**European Imperialism in India**

In the early 1600s, the British East India Company won trading rights in India. By the mid-1800s, in controlled 3/5 of India. The British were able to conquer such a vast territory by exploiting the diversity of India. India was home to many people and cultures. Because of the dozens of different languages and traditions, Indians were unable to unite against the Europeans.

The East India Company’s main goal was to make money; however, they did make some improvements. They built roads; pushed to end slavery and the caste system; and improve the position of women. They also outlawed a Hindu tradition called sati, when a widow joins her husband in death by throwing herself on his funeral fire. While the British saw this as a positive change, many were angered by the change in tradition.

Other changes were put into place that angered Indians. First, sepoys, or Indian soldiers, were required to serve in India or overseas. For high-caste Hindus, overseas travel was against their religion. Second, they passed a law that allowed Hindu widows to remarry. Then, in 1857, the British issued new rifles to the sepoys. Troops were told to bite off the tips of the cartridges before loading them into the rifles. However, the cartridges were greased with animal fat. Ingesting these animals is forbidden to Hindus and Muslims. If they refused to load their rifles they were sent home without pay.

Britain saw India was a market and a source of raw materials. To accommodate their needs they built roads and railroads and transformed agriculture.

They also revised the legal system to promote justice. They also allowed some to be educated in British schools.

The changes Britain made greatly impacted India. Some were impressed by British power and technology and urged India to follow them. They wanted to preserve Indian culture but westernize to progress. They condemned traditions such as the caste system, child marriage, and sati.

However, by the early 1900s, protests and resistance to British rule increased. Some Indian nationalists urged that Indian languages and cultures be restored. More and more demanded independence.

**European Imperialism in China**

Prior to the 1800s, Chinese rulers placed strict limits on foreign traders. European merchants were restricted to a small area in Southern China. China sold them silk, porcelain, and tea in exchange for gold and silver. Under this arrangement China enjoyed a trade surplus. However, European merchants began trading opium with China. Soon, many had become addicted to the drug. The government tried to outlaw it but the British refused sparking the Opium War. China was easily defeated. After their defeat China was forced to pay reparations, open five new ports, and grant citizens extraterritoriality.

Coupled with their defeat in the Opium War, China was suffering from internal problems. The government did not properly maintain infrastructure (roads, irrigation, canals) and a population explosion placed a strain on resources. Peasants rebelled in the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864). The rebels won control of large parts of China and toppled the Qing dynasty.

By the mid-1800s, China was divided over the need to adopt western ways. They did not want to adopt new industries or accept Christianity. They saw western technology as dangerous because it threatened Confucian ways.

However, after their humiliating defeat against Japan in the Sino-Japanese War, reformers pushed to modernize China. A young emperor, Guang Xu, launched the Hundred Days of Reform. He attempted to streamline the government, encourage new industries, and improve schools and the military. Conservatives rallied against the effort and imprisoned the emperor.

More anger came with the presence of foreign troops in China. This led to the Boxer Uprising. The Chinese were yet again defeated and forced to accept western demands. China expanded economically developing new industries in mining, shipping, railroads, and banking. They also introduced a constitutional monarchy.

**European Imperialism in Japan**

After the Tokugawa shoguns gained power in the 1600s they closed Japan to foreigners and forbade Japanese to travel overseas. For more than 200 years, Japan developed in isolation. Although internal commerce expanded, economic changes caused severe strains in Japanese society. Merchants resented their place at the bottom of the social ladder because they had no political power despite their wealth. Peasants were forced to pay heavy taxes.

The government responded to discontent by emphasizing traditional values and promoting farming over commerce (business). These efforts had little success. To add to the problems in Japan, imperial powers began pushing their way into Asia. Japan knew it wouldn’t be long before they sought trading rights in Japan.

Eventually, with the help of Commodore Matthew Perry, the United State won trading rights and extraterritoriality. Foreign influence deepened the social and economic unrest in Japan. Instead of backing down to foreign powers, Japan began the Meiji Restoration, or “enlightened rule” time period. The new leaders set out to study western ways, adapt them to Japanese ways, and beat westerners at their own game.

The emperor created a constitution stating all citizens were equal above the law; created a legislature; and created departments to supervise finance, the army, the navy, and education. They also established a banking system, built railroads, improved ports, and organized telegraph and postal systems.

The constitution ended legal distinctions between classes, providing opportunities to more people. The government set up schools and universities and hired westerners to teach. Women were allowed to receive an education but could not participate in politics.

Japan also expanded its military. Japan defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War and defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. Japan also ruled Korea for 35 years proving they were now an imperial power.

**European Imperialism in Latin America**

During the Age of Imperialism, Latin American nations found their economies increasingly dependent on those of more developed countries. Britain and the United States invested heavily in Latin America.

One man, Simon Bolivar, hoped to create strong ties among the Latin American nations. They shared a common language, religion, and cultural heritage; however, feuds among leaders, geographic barriers, and nationalism prevented that and 20 nations emerged. These new nations wrote constitutions modeled on that of the United States, but they were still plagued with revolts, civil wars, and dictatorships.

Tensions were also increased between conservatives (those who defended the old order) and liberals (those who pushed for reform). Liberals backed laissez-faire economics, religious toleration, greater access to education, and freedom of the press.

Under colonial rule, Latin America had become economically dependent on Spain and Portugal. However, in the 1800s, investors from Britain, the United States, and other nations flooded the nation. With foreign capital, they were able to develop mining and agriculture and expand their economies. Foreign investors also built railroads and modernized ports to move their goods. While economies did improve it was limited.

In Mexico, some reformers pushed for greater change. In 1855, Benito Juarez seized power and opened an area of reform known as La Reforma. They set up a constitution and ended special privileges of the church. When he died, General Porfirio Diaz took power. Under his rule, Mexico made impressive economic progress. They built railroads, increased foreign trade, and developed new industries.

**European Imperialism in the Muslim World**

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

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

Nationalism also played a key role in the decay of these empires. Ethnic groups were continually pushing for separate homelands. The tensions between these groups increased. In the Ottoman Empire, nationalism led to the genocide of the Armenians, a Christian group accused of supporting Russian imperialism.

In addition to internal decay and stress, the old Muslim empires faced western imperialism. Through diplomacy and military threats, European powers won treaties giving them favorable trading terms. They then demanded special rights for Europeans living in Muslim lands. At times, European powers protected those rights, other times they took over an entire region. Britain and Russia competed fiercely to control Iran once oil was discovered.

The empires responded to the western imperial powers in various ways. Some tried to resist the Europeans, while others made efforts to westernize and modernize. Some nations built railroads, improved education, improved living conditions. However, these reforms increased tensions among groups who saw them as movement away from traditional values.