Shanfei lived in politically exciting times. The daughter of a wealthy Chinese landowner, she grew up amid luxury and opportunity. Shanfei, however, matured into a woman who rejected the rich trappings of her youth. Her formative years were marked by the unsettling political and cultural changes that engulfed the globe in the wake of the Great War. The rise of nationalism and communism in China after the revolution of 1911 and the Russian revolution in 1917 guided the transformation of Shanfei—from a girl ruled by tradition and privilege, she became an active revolutionary.

With the exception of Shanfei's father, the members of her family in Hunan province took in the new spirit of the first decades of the twentieth century. Her brothers returned from school with compelling ideas, including some that challenged the subordinate position of women in China. Shanfei's mother, to all appearances a woman who accepted her subservience to her husband, listened quietly to her sons as they discussed new views and then applied them to her daughter. She used every means at her disposal to persuade her husband to educate their daughter. He relented but still insisted that Shanfei receive an old-fashioned education and submit to foot binding and childhood betrothal.

When Shanfei was eleven years old, her father suddenly died. Shanfei's mother took the opportunity to rip the bandages off Shanfei's feet and send her to a modern school. In the lively atmosphere of her school, Shanfei bloomed into an activist. At sixteen she incited a student strike against the administration of her school, transferred to a more modern school, and became famous as a leader in the student movement. She broke tradition in both her personal and her political life.

In 1926 Shanfei abandoned her studies to join the Communist Youth, and she gave up her fiancé for a free marriage to the man she loved: a peasant leader in the communist movement.

The twists of fate that altered the destiny of Shanfei had parallels throughout the colonial world after 1914. Two major events, the Great War and the Great Depression, defined much of the turmoil of those years. Disillusion and radical upheaval marked areas in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In Japan the ravages of the Great Depression prompted militarist leaders to build national strength through imperial expansion. Latin American states worked to alter the economic domination of their

Shanfei (shahn-fahy)
"good neighbor" to the north, and African peoples suffered a contraction in living standards along with their imperial overlords.

European empires still appeared to dominate global relations, but the Great War opened fissures within the European and American spheres of influence. Beneath colonial surfaces, resistance to foreign rule and a desire for national unity were stronger than ever. This situation was especially true in India and China, but it also pertained to those in Africa and Latin America who struggled against the domination of imperial powers.

ASIAN PATHS TO AUTONOMY

The Paris peace settlement barely altered the prewar colonial holdings of Europeans, yet indirectly the Great War affected relations between Asian peoples and the imperial powers. In the decades following the Great War, nationalism developed into a powerful political force in Asia, especially in India and China. Achieving the twin ideals of independence from foreign powers and national unity became a dream of intellectuals and a goal of new political leaders. In their search for new identities untainted by the dependent past, Asians transformed and adapted European ideologies such as nationalism and socialism to fit indigenous traditions. In that sense, peoples in India and China followed in the footsteps of Japan, which had already adapted European and American economic strategies to its own advantage. Still dissatisfied with its status, Japan used militarism and imperial expansion in the interwar years to enhance its national identity.

Indian, Chinese, and Japanese societies underwent a prolonged period of disorder and struggle until a new order emerged. In India the quest for national identity focused on gaining independence from British rule but was complicated by sectarian differences between Hindus and Muslims. The Chinese path to national identity was fraught with foreign and civil war as two principal groups—the Nationalist and Communist parties—contended for power. Japanese militarists made China's quest for national unity more difficult, because Japan struggled to overcome its domestic problems through conquests that focused on China.

India's Quest for Home Rule

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Indian nationalism threatened the British empire's hold on India. The construction of a vast railway network across India to facilitate the export of raw materials contributed to national unity by bringing the people of the subcontinent within easy reach of one another. Moreover, the British had created an elite of educated Indian administrators to control and administer the vast subcontinent. A European system of education familiarized this elite with the political and social values of European society. Those values, however—democracy, individual freedom, and equality—were the antithesis of empire, and they promoted nationalist movements.

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS Of all the associations dedicated to the struggle against British rule, the most influential was the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885. This organization, which enlisted the support of many prominent Hindus and Muslims, at first stressed collaboration with the British to bring self-rule to India, but after the Great War the congress pursued that goal in opposition to the British.
During the Great War, large numbers of Indians rallied to the British cause, and nationalist movements remained inactive. But as the war led to scarcities of goods and food, social discontent with British rule led to an upsurge in nationalist activity. Indian nationalists also drew encouragement from ideas emanating from Washington, D.C., and St. Petersburg. They read Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, which called for national self-determination, and Lenin’s appeal for a united struggle by proletarians and colonized peoples. The British government responded to increased nationalism in this period with a series of repressive measures that precipitated a wave of violence and disorder throughout the Indian subcontinent.

