Two major events – the Great War (which later came to be known as World War I) and the Great Depression – triggered major developments throughout the colonial world. Nationalist and communist sentiments grew as various countries – most notably India and China, but also countries in Africa and Latin America – began to resist foreign imperialists (i.e., European powers and the United States) and struggle for national unity. They were profoundly influenced by the concept of self-determination, the ideal espoused by Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference. In Africa, the challenge was for peoples to overcome outright imperial control, while in Latin America, peoples fought to rid themselves of the indirect economic effects of post-independence neocolonialism, which was pursued most prominently by the United States. Meanwhile in Japan, military leaders soon began to build strength through imperial aggression of their own.

Asian Paths to Autonomy

India, China and Japan underwent a drawn-out period of struggle as leaders in each country sought, on the one hand, to gain the autonomy of an independent state, and on the other hand embrace European ideologies such as nationalism and socialism, melding them to their own unique traditions. In a sense, India and China were finally following the lead of Japan, which in the 19th century had adapted European and American economic strategies.

India

- Indian nationalism was threatening British colonial rule even before World War I. The vast railway, meant to expedite the export of raw materials, contributed to a growing sense of national unity in a land that had always struggled with disunity because of its diverse geography. Also, the British relied on Indian administrators educated in the European style, but this also produced a local middle-class intelligentsia increasingly aware that the political and social values of European society – democracy, freedom, equality – were incompatible with colonialism.
- **Indian National Congress** – Founded in 1885, it was the greatest association dedicated to ridding India of British rule.
  - First tried to collaborate with the Brits to bring self-rule and even rallied to their overlord’s cause during WWI, but after the war (as food and goods became scarce and discontent rose) became more belligerent.
  - Influenced by Wilson’s Fourteen Points and Lenin’s call for united proletariat struggle of colonized peoples.
Upsurge of nationalist activity brought repressive response from Britain, followed by a wave of violence and disorder across the subcontinent.

- **Mohandas Gandhi** – Transformed the Indian National Congress from elitist organization to one with mass appeal.
  - Embraced moral philosophy of tolerance and nonviolence, and achieved status of a political and spiritual leader (Mahatma, or “great soul”).
  - Opponent of the caste system, fought especially hard for Untouchables.
  - Believed economic self-sufficiency was necessary but opposed industrialization.
  - Led the INC in spearheading two mass movements: Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-22 and Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 ⇒ boycotts of British goods, institutions … which led to violence (despite Gandhi’s moral philosophy against it).

- Amritsar – city in Punjab where troops dispersed an unarmed crowd by firing rifles into it, killing 379 demonstrators in 1919.

- Government of India Act – Ultimately failed attempt at political compromise, which gave India the institutions of a self-governing state (autonomous legislative bodies but an executive arm under British control) in 1937.
  - Indians approved the measure at Gandhi’s urging, but failed to work as a) India’s six hundred nominally sovereign princes refused to cooperate, and b) increased conflict emerged between Muslims and Hindus because of the effects of the Great Depression (Muslims were indebted tenant farmers unable to pay rents and debts to mainly Hindu landlords).

- Pakistan – “land of the pure”
  - The idea of two separate states – one Muslim (Pakistan) and the other Hindu (India) first proposed by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, head of the Muslim League.

**China**

- Qing empire finally collapsed as 1911 revolution ushered in an unstable republic, which quickly gave way to anarchy, economic disintegration and warlord rule.

- Nationalist sentiment grew rapidly following WWI as Chinese became disillusioned by the results of the Paris Peace Conference, which failed to restore full Chinese sovereignty and gave Japan increasing interference in China.

- **May Fourth Movement** – galvanized the country behind idea of ridding imperialism and re-establishing national unity; led by students and intellectuals in urban areas ⇒ speeches, newspapers, novels.

- Decades-long struggle for power emerged between Nationalist People’s Party, or Guomindang, and Chinese Communist Party (CCP).
  - Nationalist leadership, following 1925 death of Sun Yatsen, fell to Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), who consolidated a central government in Nanjing and by late 1927 declared the Guomindang the official government of a unified and sovereign Chinese state.
  - **Mao Zedong** was among early members of CCP, who were interested in Marxist thought and the experiments under way in the Soviet Union.
Chinese communists drew support from women and those opposing western imperialism generally.

- Early on, both Guomindang and CCP received help from Soviet advisors, and members of the CCP even joined the ranks of the Guomindang until Kai-shek turned against them.

- Though nominally run by the Nationalists, China faced a civil war as the communist threat remained strong through the 1930s. As Japanese aggression increased toward China, Kai-shek tried to stamp out the CCP threat and its Red Army – the **Long March** (1934-35) ensued: 85,000 members of the CCP marched more than 6,000 miles and established communist headquarters in northwest China, with Mao emerging as leader.

**Japan**

- Though it prospered during WWI by selling munitions and other goods to the Allies, Japan was deeply hurt economically by a series of recessions and finally the worldwide Great Depression. Facing plummeting industrial production, massive layoffs and declining trade, Japan veered toward social unrest and the embracement of radical politics: Politicians who supported Japan’s role in the international industrial-capitalist system lost favor to those with a militarist vision of self-sufficiency and Japanese dominance of east Asia.

- In Manchuria, Japan had established a sphere of influence and had built the Manchurian Railroad (1906) … so when talk turned internationally to reinstating Chinese sovereignty over this traditionally Chinese territory, Japan acted militaristically to protect its economic interests.

  - “Mukden incident” – In 1931, Japanese troops blew up a small portion of railway north of Mukden … and then accused the Chinese for the attack. This provided a pretext for Japanese military incursions into Manchuria, despite protesting civilian voices in Japan. When Kai-shek appealed to the League of Nations to halt Japanese aggression, Japan left the league – which highlighted its own ineffectual nature and prefigured the international community’s inability to stop expansionist policies of other aggressor nations.

