CHAPTER 33

Africa, the Middle East, and Asia in the Era of Independence

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Deep divisions between ethnic and religious groups remained when European rulers disappeared from their former colonies. Economic life was hampered by concessions made to the departing colonizers and by an international economy that favored industrialized nations. They lacked technological and management expertise, and had to face steady population growth and environmental degradation. Social unrest occurred due to corruption and breakdowns in traditional culture. Failure to solve the problems produced dissent and disturbances that shook existing regimes. Opponents included political and religious revivalist groups with widely different proposed solutions. Leaders adopted differing strategies to remain in power, but many were replaced by military officers who assumed dictatorial authority. In Iran, an anti-Western religious movement triumphed.

The Challenges of Independence. Successful nationalistic movements usually involved mass mobilization of peasants and urban workers drawn into national political life for the first time. Nationalist leaders promised an improved life once the Europeans departed. When those promises were unfulfilled, quarrels erupted among rival leaders, classes, and ethnic groups. The resulting instability further hampered development and deflected attention from the real problems hindering progress.

The Population Bomb. Population growth proved to be one of the most important barriers to economic advance after independence. Importation of New World food crops had fueled growth, and colonial rule reinforced the trends by combating local war and disease. Modern transportation systems helped to check famine. Population growth continued after independence, especially in Africa. The policies of the colonizers that limited industrial development resulted in few employment opportunities and an inability to produce necessities for rising populations. Most African and Asian nations have been slow to develop birth control programs in their male-dominated societies. Procreation demonstrates male virility, while the wish for male children is critical to female social standing. In Africa, some societies regard children as vital additions to lineage networks. High mortality rates formerly had encouraged families to have many children, a factor persisting when rates declined. Many African and Asian nations have recognized the dangers to their societies and now are running family planning programs.

Parasitic Cities and Endangered Ecosystems. Population growth contributed to massive migration to urban areas. Most cities lacked expanding industrial sectors able to utilize the people who were arriving, thus forming the urban underclass. They became a volatile factor in post-independence political struggles and forced governments to expend valuable resources to keep food and other staples available and cheap. The cities spread without planning and developed vast slums. Some nations concluded that only slums could provide necessary housing, and thus supplied them with electrical and sanitary systems. The result is the creation of parasitic, not productive, cities that diminish national resources by drawing supplies from already impoverished rural regions. The demands upon the latter have caused soil depletion and deforestation that upset fragile tropical ecosystems. Industrial pollution heightens the problem.
Women's Subordination and the Nature of Feminist Struggles in the Postcolonial Era. The constitutions of the new nations promised women, who had played an active role in independence struggles, legal, educational, and occupational equality. Post-independence reality was different as males continued to dominate political life in African and Asian countries. The few important female heads of state, such as Indira Gandhi, initially won support because of connections to powerful males. The inferior education of most women helps to ensure their continuance in secondary roles. The position of women is equally disadvantageous outside the political sphere. Obstacles to self-fulfillment and even survival are much greater than in democratic or Communist societies. Early marriages force many women to spend their youth and middle age caring for children at the expense of gaining education or following a career. Poor sanitation, lack of food, and male-centric customs endanger the lives of women and their children. Where legal rights exist, the lack of education and resources often block women’s chances to utilize them. The spread of religious fundamentalism usually suppresses women’s opportunities and rights.

Neocolonialism, Cold War Rivalries, and Stunted Development. The plans of the leaders of new nations for industrial development were failures. They had very limited industrial bases to begin with, and had little capital to stimulate progress. State revenues went to internal government needs. Necessary foreign exchange came from the export of cash crops and minerals. Prices of primary products, however, have fluctuated widely, and declined in relation to the prices of manufactured goods, since World War II. The gains achieved by nations producing oil were temporary. Many African and Asian leaders have blamed the legacy of colonialism for their economic problems. Neocolonialism certainly contributes to their difficulties, but it is not the sole contributing factor. New nations often have fallen to corrupt elites that rule at the expense of the mass of the population. Asian and African nations have sought aid from international organizations or industrial nations, but the price can be high in economic and political concessions. When the requirement for aid was a removal of state subsidies for food and other staple goods, regimes faced unrest or collapse.