Mohandas K. Gandhi

Into this turmoil stepped Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948), one of the most remarkable and charismatic leaders of the twentieth century. Gandhi grew up in a prosperous and pious Hindu household, married at thirteen, and left his hometown in 1888 to study law in London. In 1893 he went to South Africa to accept a position with an Indian firm, and there he quickly became involved in organizing the local Indian community against a system of racial segregation that made Indians second-class citizens. During the twenty-two years he spent in South Africa, Gandhi embraced a moral philosophy of tolerance and nonviolence (abimsha) and developed the technique of passive resistance that he called satyagraha (“truth and firmness”). His belief in the virtue of simple living led him to renounce material possessions, dress in the garb of a simple Indian peasant, and become a vegetarian.

Returning to India in 1915, Gandhi became active in Indian politics and succeeded in transforming the Indian National Congress from an elitist institution into a mass organization. Gandhi’s unique mixture of spiritual intensity and political activism appealed to a broad section of the Indian population, and in the eyes of many he quickly achieved the stature of a political and spiritual leader, their Mahatma, or “great soul.” Although he was himself a member of the merchant caste, Gandhi was determined to eradicate the injustices of the caste system. He fought especially hard to improve the status of the lowest classes of society, the casteless Untouchables, whom he called harijans (“children of God”).

Under Gandhi’s leadership the Congress launched two mass movements: the non-cooperation movement of 1920–1922 and the civil disobedience movement of 1930. Convinced that economic self-sufficiency was a prerequisite for self-government, Gandhi called on the Indian people to boycott British goods and return to wearing homespun cotton clothing. Gandhi furthermore admonished his people to boycott institutions operated by the British in India, such as schools, offices, and courts. Despite Gandhi’s cautions against the use of force, violence often accompanied the protest movement. The British retaliated with arrests. That the British authorities could react brutally was shown in 1919 in the city of Amritsar, where colonial troops fired on an unarmed crowd, killing 379 demonstrators.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

(moh-luhn-DAHSH kuhr-uhm-CHUND GAHN-dee)

abimsha (uh-HIM-sah)

satyagraha (suh-TYA-gruh-hah)

harijan (har-i-jahn)
After Mohandas Gandhi completed his study of law in England, he moved to British South Africa to serve the colony's large Indian population. While there, he became outraged at British laws that discriminated against Indians. As part of his strategy of resistance to such discrimination, Gandhi developed the idea of satyagraha, or soul-force. Satyagraha sought justice through love rather than violence, and its followers disobeyed unjust laws through nonviolent resistance. In 1908, Gandhi articulated his ideas about satyagraha in a pamphlet called Hind Swaraj (Indian Home Rule), which took the form of a dialogue between a reader and an editor.

Chapter XVII: Passive Resistance
Reader: Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called soul-force or truth-force? No instance seems to have happened of any nation having risen through soul-force. I still think that the evil-doers will not cease doing evil without physical punishment.
Editor: ...The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love. Therefore the greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the success of this force is to be found in the fact that, in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on. ...History does not and cannot take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. ...Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.
Reader: According to what you say, it is plain that instances of the kind of passive resistance are not to be found in history. It is necessary to understand this passive resistance more fully. ...
Editor: Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me; I do not like it. If, by using violence, I force the government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes.

Reader: From what you say, I deduce that passive resistance is a splendid weapon of the weak but that, when they are strong, they may take up arms.
Editor: That is gross ignorance. Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms. How, then, can it be considered only a weapon of the weak? Physical-force men are strangers to the courage that is requisite in a passive resister. ...A passive resister will say he will not obey a law that is against his conscience, even though he may be blown to pieces at the mouth of a cannon.

What do you think? Wherein is courage required—in blowing others to pieces from behind a cannon or with a smiling face to approach a cannon and to be blown to pieces? Who is the true warrior—he who keeps death always as a bosom-friend or he who controls the death of others? Believe me that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister.

This, however, I will admit; that even a man, weak in body, is capable of offering this resistance. One man can offer it just as well as millions. Both men and women can indulge in it. It does not require the training of an army; it needs no jiu-jitsu. Control over the mind is alone necessary, and, when that is attained, man is free like the king of the forest, and his very glance withers the enemy.

Why, according to Gandhi, is soul-force stronger than physical force?


THE INDIA ACT In the face of sustained nationalist opposition and after years of hesitation, the British parliament enacted the Government of India Act, which gave India the institutions of a self-governing state. The legislation allowed for the establishment of autonomous legislative bodies in the provinces of British India, the creation of a bicameral (two-chambered) national legislature, and the formation of an executive arm under the control of the British government. Upon the urging of Gandhi, the majority of Indians approved the measure, which went into effect in 1937.
The India Act proved unworkable, however, because India’s six hundred nominally sovereign princes refused to cooperate and because Muslims feared that Hindus would dominate the national legislature. Muslims had reason for concern because they already faced economic control by Hindus, a fact underlined during the Great Depression, which had a severe impact on India. Indeed, since Muslims constituted the majority of indebted tenant farmers, during the Great Depression they found themselves increasingly unable to pay rents and debts to their Hindu landlords. As a result, many Muslims felt that they had been economically exploited by Hindus, which exacerbated tensions between the two groups. Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), an eloquent and brilliant lawyer who headed the Muslim League—a separate nationalist organization founded in 1906 that focused on the needs of Indian Muslims—warned that a unified India represented nothing less than a threat to the Muslim faith and its Indian community. In place of one India, he proposed two states, one of which would be the “land of the pure,” or Pakistan. Jinnah’s proposal reflected an uncomfortable reality that society in India was split by hostility between Hindus and Muslims.

