Beginning in the Age of Exploration the major European powers had established overseas colonies and trading posts. In the Americas, these colonies quickly grew into large overseas empires that enriched Europe. In Asia and Africa, either because of reasons of geography or the power of the indigenous cultures, Europeans were prevented from building large empires in these regions, and instead developed a network of trading posts. By the middle of the nineteenth century, due to the combination of the Industrial Revolution and a growth in population, European countries began to build large empires in Asia and Africa. Europeans were able to reach out and conquer the rest of the world because of their advantages in having an aggressive purpose, superior organization, and advanced technology. One result of this burst of imperialism was to push the European nations into greater conflict between themselves and ultimately a war among themselves in World War One.

Broadly defined, imperialism is the control by one group of peoples over other groups beyond its borders. Historically, most empires can be divided into two main types (although most empires are a mixture of both). The first is a beneficiary empire based on sharing the advantages of empire with the conquered people, with the goal of moving toward equal political rights. The Roman Empire is the classic example of this type. By the second century, Roman citizenship was granted to non-Italian people and several emperors came from conquered territories. During the period of nineteenth century European imperialism, the establishment of European colonies did bring benefits to the conquered people in the form of railways, schools, and hospitals. However, non-European people were not given equal status. The second type of empire is an exploitative empire. This type of empire is based on using the resources and peoples of other lands to the benefit of the conquerors. The Spanish American Empire built by the conquistadors is model of this type of empire. Many of the nineteenth century European colonies in Africa are also models of exploitative empires.

Causes of Imperialism

There are many reasons for the European countries building large overseas empires beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. Many of these reasons were based in the changes in Europe brought about by the Industrial Revolution. It should be noted that the Industrial Revolution gave Europeans the technological ability to dominate the world. Europeans had modern weapons, steam powered transportation, and rapid communication. This ability matched the motives for empire. Principally these motives were:

- **Economic** – The Industrial Revolution created an increasing need for cheap and plentiful raw materials, such as cotton, for industrial factories. The tremendous output of the industrial factories created a desire for manufacturers to find new markets in which to sell their goods. Overseas colonies were seen as markets for European goods. In addition, European capitalist looked to overseas areas as a place to profitably invest, mainly in railroads and other projects to gain natural resources. For example, from 1880 to 1914, England’s foreign investment tripled to reach $20 billion, French foreign investment doubled to $9 billion, and German foreign investment quadrupled to $6 billion.

- **Population** – The explosive growth of Europe population drove many Europeans to seek opportunities outside of Europe. Between 1840 and 1940, 60 million people emigrated from Europe to other parts of the world. For many Europeans, the opportunities offered in administering and working overseas provided a lifestyle unattainable in Europe. For example, many British of working class background were able to live in luxury working for the British administration in India.

- **Nationalism** – Many countries believed that national prestige and power were connected to the desire to conquer and build empires. Due to newspapers, many average Europeans were strong supporters of imperialism, in particularly the ability of their own countries to build overseas empires. For example, the British bragged that “the sun never set on the British Empire” and by 1900, Britain controlled a world-wide empire 40 times as large as the island of Britain. Newly unified Germany sought to build an overseas empire by claiming, “Germany deserved its place in the sun”. During this
period the rapidly modernizing Japan described itself as the “land of the rising sun” while it tried to boldly establish its own empire in Asia.

- **Strategic Colonization** – Empire building brought many European powers into conflict as they tried to prevent rival countries from gaining resources or control of strategic points that might give other countries advantages in the European balance of power. This meant controlling crucial shipping lanes and remote islands that could serve as coaling stations for their fleets. Europeans countries spoke of the need to develop a sphere of influence, in which they could project their power to dominate the regions beyond their borders.

- **Missionary Activity** – Europeans believed they had a moral responsibility to “rescue” non-European people from their “backwardness”. Part of this was a religious drive. Often, Christian missionaries were the first to establish footholds in foreign areas and their view of indigenous cultures formed European views of other parts of the world. More importantly, Europeans believed they had a moral responsibility to bring “civilization” to non-European peoples. The best example of this was expressed in Rudyard Kipling phrase “white man’s burden” or the French expression, "la mission civilisatrice" (The civilizing mission).

