

## **Industrial and Imperial Era, 1770 CE to 1914 CE Linking the Seven Seas under Western Control**

During the nineteenth century, three major changes took place that impacted the Indian Ocean region. They were: industrialization, imperialism, and advances in transportation and communication. These global changes were interconnected, and it is difficult to separate the causes and effects of each.

People living in the Indian Ocean region responded to these changes in many different ways. One response was to resist imperialism and work toward establishing independent nations. Another response was immigration, some of which was forced, and some voluntary. Another response was to seek improvement of their own societies through education, writing, speaking and political organization. They made early attempts to modernize industries, but faced difficult obstacles.

### **Industrialization**

Industrialization was the first major change, meaning production of goods in factories using machines. Britain was the first country to begin manufacturing goods in factories where water or steam-powered machines replaced the work of hands. Spinning and weaving machines speeded up production. The first factory product exported by British merchants was cloth. By the mid-nineteenth century, Britain was selling cheap, colorful, printed cotton cloth in Britain, India and the Middle East at prices much cheaper than handmade cloth. Britain had to import raw cotton from India, the United States and later Egypt. The steel industry grew with the invention of the steam engine, which was used to power both steamships and steam locomotives. Later in the nineteenth century, chemical and electrical industries developed. Industrialization began later in Germany, France, and the United States, and caught up quickly. Cities grew in Europe, and rural areas sent many laborers to work in urban factories.

The effect of industrialization was to weaken or destroy traditional craft manufacturing in the Indian Ocean region. Many artisans slipped into poverty, and whole industries disappeared. For example, the Indian textile industry was an especially sad case because British and French manufacturers had imported Indian fabrics, and the new factories had copied styles and techniques for manufacturing from Indian artisans. A few textile machines were imported into India, but the products were not allowed to compete with British goods. Another major change resulting from industrialization was that countries in the Indian Ocean region became suppliers of raw materials for European industries. Plantations were set up to grow cash crops like tea, rubber, cotton and coffee. Mines were dug to extract gold, silver, lead, coal and iron. Forests were cut for timber. These goods were worth much less to the producer than the earlier luxury goods produced in the region. They became commodities—ordinary, bulk products. These same countries became buyers of European manufactured goods worth more to the producers. The balance of trade now tipped toward advantage for industrializing European nations.

### **Transport and Communication**

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Transportation was the second major change. Beginning 1807, steam was used to power ships. By the 1840s, problems of using steam power for ocean-going ships were solved. The screw propeller and better engines developed, and steamship hulls were made from steel instead of wood. The age of sail was ending. Steamships no longer depended on the wind. Journeys were cut from months to weeks or days. Steamships were armed with powerful guns, and industrialized nations built battleship fleets. Soldiers could be moved quickly and supplied over great distances. Travel for officials and their families was made easier as regular steamship routes were established. Tourism had its beginnings, with grand hotels in major world cities. Global time differences were standardized to time zones. Railways were important to the ocean because they carried people and heavy goods to port cities. Colonial powers built railway systems to aid in governing colonized countries and extracting resources. It is important to note that the map for the Industrial and Imperial Era does not show transportation routes on the ocean connected to those on land. They were shown for earlier eras, but the enormous growth in overland roads and the construction of railroads makes it impractical to show them on the map. Roads did continue to bring things to port cities and to carry goods into the continent, just as they always had.

Postal systems were developed in most countries and colonies. The telegraph sped the pace of communication, allowing messages sent in code to travel quickly along telegraph wires. The Indo-European Telegraph Line was completed in 1870, linking London, Teheran, Karachi and Calcutta. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, radio technology had made wireless communication possible—a boon for ships at sea. Two strategically important canals affected the Indian Ocean. The Suez Canal was completed in 1869, linking the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, making communication and trade between Europe, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean much faster by sea. Far from the Indian Ocean, the Panama Canal, constructed by the United States from 1888 to 1914. The canal would speed oceanic voyages between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. With both completed, circumnavigation of Africa and South America was no longer necessary to travel around the world.