**China’s Search for Order**

As Shafei’s life story suggested, during the first half of the twentieth century China was in a state of almost continual revolutionary upheaval. The conflict’s origins dated from the nineteenth century, when the Chinese empire came under relentless pressure from imperialist powers (see chapter 28). As revolutionary and nationalist uprisings gained widespread support, a revolution in 1911 forced the Xuantong emperor, still a child (also known as Puyi), to abdicate. The Qing empire fell with relative ease. Dr. Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), a leading opponent of the old regime, became the first provisional president of what would become the new Chinese republic in 1912.

**THE REPUBLIC** Yet the revolution of 1911 did not establish a stable government. Indeed, the republic soon plunged into a state of political anarchy and economic disintegration marked by the rule of warlords, who were disaffected generals from the old imperial Chinese army. Although the central government in Beijing ran the post office and a few other services, the warlords established themselves as provincial rulers. Because the warlords were responsible for the neglect of irrigation projects, for the revival of the opium trade, and for the decline of economic investments, they contributed to the deterioration and instability of Chinese society. Yet warlords were just one symbol of the disintegration of the political order. The relationship between native authority and foreign powers was another. Since the nineteenth century, a collection of treaties, known in China as the unequal treaties, had established a network of foreign control over the Chinese economy that permitted foreigners to intervene in Chinese society. Foreigners did not control the state, but through their privileges they impaired its sovereignty.

**CHINESE NATIONALISM** After the Great War, nationalist sentiment developed rapidly in China. Youths and intellectuals, who had looked to Europe and the United States as models for Chinese reform, eagerly anticipated the results of the 1919 peace conference in Paris. They expected the U.S. government to support the termination of the treaty system and the restoration of full Chinese sovereignty. Instead, the peacemakers approved increasing Japanese interference in China. That decision gave rise to the May Fourth movement. Spearheaded by students and intellectuals in China’s urban areas, all classes of Chinese protested against foreign, especially Japanese, interference. In speeches, newspapers, and novels, the movement’s leaders—including student leaders such as Shafei—pledged themselves to rid China of imperialism and reestablish national unity.

**Muhammad Ali Jinnah** (moo-HAM-id ah-lee JIN-uh)

**Xuantong** (soo-ahn-tohng)
Disillusioned by the cynical self-interest of the United States and the European powers, some Chinese became interested in Marxist thought and the social and economic experiments under way in the Soviet Union. The anti-imperialist rhetoric of the Soviet leadership prompted the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Shanghai in 1921. Among its early members was Mao Zedong (1893–1976), a former teacher and librarian who viewed a Marxist-inspired social revolution as the cure for China's problems.

**SUN YATSEN** The most prominent nationalist leader at the time, Sun Yat-sen, did not share the communists' enthusiasm for a dictatorship of the proletariat. Rather, Sun's basic ideology called for elimination of special privileges for foreigners, national reunification, economic development, and a democratic republican government based on universal suffrage. To realize those goals, he was determined to bring the entire country under the control of his Nationalist People's Party, or Guomindang. In 1923 members of the small CCP began to augment the ranks of the Guomindang, and by 1926 they made up one-third of the Guomindang's membership. Both organizations availed themselves of the assistance offered

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**Mao Zedong** (mow zuh-doong)

**Guomindang** (GWOH-mihn-dahng)

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Nanjing became the capital of the nationalist government, while Mao made his CCP headquarters in Yan'an.
by the Soviet Union, whose advisors helped reorganize the Guomindang and the CCP into effective political organizations. In the process, the Soviets bestowed upon China the basis of a new political system.

**CIVIL WAR** After the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, the leadership of the Guomindang fell to Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek, 1887–1975), a young general who had been trained in Japan and the Soviet Union. Before long, Jiang Jieshi launched a political and military offensive, known as the Northern Expedition, that aimed to unify the nation and bring China under Guomindang rule. Toward the end of his successful campaign, in 1927, Jiang Jieshi brutally and unexpectedly turned against his former communist allies, bringing the alliance between the Guomindang and the CCP to a bloody end. In the following year, nationalist forces occupied Beijing, set up a central government in Nanjing, and declared the Guomindang the official government of a unified and sovereign Chinese state. Meanwhile, the badly mauled communists retreated to a remote area of southeastern China to reconstitute and reorganize their forces.

The nationalist government had to deal with many concerns, but Chinese leaders evaded one major global crisis—the Great Depression. Foreign trade in such items as tea and silk, which did decline, made up only a small part of China’s economy, which was otherwise dominated by its large domestic markets. Although the new government in China generally avoided having to contend with global economic devastation, it did have to confront three major problems during the 1930s. First, the nationalists actually controlled only part of China, leaving the remainder of the country in the hands of warlords. Second, in the early 1930s communist revolution was still a major threat. Third, the Guomindang faced increasing Japanese aggression.