### British Imperialism in India

Since the fifteenth century, European involvement in India had been based in commerce. Joint-stock companies from England, Holland, and France, exercised the great freedom and power – acting at times as if they were independent of the countries where they were based. The Dutch, British, and French East India Companies, had their own fleets of ships, armies of private soldiers, and made treaties with local rulers. Both the British and the French established trading posts across India. When the Portuguese had first arrived in India, it was coming under the control of the Mughal Empire, which granted European companies the right to trade in India. The Mughals were descendents of the Mongol tribes that dominated Asia in thirteenth century.

By the 1700’s the Mughal’s power was in decline and local Hindu Indian rulers, called Marathas began to break away from Mughal control. In 1739, the Marathas captured and sacked Delhi. However, their expansion to dominate Northern India was halted in 1761 at the Battle of Panipat. After this, the Marathas consolidated their power in central India. Both the British and French East India Companies took advantage of the declining Mughal power and the constant fighting among the Marathas to expand their own power in India.

The British East India Company was granted a charter in 1600 by Elizabeth I to trade with India. Throughout the 1600’s this British company established and governed trading posts along India’s coasts at Madras, Bengal, Bombay and Calcutta. During this time, other European powers, chiefly the French, also established trading ports in India. However, it was the British power in India that appeared to threaten Indian rulers. In 1756, threatened by the growth of British economic and military power in Calcutta, the local Indian Newab (ruler) of Bombay attacked the British posts in the city and imprisoned the British prisoners in a cramped jail called the “Black Hole of Calcutta” where many of the prisoners died.

In response, six months later, an East India expeditionary force led by Robert Clive, who hired Indian soldiers called sepoys, to fight for the interests of the company, attacked and retook Calcutta. During the Seven Years War, Clive’s British East India Company Army battled both the Mughal’s and French East India Company for control of India. In 1557, after defeating the Mughals at the Battle of Plassey and the Battle of Baksar, the British East India Company became the dominant power in India. The British were finally able to dominate the southern part of India in 1803.

The British East India Company, once it had secured in dominance over India, left many local Indian rulers, called maharajas or newabs, to rule their own independent states. The company oversaw the whole of India and engaged in trade for its own profit.

While the British East India Company was focused on the economic benefits of trading with India, its occupation of India created a cultural clash between Christian Europeans and Hindu Indians. In the Charter of 1813 British Christian missionaries were allowed to work throughout India converting Indians to Christianity. Many of these British missionaries were horrified by traditional Hindu practices such as suttee, where Hindu widows burn themselves on their husband’s funeral pyres, and thuggee, where Hindus kill people in offering to the goddess Kali. These missionaries pressured the British East India Company to end these practices. Indians reacted by fearing that the British were seeking to “westernize” them and force them to give up their traditions and become Christian. In fact, many British officials were clear in their intentions to do this. Thomas Macaulay, a East India Company official announced to the British House of Commons in 1832 that, “We must do our best to form a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect”.

"One shelf of a good English library has more worth than native literature in its entirety.”
- Thomas Macaulay
Many Indians chaffed under the rule of the East India Company. The first open rebellion against British rule of India was a mutiny among the Company’s own army. The East India Company’s army was comprised of European officers leading Indian soldiers called sepoys. In 1857, the Company introduced a new bullet and Lee Enfield rifles to its soldiers. It was rumored that this new bullet was greased with animal fat. The soldiers had to tear the cartridge package that surrounded the bullet with their teeth to load the bullet in the gun. In general, both the Hindu and Muslim sepoys rejected the bullet since Hindus refused to eat cows and Muslims refused to eat pork. When forced to use the bullets, the sepoys mutinied and attacked their officers and rampaged across India attacking British people. Forty-seven of the seventy-four Indian battalions joined the rebellion. Only seven battalions remained loyal to the British. The sepoys were able to capture the capital of Delhi (they raised the Mughal flag over the city) and held it for four months. However, the rebels were unorganized and had no clear plan of action. Company army officers, supported by units of the British army, were able to regroup and lead loyal sepoys to put down the rebellion in 1858. The British were able to put down the rebellion because they used the Lee Enfield rifle, which had a longer range and faster rate of fire than the rifles the sepoys were using.

While the Sepoy Mutiny (or the First War of Independence as the Indians call it) failed, it had a dramatic effect in how the British ruled India. The British East India Company was disbanded and India became a royal colony. India was called the “Jewel of the Crown” because of its importance in the British Empire. One British viceroy noted the importance of British control of India when he said, “As long as we rule India, we are the greatest power in the world. If we lose it, we shall drop straightway to a third-rate power”.