In Depth: Artificial Nations and the Rising Tide of Communal Strife. Internal strife and the collapse of political systems have been common in the new Asian and African states. One reaction in the West is to assert that former colonial peoples are unfit to rule themselves and that many were better off under European rule. Others called for active intervention by the West and Japan. The responses do not give enough attention to the immense obstacles confronting the new nations, or to the harmful legacies of colonial rule. Western societies in the past also had to overcome disruptive social and political divisions. Nearly all new Asian and African states were artificially created by Europeans who gave minimal attention to the interests of the peoples involved. The imposed boundaries incorporated ethnic and religious groups that were often very hostile. The colonial rulers maintained power by divide-and-rule tactics. When the colonial era ended, the rulers left resolution of long-existing problems to new regimes unable to contain them. Internal strife and war between states resulted, and democratic regimes suffered. Economic improvement was hampered by military spending, while hostilities caused extensive human suffering.

Paths to Economic Growth and Social Justice. Whatever the source of blame for lack of post-independence development, leaders of new nations had to deliver on at least some of their promises if they were to continue in power. Different general efforts have achieved some success, but the majority of the population has rarely benefited. Often, new problems arise from partially successful endeavors.
Charismatic Populists and One-Party Rule. One of the least successful responses was the development of authoritarian rule under a charismatic leader. After 1957, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana attempted reform programs to improve the lives of Ghanaians. Internal rivals hampered initiatives, while Nkrumah’s turning to the Soviet bloc and its ideology drove off Western investors. The price of cocoa, the dominant export crop, fell sharply in the world market. Nkrumah, despite the difficulties, went ahead with his policies. Most failed. During the 1960s, he forcibly crushed all opposition groups and took dictatorial powers. Nkrumah tried to justify his actions by manipulating symbols supposedly drawn from Ghana’s past and by talk of a unique brand of African socialism. As the economy floundered, opposition increased; Nkrumah was deposed in 1966 and died in exile in 1972.

Military Responses: Dictatorships and Revolutions. There have been many military coups in Asian and African nations. The military often is one of the few societal groups resistant to ethnic and religious divisions, and it has the near monopoly of force. Soldiers may have the technical training lacking among civilian leaders. When military men were anti-Communist, they gained Western assistance. Once in power, many military men established repressive and corrupt regimes where limited resources were used to protect their authority. Some leaders attacked neighbors to divert attention from their failures. A few military men were different and attempted radical reform. Gamal Abdul Nasser took power in Egypt in 1952 as part of the Free Officers movement, formed during the 1930s by young nationalistic officers. They were allied for a long period with another opponent of the regime, the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, a teacher and scholar interested in scientific subjects and independence for Egypt. He was contemptuous of the wealthy Egyptian and European minority who flourished in the midst of general poverty. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded to remedy such problems. Although believers in fundamentalist Islam, its members worked for sweeping reforms. By the late 1930s, the Brotherhood intervened in politics through strikes, riots, and assassinations. Although the khedive’s men murdered al-Banna in 1949, the Brotherhood continued to be important. Egypt’s defeat in the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 and the continuing British occupation of the Suez Canal led to a successful coup in 1952 by the Free Officers. By 1954, all political parties, including the Muslim Brotherhood, had been disbanded and Nasser’s regime imposed broad social and economic reform. Land was redistributed to peasants, education became free through college, and government became the main employer. State subsidies lowered prices of food staples and five-year plans modeled on the Soviet Union were introduced. Foreign properties were seized or restricted. Nasser also began an active foreign policy designed to defeat Israel, forge Arab unity, and agitate socialist revolution. In 1956, he forced the British from the Suez Canal zone. Despite his good intentions, many of Nasser’s reforms failed.