In dealing with those problems, Jiang Jieshi gave priority to eliminating the CCP. No longer able to ward off the relentless attacks of nationalist forces, the communists took flight in October 1934 to avoid annihilation, and some eighty-five thousand troops and auxiliary personnel of the Red Army began the legendary Long March, an epic journey of 10,000 kilometers (6,215 miles). After traveling across difficult terrain and fighting for survival against hunger, disease, and Guomindang forces, those marchers who had not perished arrived in a remote area of Shaanxi province in northwestern China in October.

Jiang Jieshi (jyahng jeh-she)

**Traditions**

**TRADITIONS IN NATIONALISM AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES IN ASIA, AFRICA, AND LATIN AMERICA.** During the 1920s and 1930s, colonized peoples in Asia and Africa created nationalist, anticolonial movements that were partly inspired by Western ideals of freedom and democracy or by revolutionary Marxism. How did Asian and African nationalists modify these Western-inspired ideals with local cultural and political traditions to create unique movements of their own?

Jiang Jieshi and Mao Zedong. Adversaries in the struggle for power in China: at left, Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek); at right, Mao Zedong.
1935 and established headquarters at Yan’an. During the Long March, Mao Zedong emerged as the leader and the principal theoretician of the Chinese communist movement. He came up with a Chinese form of Marxist-Leninism, or Maoism, an ideology grounded in the conviction that peasants rather than urban proletarians were the foundation for a successful revolution in China.

**Imperial and Imperialist Japan**

After the Great War, Japan achieved great-power status and appeared to accept the international status quo that the major powers fashioned in the aftermath of war. After joining the League of Nations as one of the “big five” powers, in 1922 the Japanese government entered into a series of international agreements whereby Japan agreed to limit naval development, pledged to evacuate Shandong province of China, and guaranteed China’s territorial integrity. In 1928 the Japanese government signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which renounced war as an instrument of national policy. Concerns about earlier Japanese territorial ambitions in China receded from the minds of the international community.

Japan’s limited involvement in the Great War gave a dual boost to its economy. Japanese businesses profited from selling munitions and other goods to the Allies throughout the war, and they gained a bigger foothold in Asia as the war led Europe’s trading nations to neglect Asian markets. Economic prosperity was short-lived, however, as the postwar economy of Japan faced a series of recessions that culminated in a giant economic slump caused by the Great Depression.

Economic contraction set the stage for social unrest and radical politics. Public demands for sweeping political and social reforms figured prominently in Japanese domestic politics throughout the 1920s. Yet conservatives blocked any major advances beyond the suffrage law of 1925, which established universal male suffrage. By the early 1930s an increasingly frustrated and disenchanted public blamed its government for the nation’s continuing economic problems. Right-wing political groups called for an end to party rule, while xenophobic nationalists argued for the preservation of a unique Japanese culture and the eradication of “Western” influences. A campaign of assassinations, targeting political and business leaders, culminated in the murder of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855–1932).

Politicians who supported Japan’s role in the international industrial-capitalist system faced increasing opposition from those who were inclined toward a militarist vision of a self-sufficient Japan that would dominate East Asia. Indeed, the hardships of the depression only seemed to discredit the internationalist position and make the militarist vision of self-sufficiency more attractive.

Meanwhile, militarists were setting their sights on expansion in China, where political instability made it an inviting target. In 1931 Japan’s military forces began their campaign of expansion in Manchuria, which had historically been Chinese territory. The choice of Manchuria was no accident: the Japanese had significant economic interests there by the twentieth century, not least of which was the Manchurian Railroad, which they had built in 1906 and continued to maintain.

**THE MUKDEN INCIDENT** On the night of 18 September 1931, Japanese troops used explosives to blow up a few feet of rail on the Japanese-built South Manchuria Railway north of Mukden, then accused the Chinese of attacking their railroad. This “Mukden incident” became the pretext for war between Japanese and Chinese troops. Although the civilian government in Japan tried to halt this military incursion, by 1932 Japanese troops controlled all of Manchuria. The Japanese established a puppet state called Manchukuo, but in reality Japan had absorbed Manchuria into its empire, challenged the international peace system, and began a war. In response to the Manchurian invasion, the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) leader Jiang Jieshi appealed to the League of Nations. Inukai Tsuyoshi (ee-NO-kigh ts-yo-shi)
to halt Japanese aggression. The league eventually called for the withdrawal of Japanese forces and for the restoration of Chinese sovereignty. The Japanese responded by leaving the league, and nothing was done to stop the aggression. That reaction set the pattern for future responses to the actions of expansionist nations like Japan. Embarking on conquests in east Asia, Japanese militarists found a sure means of promoting a new militant Japanese national identity. They also helped provoke a new global conflagration.