**Africa under Colonial Domination**

**Africa and the Great War**

- Most of the primary belligerents of the Great War were colonial powers ruling over most of Africa, so the war had a tremendous influence over the continent. Every African colony took sides in the war, except for those of Spain, which remained neutral.

- The Allies attacked German colonies in Togo, Cameroon, German South-West Africa and German East Africa, looking to take out German port facilities and communication systems, and take over the territories as the spoils of war following the presumed Allied victory.
• More than 1 million African soldiers saw military action on three continents; they were brought into the war by colonial powers through formal conscription (a source of great resentment), in levies supplied by African chiefs, and on a voluntary basis. Even more men, women and children served as porters and carriers supporting the war effort in lieu of transporting supplies by road, rail or pack animal. More than 150,000 Africans in total died in the fighting.
• As Africans witnessed their European overlords killing one another, were instructed themselves to kill the enemy “white man,” and noticed the already thin European presence in Africa become even thinner as the war dragged on, revolts and uprisings increased and colonial authorities responded ruthlessly in putting down the armed insurrections.

The Colonial Economy
• Colonial powers wanted to make Africa pay for the very institutions – bureaucracies, judiciary, police, military – that kept them subjugated. Previously self-sufficient African economies gave way to colonial economies directed at extracting from Africa raw or minimally processed materials in exchange for manufactured goods from abroad thus the Great Depression, in which worldwide demand for primary products shrank, had a very negative impact on Africa as trade fell by half and commodity prices plummeted.
• European colonials built up Africa’s infrastructure – ports, roads, railways, telegraph lines – but the new transportation and communication networks within Africa benefited the colonists the most.
• Colonial mining in central and southern Africa drew men from rural areas seeking minimal wages, and the resulting migration pattern created a vacuum of male labor in their home villages, where women often couldn’t grow enough food to feed their children and elderly relatives.
• Concessionary companies were authorized to exploit a region’s resources through their own systems of taxation and labor recruitment. Their practices were often brutal, leading to many deaths from starvation, disease and maltreatment of a kind not far different from outright slavery.

African Nationalism
A class of native urban intellectuals – often schooled in Europe or the United States and influenced by Wilson’s ideas about self-determination – led the movement toward freedom from colonialism and the articulation of new national identities in Africa. These members of the “new elite” included high-ranking civil servants, physicians, lawyers and writers, who were familiar with the world of the colonizer and often outwardly adopted their cultural norms (names, dress, etc.).
• Jomo Kenyatta (1895-1978) – After attending the London School of Economics, led Kenya to independence from Britain.
• Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) – Jamaican-born leader in the United States who promoted the “Back to Africa” movement of Pan-Africanism, which called for blacks living in the African diaspora to unify in their mother country as a single African state.
Latin American Struggles with Neocolonialism

Although they gained their independence in the 19th century, most sovereign nations of Latin America struggled with political and economic instability in the early 20th century as “neocolonialists” – Great Britain and the United States, rather than the old colonial powers, Portugal and Spain – exercised indirect and more subtle forms of imperial control.

The Great War and the Great Depression

The Enlightenment-inspired liberalism that guided independence movements and the post-independence political systems of Latin America became challenged by more radical ideas as Marxist-Leninism gained traction in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. A growing concern for the impoverished Indian masses and resentment over the United States’ emergence following the Great War as a world economic power manifested itself first as a rebellion in Latin American universities, where students became politicized in their demands for reform. Fidel Castro, who would eventually lead a revolution that resulted in Cuba going communist, was among the future Latin American leaders shaped by his university experience. The same strain of political thought also led to socialist and communist party agitation in Peru and Mexico.

The Evolution of Economic Imperialism

The United States became predominant in the economic affairs of Latin America as U.S. investments in the region soared in the 1920s in ventures such as copper-mining in Chile and oil-drilling in Venezuela.

- **Dollar diplomacy** – term used by critics of U.S. President Taft’s pre-Great War argument that the United States should substitute “dollars for bullets” in its foreign policy toward Latin America. U.S. takeovers of Latin American businesses were seen as “Yankee imperialism.”
- **The Great Depression** – revealed the vulnerability of raw products nature of Latin America’s export-oriented economy: the infusion of U.S. capital dried up and prices tumbled for sugar from the Caribbean, coffee from Brazil and Colombia, wheat and beef from Argentina, tin from Bolivia. But among Latin American policies that were tried in response to the crisis: raising tariffs on foreign products encouraged domestic manufacturing.
- **“Good Neighbor Policy”** – most closely associated with U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt: maintaining U.S. military forces in Latin America as peacekeepers seen as too costly U.S. Marines would instead train indigenous police forces to keep the peace, maintain law and order … and remain loyal “good neighbors” to the United States.
  - Roosevelt Corollary (Theodore’s, not FDR’s) formally renounced in 1933 … but the new proposition of not intervening in the internal or external affairs of another country was put to the test in 1938 when Mexican president Lazaro Cardenas nationalized the oil industry, much of which was controlled by U.S. and British investors. Ultimately, these foreign oil
companies had to settle for just $24 million in compensation rather than the $260 million they thought they were owed.

○ Part of the rationale for Good Neighbor Policy was to cultivate Latin American export markets for U.S. producers and better ensure their support in the event of another global war.

○ Hollywood embraced the policy with the Latin American singing and dancing sensation Carmen Miranda, whose image was later appropriated and transformed into “Chiquita Banana,” the marketing icon for bananas grown by the United Fruit Company in Latin America.