### **Imperialism and Colonization**

In the Indian Ocean, the takeover of governments by European powers happened gradually but forcefully after 1800. The extraordinary powers of the East India Companies of the British and Dutch were taken away, the powers replaced by direct rule from Britain. Some local rulers remained in name only, but the power to govern and tax. This authority was won as weak rulers confronted European weapons and tactics. In India, the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 was a rebellion of Indian troops against British officers. In Africa, in Southeast Asia and on the islands of Indonesia, French and Dutch were in control of colonies. China was forced to give up territory and trade and other rights after the Opium Wars.

European powers competed in the "scramble for Africa" after 1880, taking over one country after another. They were aided by weapons like quick-loading rifles on one hand, and medicines that saved Europeans from tropical disease on the other. Everywhere, the colonized people resisted with arms and with words. European colonial powers set up rules that gave advantages to European manufactured goods, and made favorable conditions to buy raw materials. This was the key to the colonial economy. Other colonial powers acted in similar ways, but Britain became the largest colonial power by far in the nineteenth century.

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As a result of both imperialism and transportation, millions of people in the world began to migrate to other lands.

During the nineteenth century, the Europeans justified their rule over people by explaining that they had a civilizing mission in the Indian Ocean region, to modernize lands and cultures. Ideas of European racial superiority became apparent in the colonial policies, and in what colonial officials wrote and spoke. The British, French, and Dutch did establish schools, and people from colonized countries traveled for education to England or France. There, they learned language, literature, history, and other fields. When they returned, they joined people educated in the colonial schools at home. Through these western-educated Africans and Asians, great cultural and social changes began to take place. Questioning the old ways, imitating the Europeans in their midst, and re-thinking their own cultures. Out of the discussions and experiences of these modernizers, nationalism grew.

### **Nationalist and Independence Movements**

Nationalism is a movement by a group of people living in a territory, or having a feeling of belonging to a territory, who share cultural, religious or ethnic characteristics. They work toward forming a national state that is recognized by the community of other nations. Colonized and non-colonized peoples worked to realize independent nationhood during the nineteenth century, some winning their struggles and some being denied the opportunity. Many of these struggles spilled over into the twentieth century, or are still going on today. Nationalist and independence movements were usually joined together, even where traditional groups such as tribes, ethnic majorities or minorities were divided into separate colonies, or where groups wanted to form separate nations out of lands joined into one European colony. Political organizations, protests, and civil actions against the colonial governments resulted in violent or peaceful resistance to foreign rule, as did the great leader Mahatma Gandhi. Leaders—often western-educated, middle or upper class people—wrote, spoke, and organized to gain the support of other classes in society, and were often jailed, sometimes exiled, and sometimes killed. Successful nationalist leaders sometimes became the heads of new national governments.

### **New Ways of Life**

The nineteenth century was a time of intense competition among industrializing countries of Europe and the United States, often called “the West.” It was a time of upheaval for people in both industrializing and colonized countries, as societies adjusted to massive changes in the economy, in politics, and in the way households took care of their basic needs. There were new products, new ways of dressing, eating and working. It was a time of great social mobility for some. Rags to riches stories were common as people found new business opportunities, some taking up new lives in faraway lands. Others were plunged into poverty unknown by their grandparents, or seized as slaves. Millions died from diseases, famine, and war. People questioned their own past and present, their religions, and their ideas about science, both believing in progress and doubting it. Artistic expression flourished in music, literature, painting and crafts, and a treasure-house of human creativity was opened by travelers seeking to understand human history, to learn languages, and to collect arts, stories, and crafts of all the world’s cultures. Styles and decorations rapidly crossed from one culture

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to another. Museums sprang up, and photography was invented. Color printing and mass media emerged and became more accessible. It was both a time of great destruction and great production, of great injustice and great efforts to achieve justice.