**AFRICA UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION**

The Great War and the Great Depression similarly complicated quests for national independence and unity in Africa. The colonial ties that bound African colonies to European powers ensured that Africans became participants in the Great War, willing or not. European states transmitted their respective animosities and their military conflicts to African soil and drew on their colonies for soldiers and carriers. The forced recruitment of military personnel led some Africans to raise arms against their colonial overlords, but Europeans generally prevailed in putting down those uprisings. African contributions to the Great War and the wartime rhetoric of self-determination espoused by U.S. president Woodrow Wilson led some Africans to anticipate a different postwar world. The peacemakers in Paris, however, ignored African pleas for social and political reform.

In the decades following the peace settlement of 1919, colonialism grew stronger on the African continent as European powers focused on the economic exploitation of their colonies. The imposition of a rapacious form of capitalism destroyed the self-sufficiency of many African economies, and African economic life became more thoroughly enmeshed in the global economy. During the decades following the Great War, African intellectuals searched for new national identities and looked forward to the construction of nations devoid of European domination and exploitation.

**Africa and the Great War**

The Great War had a profound impact on Africa. The conflict of 1914–1918 affected Africans because many belligerents were colonial powers with colonies in Africa. Except for Spanish-controlled territories, which remained neutral, every African colony as well as the two independent states of Ethiopia and Liberia took sides in the war.

**WAR IN AFRICA** Although Germany had been a latecomer in the race for overseas colonies, German imperialists had managed to carve out an African empire in Togo, Cameroon, German Southwest Africa, and German East Africa. Thus, one immediate consequence of war for Africans in 1914 was that the Allies invaded those German colonies. Badly outnumbered by French and British-led troops, the Germans could not hope to win the war in Africa. Yet, by resorting to guerrilla tactics, some fifteen thousand German troops tied up sixty thousand Allied forces and postponed defeat until the last days of the war.

More than one million African soldiers participated directly in military campaigns, in which they witnessed firsthand the spectacle of white people fighting one another. The colonial powers also encouraged their African subjects in uniforms to kill the enemy “white man,” whose life until now had been sacrosanct because of his skin color. Even more men, as well as women and children, served as carriers to support European armies, many of them serving involuntarily. In French colonies, military service became compulsory for all males between the ages of twenty and twenty-eight, and by the end of the war over 480,000 colonial troops had served in the French army. In British colonies, a compulsory service order in 1915 made all men aged eighteen to twenty-five liable for military service. In the Congo, the Belgians impressed more than half a million porters. Ultimately, more than 150,000 African soldiers and carriers lost their lives, and many suffered injury or became disabled.
CHALLENGES TO EUROPEAN AUTHORITY  While the world's attention was focused on the slaughter taking place in Europe between 1914 and 1918, Africans mounted bold challenges to European colonial authority. Indeed, opportunities for rebellion and protest increased when the already thin European presence in Africa grew even thinner as commercial and administrative personnel left the colonies in large numbers to serve the war effort. The causes of those revolts varied. In some cases, as in Libya, revolts simply represented continued resistance to European rule. In other instances, religious opposition manifested itself in uprisings. The Mumbo cult in Kenya, for example, targeted Europeans and their Christian religion, declaring that "all Europeans are our enemies, but the time is shortly coming when they will disappear from our country." The major inspiration for most revolts, however, stemmed from the resentment and hatred engendered by the compulsory conscription of soldiers and carriers. No matter the cause, colonial authorities responded ruthlessly to put down the revolts.

The Colonial Economy

The decades following the Great War witnessed a thorough transformation of African economic life. Colonial powers pursued two key economic objectives in Africa: they wanted to make sure that the colonized paid for the institutions—bureaucracies, judiciary, police, and military forces—that kept them in subjugation; and they developed export-oriented economies characterized by the exchange of raw materials or cash crops for manufactured goods from abroad. In pursuit of those goals, colonial authorities imposed economic structures that altered, subordinated, or destroyed African economies by making them increasingly dependent on a European-dominated global economy. One result of this integration was that global economic downturns could spell disaster for African economies. During the Great Depression, for example, as international markets for primary products shrank, prices for African raw materials and cash crops dropped sharply and trade volume often fell by half. This, in turn, wreaked havoc on economies that had been geared almost completely toward the production of a single resource or crop.

INFRASTRUCTURE  Part of the process of global economic integration involved investment in infrastructures such as port facilities, roads, railways, and telegraph wires. Efficient transportation and communication networks not only facilitated conquest and rule but also linked the agricultural or mineral wealth of a colony to the outside world. Although Europeans later claimed that they had given Africa its first modern infrastructure, Europeans and their businesses were usually its main beneficiaries. Even though Africans paid for the infrastructure with their labor and taxes, Europeans designed such systems with their own needs, rather than the needs of Africans, in mind.

FARMING AND MINING  Colonial taxation was used as an important tool to drive Africans into the labor market. To earn the money to pay colonial taxes, African farmers had to become cash-crop farmers or seek wage labor on plantations and in mines. In most colonies, farmers specialized in one or two crops destined for export to the country governing them, among them peanuts from Senegal and northern Nigeria, cotton from Uganda, cocoa from the Gold Coast, rubber from the Congo, and palm oil from the Ivory Coast and the Niger delta. In areas with extensive white settlement, such as in Kenya, Rhodesia, and South Africa, settlers expropriated African lands and grew cash crops—using African labor—their own. In British-controlled Kenya, for example, four thousand white farmers seized seven million acres in the Kikuyu highlands, the colony's richest land.

