a variety of agents, from whalers and merchants to missionaries and colonial administrators. With the great expansion of European settlement after the first decades of contact, the peoples of New Zealand and Hawaii experienced a period of crisis so severe that their continued survival was in doubt. In both cases, however, the threatened peoples and cultures rebounded and found enduring solutions to the challenges from overseas. Their solutions combined accommodation to outside influences, usually represented by the large numbers of European settlers living in their midst, with revivals of traditional beliefs and practices.

**New Zealand** The Maori of New Zealand actually went through two periods of profound disruption and danger. The first began in the 1790s, when timber merchants and whalers established small settlements on the New Zealand coast. Maori living near these settlements were afflicted with alcoholism and the spread of prostitution. In addition, they traded wood and food for European firearms, which soon revolutionized Maori warfare—in part by rendering it much more deadly—and upset the existing balance between different tribal groups. Even more devastating was the impact of diseases, such as smallpox, tuberculosis, and even the common cold, that ravaged Maori communities throughout the north island. By the 1840s, only 80,000 to 90,000 Maori remained of a population that had been as high as 130,000 less than a century earlier. But the Maori survived these calamities and began to adjust to the imports of the foreigners. They took up farming with European implements, and they grazed cattle purchased from European traders. They cut timber, built windmills, and
traded extensively with the merchants who visited their shores. Many were converted to Christianity by the missionaries, who established their first station in 1814.

The arrival of British farmers and herdiers in search of land in the early 1850s, and the British decision to claim the islands as part of their global empire, again plunged the Maori into misery and despair. Backed by the military clout of the colonial government, the settlers occupied some of the most fertile areas of the north island. The Maori fought back, sometimes with temporary successes, but they were steadily driven back into the interior of the island. In desperation, in the 1860s and 1870s they flocked to religious prophets who promised them magical charms and supernatural assistance in their efforts to drive out the invaders. When the prophets also failed them, the Maori seemed for a time to face extinction. In fact, some British writers predicted that within generations the Maori would die out entirely.

The Maori displayed surprising resilience. As they built up immunities to new diseases, they also learned to use European laws and political institutions to defend themselves and preserve what was left of their ancestral lands. Because the British had in effect turned the internal administration of the islands over to the settlers' representatives, the Maori's main struggle was with the invaders who had come to stay. Western schooling and a growing ability to win British colonial officials over to their point of view eventually enabled the Maori to hold their own in their ongoing legal contests and daily exchanges with the settlers. Though New Zealand was included in the White Dominions of the British Empire, it was in fact a multiracial society in which a reasonable level of European and Maori accommodation and interaction has been achieved. Over time the Maori have also been able to preserve much of value in their precontact culture.

Hawaii The conversion of Hawaii to settler colony status followed familiar basic imperialist patterns but with specific twists. Hawaii did not become a colony until the United States proclaimed annexation in 1898, although an overzealous British official had briefly claimed the islands for his nation in 1843. Hawaii came under increasing Western influence from the late 18th century onward—politically at the hands of the British, and culturally and economically from the United States, whose westward surge quickly spilled into the Pacific Ocean.

Although very occasional contact with Spanish ships during the 16th and 17th centuries probably occurred, Hawaii was effectively opened to the West through the voyages of Captain James Cook from 1777 to 1779 (Figure 24.7). Cook was first welcomed as a god, partly because he had the good luck to land during a sacred period when war was forbidden. A later and less well-timed visit brought Cook's death as Hawaiian warriors tried to take over his ship for its metal nails. These humble objects were much prized by a people whose elaborate culture rested on a Neolithic technology and thus was without iron or steel. The Cook expedition and later British visits convinced a young Hawaiian prince, Kamehameha, that some imitation of Western ways could produce a unified kingdom under his leadership, replacing the small and warring regional units that had previously prevailed. A series of vigorous wars, backed by British weapons and advisors, won Kamehameha his kingdom between 1794 and 1810. The new king and his successors promoted economic change, encouraging Western merchants to establish export trade in Hawaiian goods in return for increasing revenues to the royal treasury.

Hawaiian royalty began to imitate Western habits, in some cases traveling to Britain and often building Western-style palaces. Two powerful queens advanced the process of change by insisting that traditional taboos subordinating women be abandoned. In this context, vigorous missionary efforts from Protestant New England, beginning in 1819, brought extensive conversions to Christianity. As with other conversion processes, religious change had wide implications. Missionaries railed against traditional Hawaiian costumes, insisting that

FIGURE 24.7 One of the most famous, but ultimately tragic, cross-cultural encounters of the late 18th century was between Captain James Cook and the crew of the ship he commanded and the peoples of Hawaii. In this painting depicting his arrival in the islands, Cook, a renowned English explorer, is welcomed enthusiastically by the Hawaiians, who may have believed he was the god, Lono, whose festival had just begun. When Cook was later killed due to less fortunate timing and misunderstandings with the Hawaiians, he was lamented throughout Europe as one of the great lost heroes of his age.
women cover their breasts, and a new garment, the muumuu, was made from homespun American nightgowns with the sleeves cut off. Backed by the Hawaiian monarchy, missionaries quickly established an extensive school system, which by 1831 served 50,000 students from a culture that had not previously developed writing.