Population growth offset economic advances, and Western capital was not replaced by Egypt’s communist supporters. Failed foreign adventures, including the disastrous Six-Day War with Israel in 1967, added to the regime’s problems. Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat, had to end many programs and turn to private initiatives. He came to terms with Israel, expelled the Russians, and opened Egypt to Western assistance. Sadat’s policies have been continued by his successor, Hosni Mubarak. None of the paths followed since 1952 have solved Egypt’s problems. Muslim fundamentalist movements proliferated; one group assassinated Sadat.

The Indian Alternative: Development for Some of the People. Indian leaders favored socialism and state intervention for reforming their society, but differed from the Egyptians in important ways. Indians have preserved civilian rule since independence. Despite the burden of overpopulation, India differed by possessing at independence a large industrial and scientific
sector, a developed communications system, and an important middle class. The early leaders of
the Indian National Congress were committed to social reform, economic development, and
preservation of democracy and civil rights. Despite a host of problems, India has remained the
world's largest working democracy. The first leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, mixed government and
private economic initiatives. Foreign investment from both the democratic and socialist bloes
was accepted. Private investment by farmers was at the heart of the Green Revolution.
Industrial and agrarian growth generated revenues for promoting education, family planning, and
other social measures. Despite its successes, India faces problems similar to other developing
nations because it lacks the resources to raise the living standards of most of its population. The
middle class has grown rapidly, but a majority of Indians has gained little. This result is partly
due to population growth, but other reasons include the continued domination of wealthy
landlords.

**Iran: Religious Revivalism and the Rejection of the West.** The Iranian Revolution directed
by Ayatollah Khomeini presented a fundamental challenge to the existing world order. It recalls
the religious fervor of the Mahdi's 19th-century movement in the Sudan by emphasizing
religious purification and the rejoining of religion and politics central to early Islam. Both
movements called for a return to a golden age and were directed against Western-backed
governments. The Mahdi and Khomeini claimed divine inspiration and sought to establish a
state based on Islamic precepts. Each wanted to spread their movement to wider regions.
Khomeini succeeded because of circumstances unique to Iran, a nation not formally colonized,
but divided into British and Russian spheres of interest. Iran thus lacked colonial bureaucratic
and communications infrastructures as well as a large Western-educated middle class.
Modernization policies, supported by Iran's oil wealth, were imposed by the regime of the
Pahlavi shahs. Advances resulted, but the majority of Iranians were alienated. The shah's
authoritarian rule offended the middle class; his ignoring of Islamic conventions roused religious
leaders who were influential with the mass of the people. Favoritism to foreign investors and a
few Iranian entrepreneurs angered bazaar merchants. Landholders were affronted by incomplete
land reform schemes that did not much benefit the rural poor. Urban workers at first secured
benefits, but then suffered from an economic slump. The military was neglected. When
revolution came in 1978, the shah was without support and left Iran. Khomeini then carried
through radical reform. Religious figures took over leadership and suppressed all opposition.
Strict implementation of Islamic law began and women's opportunities were restricted. Most of
the planned reforms halted when Iraq forced a war that lasted for 10 years and absorbed most
national resources. Iran finally accepted a humiliating peace in 1988. The war, plus the
consequences of internal repression and failed development efforts, left Iran in shambles.

**South Africa: The Apartheid State and Its Demise.** By the 1970s, South Africa's majority
African population remained under the rule of the country's European-ancestry population.
Afrikaner domination had been secured through victory in elections (Africans could not vote) of
their Nationalist Party in 1948. A vast system of laws was passed to create apartheid, a system
designed to ensure white domination of political power and economic resources. All aspects of
living were segregated. Special homelands were formed for the main "tribal" groups, thus
leaving whites with most of the richest, productive land. The overpopulated homelands were
reservoirs of cheap labor for white industry and agriculture. A brutal regime enforced the
system. All forms of African protest were illegal. Leaders were imprisoned, tortured, or killed.
Africans turned to guerrilla resistance during the 1960s without much immediate success. By the
1980s, the state system began cracking because of internal and external economic and political
pressures. Moderate Afrikaners led by F.W. de Klerk began dismantling apartheid. The release
CHAPTER 33

TIMELINE

Insert the following events into the timeline. This should help you to compare important historical events chronologically.