In South Africa, the government reserved 88 percent of all land for whites, who made up just 20 percent of the total population. Colonial mining enterprises geared toward the extraction of copper, gold, and diamonds loomed large in parts of central and southern Africa. These enterprises depended on the labor of African men who were recruited from rural areas and were paid minimal wages. Such recruitment practices set in motion a vast pattern of labor migration that persisted throughout the twentieth century. In many cases,
the absence of male labor and the payment of minimal wages had the effect of impoverishing rural areas, where the women left behind could not grow enough food to feed their children and elderly relatives.

**Labor Practices**  Where taxation failed to create a malleable native labor force, colonial officials resorted to outright forced labor and barely disguised variants of slavery. Indeed, the construction of railways and roads often depended on forced-labor regimes. When the French undertook the construction of the Congo-Ocean railway from Brazzaville to the port at Point-Noir, for example, they rounded up some ten thousand workers annually. Within a few years, between fifteen and twenty thousand African laborers had perished from starvation, disease, and maltreatment. A white settler in Kenya candidly expressed the view held by many colonial administrators: “We have stolen his land. Now we must steal his limbs. Compulsory labor is the corollary to our occupation of the country.”

**African Nationalism**  In the decades following the Great War, many Africans were disappointed that their contributions to that conflict went unrewarded. In place of anticipated social reforms or some degree of greater political participation came an extension and a consolidation of the colonial system. Nevertheless, ideas concerning self-determination, articulated by U.S. president Woodrow Wilson during the war, gained adherents among a group of African nationalists. Those ideas influenced the growth of African nationalism and the development of incipient nationalist movements. An emerging class of native urban intellectuals, frequently educated in Europe, became especially involved in the formation of ideologies that promised freedom from colonialism and promoted new national identities.

**Africa’s New Elite**  Colonialism prompted the emergence of a new African social class, sometimes called the “new elite.” This elite derived its status from European-style education and employment in the colonial state, in foreign companies, or in Christian missions. The upper echelons of this elite were high-ranking civil servants, physicians, lawyers, and writers who had studied abroad in western Europe or the United States. A case in point was Jomo Kenyatta (1895–1978), who spent almost fifteen years in Europe, during which time he attended various schools, including the London School...
of Economics. An immensely articulate nationalist, Kenyatta later led Kenya to independence from the British. Below men such as Kenyatta in status stood teachers, clerks, and interpreters who had obtained a European-derived primary or secondary education. All members of the elite, however, spoke and understood the language of the colonizer and outwardly adopted the cultural norms of the colonizer, such as wearing European-style clothes or adopting European names. It was within the ranks of this new elite that ideas concerning African identity and nationhood germinated.

**FORMS OF NATIONALISM** Because colonialism had introduced Africans to European ideas and ideologies, African nationalists frequently embraced the European concept of the nation as a means of forging unity—as well as colonial resistance—among disparate African groups. Some nationalists looked to the precolonial past for inspiration. There they found identities based on ethnicity, religion, and languages, and they believed that any future nation must reconstitute distinctively African spiritual and political institutions. Race had provided colonial powers with one rationale for conquest and exploitation; hence it was not surprising that some nationalists used the concept of an African race as a foundation for identity, solidarity, and nation building. Indeed, race figured prominently in a strain of African nationalism known as pan-Africanism, which originated in the western hemisphere among the descendants of slaves. Representative of this pan-Africanism was the Jamaican nationalist leader Marcus Garvey (1887–1940), who thought of all Africans as members of a single race and who promoted the unification of all people of African descent into a single African state. Still other nationalists looked for an African identity rooted in geography rather than in race. That approach commonly translated into a desire to build the nation on the basis of borders that defined existing colonial states. Collectively those ideas influenced the development of nationalist movements during the 1930s and 1940s, which, after World War II, translated into demands for independence from colonialism.

**LATIN AMERICAN STRUGGLES WITH NEOCOLONIALISM**

The postcolonial history of Latin American states in the early twentieth century offered clues about what the future might hold for those areas in Asia and Africa still seeking independence from colonial rule. Having gained their independence in the nineteenth century, most sovereign nations in Latin America thereafter struggled to achieve political and economic stability in the midst of interference from foreign powers. The era of the Great War and the Great Depression proved crucial to solidifying and exposing to view the neocolonial structures that guided affairs in Latin America. Generally seen as a more subtle form of imperial control, neocolonialism refers to foreign economic domination, as well as military and political intervention, in states that have already achieved independence from colonial rule. In Central and South America, as well as in the Caribbean, this new imperial influence came not from former colonial rulers in Spain and Portugal but, rather, from wealthy, industrial-capitalist powerhouses such as Great Britain and the United States. Neocolonialism impinged on the political and economic development of Latin American states, but it did not fully prevent nationalist leaders from devising strategies to combat the newfound imperialism.