The British government consolidated all power under the colonial government. A British Secretary of State ruled from England and Viceroy enacted policy in India. By 1890, the British had established a colonial government through which a thousand colonial officials ruled over 280 million Indians. After the Sepoy Mutiny, the British government officials were forbidden to interfere in traditional customs and missionary were told to cut down on their efforts to convert Indians. However, beyond this, the British government made no attempts at reform and deliberately created a system of government in which Indians were denied power in the colonial government. For example, to qualify for a post in the Indian administration, young Indian men had to pass a government examination given once a year in London by the time they reached the age of nineteen. By 1869, only one Indian, Surendranath Banerjea has passed the civil service exam. However, he was dismissed from his position after three years for a minor infracton of the rules. He went on to found the Indian Association, the first Indian nationalist group in 1875. While denied positions of leadership, a class of Indians worked as clerks and lower level administrators in the British colonial government. Through working for the British, this group of Indians learned about law and government administration, which would give them the knowledge and experience in how to form an independent Indian government. In addition, because the British taught English in schools across India in order to train the junior level administrators they needed. This had the effect of breaking down the historic language barriers that had made it difficult for the Indians to unite against the British.

During this time, the British economic relationship to India became one of an industrial country that sold industrial products in return for raw materials produced by an agricultural country. The increased productivity from industrial revolution resulted in European goods being able to undercut the prices of goods made around the world. For example, between 1802 and 1826 the cost to produce 40 count yarn (a measure of yarn quality) in England fell from 60 pence to 16 pence. In India during that period it cost 43 pence to produce 40 count yarn. As a result, British textiles took over the Indian cloth markets and Indian weavers lost their jobs as India shifted from being a cloth exporter to being a cloth importer. Essentially, India became a large market for British industry – which resulted in British industry expanding – and increased British interest in making India a supplier of industrial raw materials. The hundreds of thousands, if not a million, Indians who lived were disrupted by this economic change perished as a result of starvation brought on by the introduction of cotton as a cash crop and the importation of British textiles, since cotton production meant less food production and imported British textiles put Indian weavers out of work. This economic exchange between British industry and Indian agriculture did bring some benefits to India. For example, between 1860 and 1900, the British built 25,000 miles of railroads and 18,600 miles of telegraph lines to connect India together. However, this was built with material produced in Britain and served to help make it easier for the British to administer India. In addition, the British developed 7.5 million acres through irrigation projects. But, the British undertook these improvements so that they could use India to their economic benefit by encouraging the growing of cotton to feed British mills. Part of the British interest in Indian cotton was because the American Civil War halted the supply of American cotton to British factories.

China

China is one of the oldest and largest societies in the world. Indications of this are the facts that the first civilizations in China arose at the same time as early Mesopotamian civilizations and that one out of every six people alive today are Chinese. Traditionally, China was a prosperous and stable society where order and rank were important. At the top of Chinese society was the Emperor. While China had many dynasties (imperial families) and numerous revolts, the results of this change had usually been a continuation of traditional systems. China seldom changed rapidly. In 1644, the Manchus swept out of Manchuria (Northern China) and conquered China, establishing the Qing Dynasty. The Manchus did not try to change traditional Chinese culture. Instead they adopted the Chinese imperial system to their own advantage. Similar to the Mongols, the Manchus tried to
keep their culture separate from Chinese culture. For example, all Chinese men had to wear their hair in a long ponytail called a "que" – failure to do this was punishable by death.

In order to maintain their dominance, the Qing maintained the Chinese policy of isolating China from the rest of the world, principally by limiting Chinese contact with European merchants. The Chinese government only allowed European merchants to work in the ports of Macao and Canton. The Chinese had traditionally looked down upon foreigners as being from "lesser" societies. They believed they had all they needed and that the outside world had little to offer them. This outlook greatly affected their trade with Europeans. While Europeans wanted to purchase a lot from China, particularly tea and porcelain, the Chinese were not interested in trading for European goods. The Chinese even considered sophisticated clocks and timepieces to be toys because they did not see the practical use in tracking time – a crucial aspect in modern industry. This is only one example of how China was not able to keep up with the technological or organizational advances of Europe. As a result, the Chinese only accepted gold and silver as mediums of exchange.