The combination of Hawaiian interest and Western intrusion produced creative political and cultural changes, though at the expense of previous values. Demographic and economic trends had more insidious effects. Western-imported diseases, particularly sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis, had the usual tragic consequences for a previously isolated people. By 1850 only about 80,000 Hawaiians remained of a prior population of about half a million. Because of the Hawaiian population decline, it was necessary to import Asian workers to staff the estates. The first Chinese contract workers had been brought in before 1800; after 1868, a larger current of Japanese arrived. Westerners began to more systematically exploit the Hawaiian economy. Whalers helped create raucool seaport towns. Western settlers from various countries (called háoles by the Hawaiians) experimented with potential commercial crops, soon concentrating on sugar. Many missionary families, impatient with the subsistence habits of Hawaiian commoners, turned to leasing land or buying it outright. Most settlers did not entirely forget their religious motives for migrating to the islands, but many families who came to Hawaii to do good ended by doing well.

Literal imperialism came as an anticlimax. The abilities of Hawaiian monarchs declined after 1872, in one case because of disease and alcoholism. Under a weakened state, powerful planter interests pressed for special treaties with the United States that would promote their sugar exports, and the American government claimed naval rights at the Pearl Harbor base by 1887. As the last Hawaiian monarchs turned increasingly to promoting culture, writing a number of lasting Hawaiian songs but also spending money on luxurious living, American planters concluded that their economic interests required outright United States control. An annexation committee persuaded American naval officers to "protect American lives and property" by posting troops around Honolulu in 1893. The Hawaiian ruler was deposed, and an imperialist-minded U.S. Congress formally took over the islands in 1898.

As in New Zealand, Western control was combined with respect for Polynesian culture. Because Hawaiians were not enslaved and soon ceased to threaten those present, Americans in Hawaii did not apply the same degree of racism found in earlier relations with African slaves or Native Americans. Hawaii's status as a settler colony was further complicated by the arrival of many Asian immigrants. Nevertheless, Western cultural and particularly economic influence extended steadily, and the ultimate political seizure merely ratified the colonization of the islands.

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS
A European-Dominated World Order

The Industrial Revolution not only gave the Europeans and North Americans the motives but also provided the means for them to become the agents of the first civilization to dominate the entire world. By the end of the 19th century, the Western industrial powers had directly colonized most of Asia and Africa, and (as we shall see in Chapter 26) indirectly controlled the remaining areas through the threat of military interventions or the manipulation of local elites. Political power made it possible for the Europeans to use their already well-established position in world trade to build a global economic order oriented to their industrial societies.

In many ways the first phase of globalization in the most meaningful sense of the term occurred in the four or five decades before the outbreak of World War I in 1914. The communications and commercial networks that undergirded the European colonial order made possible an unprecedented flow of foods and minerals from Africa, Asia, and Latin America to Europe and North America. Western industrial societies provided investment capital and machines to run the mines, plantations, and processing plants in colonized areas. European dominance also made it possible to extract cheap labor and administrative services from subject populations across the globe. Western culture, especially educational norms—but also manners, fashions, literary forms, and modes of entertainment—also became the first to be extensively exported to virtually all the rest of the world. No culture was strong enough to remain untouched by the European drive for global dominance in this era. None could long resist the profound changes unleashed by European conquest and colonization.

The European colonizers assumed that it was their God-given destiny to remake the world in the image of industrial Europe. But in pushing for change within colonized societies that had ancient, deeply rooted cultures and patterns of civilized life, the Europeans often aroused resistance to specific policies and to colonial rule more generally. The colonizers were able to put down protest movements led by displaced princes and religious prophets. But much more enduring and successful challenges to their rule came, ironically, from the very leaders their social reforms and Western-language schools had done so much to nurture. These Asian and African nationalists reworked European ideas and resurrected
those of their own cultures. They borrowed European organizational techniques and used the communication systems and common language the Europeans had introduced into the colonies to mobilize the resistance to colonial domination that became one of the dominant themes of global history in the 20th century.

Further Readings


Of the many contributions to the debate over late 19th-century imperialism, some of the most essential are those by Y. C. M. Platt, Insker-Ulrich Wehler, William Appleman Williams, Jean Stengers, D. K. Fieldhouse, and Henri Brunswig, as well as the earlier works by Lenin and J. A. Hobson. Winfried Baumgarth’s *Imperialism* (1982) provides a good overview of the literature and conflicting arguments. Very different perspectives on the partition of Africa can be found in Jean Suret-Canale’s *French Colonialism in Tropical Africa, 1900–1945* (1971) and Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher’s *Africa and the Victorians* (1961).

Most of the better studies on the impact of imperialism and social life in the colonies are specialized monographs, but Percival Spear’s *The Nubads* (1962) is a superb place to start on the latter from the European viewpoint, and the works of Franz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and O. Mammoni provide many insights into the plight of the colonized. The impact of industrialization and other changes in Europe on European attitudes toward the colonized are treated in several works, including Philip Gurne, *The Image of Africa* (1964); William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans* (1980); and Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men* (1989). Ester Boserup, *Women’s Role in Economic Development* (1970), provides a good overview of the impact of colonization on African and Asian women and families, but it should be supplemented by more recent monographs on the position of women in colonial settings. One of the best of these is Jean Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia* (1989).

On the Web


The onset of British imperialism in India, including studies of key personalities, such as Robert Clive, and key events, such as the Battle of Plassey, receives careful treatment at http://www.inscnet.virginia.edu/southasia/History/British/Plassey.html. The life of Tipu Sultan, the Indian Muslim ruler who tried to defeat the British on their own terms, is examined at http://www.kamal.com/kalranga/indias/tipu.sultan.html.