**The Impact of the Great War and the Great Depression**

The Great War, the Russian revolution, and the Mexican revolution spread radical ideas and the promise of new political possibilities throughout Latin America. The disparate ideals emerging from this time of political ferment found receptive audiences in Latin America, especially during the global economic crisis of the Great Depression. Marxism,
Vladimir Lenin’s theories on capitalism and imperialism, and a growing concern for the impoverished Indian masses as well as exploited peasants and workers in Latin American societies informed the outlooks of many disgruntled intellectuals and artists. The Enlightenment-derived liberalism that had shaped independence movements and the political systems of many postindependence nations no longer served as the only form of political legitimacy. Some of the most radical responses to U.S. economic domination came from Latin American universities, whose students became increasingly politicized in this period. Many took their inspiration from the Mexican and Russian revolutions—both of which were inimical to the ideas of the United States. Indeed, universities became training grounds for future political leaders, including Cuba’s Fidel Castro (1926–). In many Latin American countries, radicalism also expressed itself in the formation of political parties that either openly espoused communism or otherwise adopted rebellious agendas for change.

**Diego Rivera and Radical Artistic Visions** The ideological transformations apparent in Latin America became stunningly and publicly visible in the murals painted by famed Mexican artist Diego Rivera (1886–1957). Artistically trained in Mexico in his youth, Rivera went to study in Europe in 1907 and did not return to Mexico until 1921. Influenced by indigenous art forms as well as the European Renaissance artists and Cubists, Rivera’s paintings reflected the turmoil and shifting political sensibilities taking place during the Great War and its aftermath. He blended his artistic and political visions in vast public murals in Mexico’s cities, because he believed that art should be on display for working people.

As a political activist, Rivera also used his art to level a pointed critique of the economic dependency and political repressiveness engendered by U.S. neocolonialism in Latin America. In the painting *Imperialism*, for example, Rivera depicted massive guns and tanks extending over the New York Stock Exchange. In the foreground and at the edges of the stock exchange are a variety of Latin American victims of this monied-military oppression. Indeed, Rivera made visible the impact of U.S. imperialism on Latin American societies, and by doing so helped spread political activism in the Americas.

**The Evolution of Economic Imperialism**

Latin American states were no strangers to foreign economic domination in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their export-oriented economies had long been tied to global finances and had been subject to controls imposed by foreign investors, largely those from Great Britain and the United States. The major evolution in economic neocolonialism during this period concerned the growing predominance of the United States in the economic affairs of Latin American nations, which was sealed by the Great War. Between 1924 and 1929, U.S. banks and
Note that the number of U.S. interventions in Latin America belied the official policy of "dollar diplomacy."

MAP 31.2 The United States in Latin America, 1895–1941. Note the number of states where U.S. troops intervened in local politics. On what basis did U.S. policymakers justify those interventions?

businesses more than doubled their financial interests in Latin America as investments grew from $1.5 billion to $3.5 billion.

That U.S. neocolonialism was meant to be largely economic became evident in the policies of President William Howard Taft (1857–1931). In his final address to Congress in 1912, Taft argued that the United States should substitute “dollars for bullets” in its foreign policy. He wanted businesses to develop foreign markets through peaceful commerce and believed that expensive military intervention should be avoided as much as possible. This new vision of U.S. expansion abroad, dubbed “dollar diplomacy” by critics, encapsulated the gist of what those in Latin America perceived as “Yankee imperialism.”

The economic crisis of the Great Depression demonstrated the extent to which Latin America had become integrated into the world economy. Indeed, the Great Depression halted fifty years of economic growth in Latin America and illustrated the region’s susceptibility to global economic crises. For one thing, U.S. capital investments for nascent industries and other financial concerns during the 1920s could not be maintained during this disastrous economic downturn. Moreover, most Latin American states, because they exported agricultural products or raw materials, suffered from plummeting prices. Indeed, the prices of sugar from the Caribbean, coffee from Brazil and Colombia, wheat and beef from Argentina, tin from Bolivia, nitrates from Chile, and many other products fell sharply after 1929. Throughout Latin America unemployment rates increased rapidly. The drastic decline in the price of the region’s exports and the drying-up of foreign capital prompted Latin American governments to raise tariffs on foreign products and impose various other restrictions on foreign trade.
Although the weaknesses of export-oriented economies and industrial development financed by foreigners became evident during the Great Depression, the international crisis also allowed Latin American nations to take alternative paths to economic development. Economic policy stressing internal economic development was most visible in Brazil, where dictator-president (1930–1945, 1950–1954) Getúlio Dornelles Vargas (1883–1954) turned his nation into an estado novo (new state). Ruling with the backing of the military but without the support of the landowning elite, Vargas and his government during the 1930s and 1940s embarked on a program of industrialization that created new enterprises. Key among them was the iron and steel industry. The Vargas regime also implemented protectionist policies that shielded domestic production from foreign competition, which pleased both industrialists and urban workers. Social welfare initiatives accompanied industrial development, protecting workers with health and safety regulations, minimum wages, limits on working hours, unemployment compensation, and retirement benefits. Thus the Great Depression contributed in many ways to the evolution of both economic neocolonialism and economic experimentation within Latin American states.