The Chinese placed strict restrictions on trade with the goal of limiting foreign influence in China. Foreigners could not enter China or address the emperor unless the emperor invited them. When foreigners did visit the emperor they were required to kowtow to the throne (bow down to the ground three times and bow their head to the floor nine times). Europeans were only allowed to trade with the Chinese in the city of Canton for a few months each year. Europeans were further restricted to part of the city of Canton and could only trade with guild merchants or co-hong. Foreign sailors could not bring any women with them and could not carry any weapons when in China.

Foreigners in China were also subject to Chinese law when in Canton. A difference in European and Chinese legal concepts brought these cultures into conflict. Traditionally, China had the concept of “doctrine of responsibility” under which a person is obligated to pay the full cost of a crime, regardless of the intent in committing the crime. This legal concept is in contrast to the European concept that intent is a crucial element in determining the degree of guilt in a crime. In essence, the doctrine of responsibility held no difference between manslaughter and murder. For example, in 1821, a jar fell off an American ship and killed a Chinese woman. The ship was forced to surrender the American sailor who knocked the jar overboard to the Chinese authorities who was executed him.

While dealing with China was difficult, European merchants continued to trade with China because of the large profits that could be made by selling Chinese goods in Europe. Europeans demanded and were willing to pay high prices for a wide range of Chinese products, including silk, porcelain, and tea. Tea represented roughly fifty percent of Chinese exports. However, the Chinese did not want to buy British products in exchange. The Chinese only accepted gold and silver for trade. As a result, the British were spending huge amounts of gold and silver in China every year.

The British wanted to correct this imbalance of trade, since China was draining its treasury of precious metals. The British discovered that addictive opium from India was an inexpensive product that the Chinese were willing to buy. In 1729, British merchants smuggled 200 chests (at 120 pounds each) into China. The addictive nature of opium caused it to become a demanded import. In 1835 there were 12 million opium addicts in China, which created an even greater demand for opium. By 1838, British imported 40,000 chests of opium or roughly 200 tons a year. The British established a “three-cornered” trade system. Britain sold finished goods to India in return for opium and cotton. Opium was sold to China in return for Chinese goods. Both Chinese goods and Indian cotton were sold in Britain. This system of trade greatly benefited the British since it met the British demands for Chinese goods and produced raw materials to British factories.

As could be expected, the growing rate of opium addiction caused many social problems in China, and in 1839, the Chinese Emperor demanded that the British stop this trade. It should be noted that opium use was legal in England at this time. The British refused to stop importing opium, and in 1839 the Chinese Emperor ordered that the British supply of opium in Canton, worth $6 million, be destroyed.

The British responded by attacking China in the First Opium War. The modern British navy destroyed the Chinese navy, seized control of Canton and lay siege to Nanking. The British used the HEIC Nemesis, the first ocean-going iron warship in the war – literally “gun boat” diplomacy. In the two hour Battle of Pearl River in January 1841, the British dealt a crushing defeat to the Chinese, sinking eleven Chinese ships and killing 500 men, while only suffering a few wounded. Through this crushing defeat, the British were able to force the Chinese to accept the humiliating Treaty of Nanking, which
obligated the Chinese to open five port cities to trade, give the British control of Hong Kong, to abandon the co-hong policy, and pay an indemnity (cost of conflict) of $21,000,000.

As part of this treaty, the Chinese were forced to give the British citizens in China extraterritorial rights. This meant that the British were subject to their own laws when on Chinese soil. They would be tried in their own courts of law. The treaty also gave Britain a most favored nation clause that extended to the British any and all benefits China might grant another country. The Treaty of Nanking established the beginning of the “treaty system” through which Europe slowly used a mixture of force and diplomacy to expand their control over China.

In 1856, the Second Opium War erupted when England and France sought to gain even more concessions from China. In this conflict, a combined European army marched on Peking (Beijing) and burned down the Chinese Emperor’s summer palace. This war was ended by the Second Treaty Settlement, a total of eight different treaties which forced China to open ten more treaty ports, allow foreigners to send ambassadors to the Emperor and to lower the tariff on imported goods to China. In general the tariff could be no more than five percent and was collected by the Europeans, who often kept some of the money to pay for the “war indemnities”. Even though Russia was not involved in the war, it received a strip of land in northern China.