Free Officers overthrow Farouk in Egypt
Khomeini overthrows Shah of Iran
Nkrumah overthrown in Ghana
Saddam Hussein annexes Kuwait to Iraq
Nasser expels British from Suez Canal zone
Independence for Bangladesh
Israel-Palestine partition

—— 1952
—— 1956
—— 1966
—— 1972
—— 1979
—— 1990

Ghana established as an independent state
Independence of India, Pakistan
Foundation of the Indian National Congress Party
Independence in Algeria
Emergence of Wafd Party in Egypt
**TERMS, PEOPLE, EVENTS**

The following terms, people, and events are important to your understanding of the chapter. Define each one on a separate sheet of paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African National Congress</th>
<th>Muhammad Ali Jinna</th>
<th>Nelson Mandela</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab-Israeli War of 1948</td>
<td>Land Freedom Army</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biafra</td>
<td>Saddam Hussein</td>
<td>Kwame Nkrumah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. W. de Klerk</td>
<td>apartheid</td>
<td>lineage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>globalization</td>
<td>homelands</td>
<td>Afrikaner National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosni Mubarak</td>
<td>Jawaharlal Nehru</td>
<td>Indira Gandhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran-Iraq War</td>
<td>Walter Sisulu</td>
<td>Steve Biko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad Mossaddeq</td>
<td>mullahs</td>
<td>Montagu-Chelmsford reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood</td>
<td>Free Officers Movement</td>
<td>Anwar Sadat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Revolution</td>
<td>Ayatollah Khomeini</td>
<td>primary products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neocolonial economy</td>
<td>Gamal Abdul Nasser</td>
<td>religious revivalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan al-Banna</td>
<td>B.G. Tilak</td>
<td>National Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morley-Minto reforms</td>
<td>Lord Cromer</td>
<td>effendi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinshawai incident</td>
<td>Rowlatt Act</td>
<td>Mohandas Gandhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim League</td>
<td>Simon Commission</td>
<td>Secret Army Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of India Act</td>
<td>Leon Pinsker</td>
<td>Indian National Congress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zionism</td>
<td>Theodor Herzl</td>
<td>Wafd Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>négritude</td>
<td>Atlantic Charter of 1941</td>
<td>Jomo Kenyatta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAP EXERCISE

The following exercise is intended to clarify the geophysical environment and the spatial relationships among the important objects and places mentioned in the chapter. Locate the following places on the map.

Turkey
Palestine
Iraq

Lebanon
Egypt
Transjordan

How did the map of the Middle East change after World War I? Was the region likely to be more stable or volatile politically? Why?
MULTIPLE CHOICE. Choose the one alternative that best completes the statement or answers the question.

1. What happened in 1947 during the decolonization of India that established a precedent throughout the third world?
   A) The establishment of a democratic form of civilian government
   B) The partition of the subcontinent as a result of ethnic and religious strife
   C) The fall of the new government following a military coup
   D) The slaughter of whites by the Hindu population
   E) Large sums of money being contributed by the former colonial power to assist the new state

2. The continued relegation of the third world to economic dependency after decolonization is sometimes referred to as
   A) the “Malthusian principle.”
   B) Western supremacy.
   C) “neocolonialism.”
   D) global retardation.
   E) Social Darwinism.

3. One of the most common elements of African and Asian governments since decolonization is
   A) the creation of liberal democracies.
   B) military takeovers.
   C) Communism.
   D) effective industrialization.
   E) unity through religion.