Conflicts with a “Good Neighbor”

THE “GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY” The pressures of the Great Depression and the instability of global politics led to a reassessment of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America during the late 1920s and 1930s. U.S. leaders realized the costliness and the ineffectiveness of direct interventions in Latin America, especially when committing U.S. marines as peacekeeping forces. To extricate U.S. military forces and rely more fully on “dollar diplomacy,” policymakers instituted certain innovations that nonetheless called into question any true change of heart among U.S. neocolonialists. They approved “sweetheart treaties” that guaranteed U.S. financial control in the Caribbean economies of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, for example, and the U.S. Marines provided training for indigenous police forces to keep the peace and maintain law and order. This revamped U.S. approach to relations with Latin America became known as the “Good Neighbor Policy,” and it was most closely associated with the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945).

Under Roosevelt, the Good Neighbor Policy evolved into a more conciliatory U.S. approach to Latin American relations. The interventionist corollary to the Monroe Doctrine enunciated previously by President Theodore Roosevelt (1859–1919) was formally renounced in December 1933, when Secretary of State Cordell Hull attended the Seventh International Conference of American States in Montevideo, Uruguay. Hull signed the Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, which held that “no state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another.” That proposition faced a severe challenge in March 1938 when Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas (1895–1970) nationalized the oil industry, much of which was controlled by foreign investors from the United States and Great Britain.

Given the history of tempestuous relations between the United States and Mexico, including multiple U.S. military incursions into Mexico during the revolution, it seemed there was little chance for a peaceful resolution to this provocative move on the part of Cárdenas. The reluctance of U.S. and British oil companies to grant concessions to Mexican oil workers prompted him to this drastic act. Yet despite calls for a strong U.S. and British response, Roosevelt and his administration officials resisted the demands of big businesses and instead called for a cool, calm response and negotiations to end the conflict. This plan prevailed, and the foreign oil companies ultimately had to accept only $24 million in compensation rather than the $260 million that they initially demanded.

Although the nationalization crisis in Mexico ended in a fashion that suggested the strength of the Good Neighbor Policy, a good deal of the impetus for this policy came from economic and political concerns associated with the Great Depression and the deterioration

Getúlio Dornelles Vargas (zhi-TOO-lyoo door-NE-lish VAHR-guhs)
of international relations in the 1950s. The United States wanted to cultivate Latin American markets for its exports, and it wanted to distance itself from the militarist behavior of Asian and European imperial powers. The U.S. government knew it needed to improve relations with Latin America, if only to secure those nations' support in the increasingly likely event of another global war. Widespread Mexican migration to the United States during and after the Great War suggested the attractiveness of the United States for at least some Latin Americans.

Filling the migration void left by Europeans prevented from coming to the United States by the war and by the U.S. immigration restriction laws of the 1920s, Mexican men, women, and children entered the United States in the hundreds of thousands to engage in agricultural and industrial work. The migrants suffered the animosity of some U.S. citizens, who considered them “cheap Mexican labor,” but the political power of agribusinesses prevented the government from instituting legal restrictions on Mexican migration. Federal and local officials managed, however, to deport thousands of Mexicans during the Great Depression.

Trying to contribute to the repairing of relations and the promoting of more positive images of Latin American and U.S. relations, Hollywood adopted a Latin American singing and dancing sensation, Carmen Miranda (1909–1955). Born in Portugal but raised from childhood in Brazil, Miranda found fame on a Rio de Janeiro radio station and recorded hundreds of hit songs. In the United States, she gained her greatest visibility in films produced during World War II, such as Down Argentine Way (1940). Carmen Miranda appeared as an exotic Latin American woman, usually clothed in sexy, colorful costumes that featured headdresses adorned with the fruits grown in Latin America—such as bananas. She softened representations of Latin Americans for audiences in the United States, providing a less threatening counterpoint to laboring migrants or women guerrilla fighters in Mexico’s revolution. She also became a source of pride for Brazilians, who reveled in her Hollywood success. Hollywood’s espousal of Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy proved a success.

**SUMMARY**

In the decades after the Great War, and in the midst of the Great Depression, intellectuals and political activists in Asia, Africa, and Latin America challenged the ideological and economic underpinnings of empire and neocolonialism. Often embracing the ideas and theories that were disseminated around the globe as a result of the war, including self-determination, socialism, communism, and anti-imperialism, radicals and nationalists revised understandings of political identity in the colonial and neocolonial worlds.

Japanese and U.S. imperial practices incited military and civil discord within their respective spheres, while European colonial rulers continued to limit, often brutally, the freedom of peoples in India and Africa. Like Shafie, young intellectuals and older political leaders alike emerged transformed in these years. Their efforts to inspire nationalism and to achieve economic and political autonomy came to fruition later—after another world war had come and gone.
### STUDY TERMS

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### FOR FURTHER READING