This humiliating loss to the Europeans was only one of China’s problems in the nineteenth century. The growth of its population, always a concern in China, was becoming impossible to support. By 1850 the population had grown to 430 million people, but food production had not increased. As a result of several years of bad harvest, millions of Chinese died in famines.

The combination of internal problems and the humiliating losses to Europeans, turned many Chinese to support the Taiping Rebellion, led by Hong Xiuquan. This represented the opening of the revolutionary period of Chinese history that would continue until the middle of the twentieth century. Xiuquan was a mystic and religious fanatic who claimed to be the second son of God, or the brother of Jesus Christ. He preached the overthrow of the Manchus and the establishment of the “Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace”. His message of a brotherhood of Chinese people, shared property, and equality of the sexes, was very similar slogans of the Communist who took over China in 1949.

Xiuquan organized a rebel army of a million people, both men and women. The Taiping Rebellion (name means “great peace”) began in the 1840’s and continued until 1864. The rebellion captured the city of Nanking, which it used as its capital, and moved to within 30 miles of the capital Peking.

However, internal conflict within the Taiping Rebellion caused it to gradually weaken in power. In 1864, the rebellion was put down by the Ever Victorious Army, a Chinese army led by Fredrick Ward, an American, and later by Charles Georges Gordon of Britain. It is estimated that between 10 and 20 million Chinese were killed in the rebellion. As a result of this rebellion, the Chinese government was further weakened and became more dependent on foreign powers in running its affairs. For example, Sir Robert Hart, British a man, was put in charge of organizing and running the Chinese system of collecting tariffs. While Hart’s system was considered to be the best in the world, the fact that it was foreign run was another humiliation for the Chinese.

The Chinese did attempt reform; however it was both too little and too late. In 1898, Emperor Prince Kung sought to reform China through establishing a new education system and removing corrupt government officials from their positions. He described his policy as “self-strengthening” and its goal was to modernize within the Confucian tradition of China. This was called the Hundred Days of Reform. However, the Empress Dowager Tzu His, the real power in China, felt that the reforms threatened the control of the Qing Dynasty over China since the reforms took power from the Manchu Qing and gave them to the Chinese. On September 26, 1898, she oversaw a coup d’etat that overthrew the prince and abolished the reforms.

Japan

The reaction of Japan to the threat of European imperialism stands in stark contrast to China. The first Portuguese ship arrived in Japan in 1543. At this time Japan was shifting from being a feudal state to centralized power. Beginning in twelfth century, the military took power from the emperor. While Japan continued to have an emperor, it was largely a symbolic position. The real power lay with the Shogun or the imperial general. The shogun controlled all land in Japan and granted fiefs to regional lords, called daimyo, who promised them military service. The daimyo oversaw their lands and maintained armies of samurai warriors to support the Shogun. The samurai were highly trained warriors that were loyal to their lord or leader. The samurai were expected to follow a code of honor called Bushido or the “way of the warrior”. If a Samurai brought dishonor upon himself or his lord, he was expected to commit Sepuku or ritual suicide.

In the sixteenth century this system broke down and Japan fell into civil war between daimyos. Even the capital of Kyoto was reduced to ruins and the emperor became a pauper as samurai armies fought over the city. The arrival of the Portuguese changed the dynamics of the war by introducing firearms. Guns allowed peasant foot soldiers to fight samurai. The civil wars did not end until 1615, when Ieyasu Tokugawa emerged as the undisputed leader of Japan. As Shogun, Ieyasu established the Tokugawa Dynasty which ruled Japan for 250 years. Under the Tokugawa Shogunate, the class system of Japan was ridged and
highly regulated around the needs of the feudal system in which warriors were at the top and merchants were at the bottom. Merchants were the lowest level of society since it was believed they “produced” nothing – only moving goods around and exploiting peasants. The peasants ranked higher than the merchants because they were valued for growing food and manual labor.

In addition to guns, the Europeans had introduced Christianity to Japan. The threat of a Japanese population loyal to a foreign power, because of religious ties, and armed with firearms worried the Shogun. These worries were compounded by the news that the Spanish had taken over the Philippine Islands. Beginning in 1633, the Shogun moved to isolate Japan from contact with the rest of the world. In 1639, the Shogun outlawed all fire arms, outlawed Christians, and restricted Japan’s trade with the outside world to one Dutch ship a year in the port of Nagasaki. The Dutch were allowed to stay because Catholic missionaries had said that the Protestant Dutch were not really Christians. Japan was isolated from the rest of the world as the country entered the period of Sakoku or “national seclusion”.