4. Which of the following nations experienced a military takeover of its government?
   A) Kenya
   B) India
   C) Zambia
   D) Uganda
   E) South Africa

5. Gamal Abdul Nasser
   A) wanted to establish a self-sufficient democracy in Egypt.
   B) was assassinated in 1959 by the Egyptian secret police.
   C) was an Islamic fundamentalist whose movement closely resembled that of the Mahdistks.
   D) joined the Muslim Brotherhood after coming to power in 1959.
   E) participated in the Free Officer movement that toppled the Khedive Farouk in 1952.
6. Nasser’s greatest foreign policy coup was the
   A) destruction of Israel in 1957.
   B) expulsion of the British from the Suez Canal zone in 1956.
   C) elimination of Soviet influence in Egypt.
   D) conquest of Libya.
   E) alliance with Turkey.

7. In which of the following ways was India similar to Egypt following decolonization?
   A) Level of industrialization
   B) Emphasis on socialism and state intervention in the economy
   C) Military takeover of the government
   D) Size of the middle class
   E) Role of religion

8. Which of the following was typical of post-independence India?
   A) Military intervention in the government
   B) Controlled population growth
   C) Equitable land redistribution
   D) One-party control of the national government
   E) Religious unity

9. In which of the following ways was the Iranian Revolution of 1979 NOT like the 19th-century Mahdist revolt in the Sudan?
   A) Both placed emphasis on religious purification.
   B) Both Mahdi and Khomeini claimed to be divinely inspired.
   C) Both sought to establish states on Islamic precepts.
   D) Both revolutions were Sunni movements.
   E) Both strove to rejoin religion and politics.

10. From 1948, South African politics were dominated by
    A) the Nationalist Party.
    B) the black leadership of the Zulu nation.
    C) Nelson Mandela.
    D) a UN mandate government dominated by the United States.
    E) the African National Congress.

SHORT ANSWER. Write the word or phrase that best completes each statement or answers the question.

1. Backed by the Indians, the East Pakistanis won a war of secession that led to the establishment of the independent nation of ________ in 1972.
2. Iraq’s _______ justified his 1990 annexation of Kuwait with the argument that the oil-rich nation was an artificial creation of the British colonizers, who had seized land that originally belonged to Iraq.

3. Most third world countries depend on the export of two or three food or industrial crops such as cocoa, palm oil, coffee, jute, or minerals. Such export commodities are called _______ products.

4. No military leader was more radical with regard to social and economic reform than Egypt’s _______, who came to power in 1952.

5. Nasser’s greatest foreign policy coup came in 1956, when he rallied international opinion to oust the British from the _______ zone.

6. The _______ Dam project, which was the cornerstone of Nasser’s development drive, was something of a disaster.

7. Nasser’s successor, _______, had little choice but to dismantle the massive state apparatus that had been created.

8. In many respects, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 under _______ represents a throwback to the religious fervor of anticolonial movements such as the Mahdist revolt in Sudan.

9. Racial separation was organized on a grander scale in South Africa by the creation of numerous _______, each designated for the main ethno-linguistic groups within the black African population.

10. Black organizations like the _______ were declared illegal, and African leaders were shipped off to maximum-security prisons.

TRUE/FALSE. Write ‘T’ if the statement is true and ‘F’ if the statement is false.

1. The realities of the post-independence situation in virtually all new African and Asian nations made it impossible for nationalist leaders to fulfill the expectations they had aroused.

2. No African leaders have seriously suggested altering the unnatural boundaries established in the colonial era.

3. In every case when female heads of state in the third world entered politics and initially won political support because they were connected to powerful males.

4. The name of Ghana was taken from an ancient African nation that had been located in the same area as the Gold Coast.

5. An important aspect of the Green Revolution in India was that it did not favor only those cultivators with capital to invest.

6. Following Khomeini’s rise to power, veiling became mandatory for all women in Iran.
7. When their revolution succeeded, the Ibo people of eastern Nigeria proclaimed an independent state of Biafra in 1967.

8. Third world leaders have been quite ready to credit the legacy of colonialism and what they have termed the “neo-colonial” structure of the global economy for their development success.

9. During the first decades of its freedom, India had the good fortune to be governed by Jawaharlal Nehru and his allies in the Congress Party.

10. A desire to use no chemicals in agriculture is at the heart of the Green Revolution.