This period of isolation led to a cultural Golden Age for Japan. The Tokugawa Dynasty established their capital at Edo, now Tokyo, and required that the nobles spend four months a year in the capital. The samurai were reduced from a warrior class to paid administrators. While they still carried swords, their use was limited. The Japanese economy grew and merchants, while low in social status, became wealthy powerbrokers. Under the patronage of these merchants, Japanese artistic culture flourished. For example, kabuki theater, haiku poetry, and stylized printing, all became highly developed arts. During this period, the Shogun ruled an isolated Japan run under a feudal system. Still, the isolation took its toll and Japan gradually fell behind the rest of the world.

In 1853, the Japanese feudal system was shaken to its core when the American fleet under American Commodore Matthew Perry demanded under threat of war that the Japanese open their ports to American ships. Prior to this, shipwrecked sailors were killed by the Japanese. The opening of Japan showed that the Tokugawa were powerless it the face of Western military power. However, rather than surrender to the Western powers, the Japanese were determined to become a modern country based on their own culture and identity. The need to become a modern industrialized country was reinforced in 1862, when a local Japanese noble launched an attack on foreign ships off the coast of Japan. The British, French, Dutch and Americans launched a punitive attack on Japanese coastal forts and cities, and the Japanese could do little defend themselves against these attacks.

The process of Japanese modernization required the Japanese to abandon their traditional system of government and adopt the systems of European and American government, industry, and military. In 1867, the shogun voluntarily surrendered his power to the fifteen year old Emperor Mutsuhito – Mutsuhito would rule Japan until 1912. The imperial restoration of power, called the Meiji or “Enlightened Government”, placed full power of the country in the hands of the Emperor. While the Shogunate was abolished, the imperial council was full of young samurai and elements of samurai culture remained embedded in Japanese culture.

In 1871, the feudal system was officially abolished – essentially everyone was made legally equal. However, some samurai refused to surrender their power or feudal lands. As a result, for a year the new imperial army crushed samurai resistance to this change. Over the next decade the samurai were gradually stripped of their traditional rights, including the right to wear swords in public. In 1872, Japan introduced a system of universal military service, which further undermined the traditional role of the samurai. In addition, the Japanese built a modern army based on the Germany army and a modern navy based on the British navy. The Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1902, formalizing the relationship between Britain and Japan, was seen as recognition that Japan had become a modern nation.

After ending its traditional systems, Japan began to borrow western ideas and systems to modernize. In doing this, Japan was careful to adopt the best practices of European and American systems, but they were careful to shape these adopted systems so they worked within Japanese culture. Still, the changes represented a wholesale change in their society. For example, the Japanese abandoned their traditional way of keeping time and adopted both the western calendar and system of 24 hour days when they built their railroad network. In addition, in 1889, Japan adopted a western structured government with a constitution based on Prussia (a two house legislature where most power lay with Emperor and his officials) and legal system that was drafted by French advisors. This modernization also included the development of a compulsory education that was mandated by law. A primary school was built for every 600 children and by

May our Country
Taking what is good,
and rejecting what is bad,
be not inferior
to any other.

Japanese Expression
1900, 90% of Japanese children were attending school. A large number of high schools, technical schools and universities were also built.

Using Europe and the United States as a model, the Japanese began to build heavy industry, with the goal of building a strong military. In the 1880’s, the Japanese government sold its factories to prominent families called zaibatsu, such as the Mitsui and the Mitsubishi. These companies often cooperated with each other to become more efficient and prosperous. The Japanese government also adopted a “targeted industrial policy” to develop Japan’s industry. An important part of the policy was to develop Japanese industry to supply the materials needed for development of the country, instead of importing materials from Europe or the United States. The government also supported farmers and spread information on new farming techniques to increase food production, so as to feed the growing industrial work force.

**Struggle for Control of China**

The process of modernization and industrialization drove the Japanese to build their own overseas empire. The islands of Japan possess few natural resources necessary for an industrial society, namely iron, coal, and steel. In order to maintain this process of economic development, the Japanese were forced to secure sources of these raw materials that were abundant in the region of northern China called Manchuria and in Korea. Traditionally, Korea had been dominated by China. This economic expansion brought Japan into conflict with an already weakened China.

In 1894, China and Japan came into conflict over internal disputes between progressive and conservative forces in Korea. Both Japan and China sent armies to support allied forces in the government of Korea. Although the Chinese army greatly outnumbered the Japanese, the Japanese armed with modern weapons quickly defeated the Chinese. The Sino-Japanese War was over by February 1895. The victorious Japanese forced China to agree to the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which forced China to grant Korea independence (in reality it recognized Japan’s right to dominate Korea), and gave the island of Taiwan (Formosa) to Japan.

The European powers were stunned and alarmed by Japan’s success in the Sino-Japanese War. Fearing that Japan was becoming more powerful, they moved to protect their interests in China. Although the Chinese army greatly outnumbered the Japanese, the Japanese armed with modern weapons quickly defeated the Chinese. The Sino-Japanese War was over by February 1895. The victorious Japanese forced China to agree to the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which forced China to grant Korea independence (in reality it recognized Japan’s right to dominate Korea), and gave the island of Taiwan (Formosa) to Japan.

The European powers were stunned and alarmed by Japan’s success in the Sino-Japanese War. Fearing that Japan was becoming more powerful, they moved to protect their interests in China. The British, French, Germans and Russians pushed the Chinese to give them control of coastal areas and of “treaty ports”. The French and Germans took over mines and built railroads to better control parts of China close to the coastal “treaty ports” they administered. As part of this, the Russians received Port Arthur and the right to extend its Trans-Siberian Railroad. Possession of Port Arthur, a warm-water port on the Pacific, as a naval base for the Russian fleet allowed the Russians to project their power into the Pacific.

Simultaneously, in 1898, the United States became an imperialistic Pacific power after it defeated Spain in the Spanish American War. As a result of the war, the United States took control of the Philippine Islands. The Americans feared that the Europeans, through the Treaty System, would cut America out of the economic opportunities in China. In response, Secretary of State John Hay pushed the European nations to accept the “Open Door Policy” which would protect the “territorial integrity” of China against further losses of land and allow all nations to have equal access to the commercial opportunities in China.

Similar to the Taiping Rebellion, the Chinese reacted violently to the intervention and aggressiveness of foreigners. Many Chinese especially despised the Christian missionaries because they were seen as destroying traditional Chinese culture and religious practices. The Chinese wanted to re-establish Chinese sovereignty, dignity, and national respect.

Many Chinese joined the Society of Harmonious Fists, a secret organization often called the Boxers by Europeans. In 1900, the Boxers began a rebellion when they staged protests in Beijing where they shouted “Death to the foreign devils” and attacked foreigners. Believing that they were acting in defense of old empress dowager Tzu-His, the Boxers attacked the district of Beijing that housed foreigners, killing 242 westerners, including the German ambassador, and thousands of Chinese Christians. In response to the revolt, an international military force comprised of European, American, and Japanese soldiers was dispatched to
liberate westerners in Peking. After violently putting down the Boxer Rebellion, the Western powers forced the Chinese government to pay an indemnity of $333,000,000 for the “rescue mission” and give foreign powers the right to permanently station soldiers in Peking.

The combination of China’s weakness and Japan’s growing military power led Russia to station more soldiers along the Russian-Chinese border to protect its interests in northern China and base at Port Arthur. This increase in Russian military power caused Japan to become alarmed about Russia gaining too much power in Japan’s sphere of influence. In February 1904, the Japanese military launched a surprise attack on the Russian fleet based at Port Arthur. Only after the attack did the Japanese formally declare war. In response, the Russians dispatched their Baltic fleet, which sailed around the world to engage the Japanese navy. However, due to the incompetence of Russian navy, the Russian Baltic fleet was destroyed in a few hours at the Battle of Tsushima. The Russians did no better in the land war. While the Russians outnumbered the Japanese, they were poorly equipped and poorly led against the better-trained and equipped Japanese army. Still, the Japanese paid a high price for their victories in this war. For example, Japanese were able to capture Port Arthur in 1905 after a year long siege that resulted in more than 200,000 in Japanese dead. The Japanese also won the battle of Mukden, a four week struggle in which the Japanese lost 70,000 and the Russians lost 100,000. The Japanese tactic of frontal assault on entrenched forces convinced many military leaders in Europe that it was a good tactic (this would influence military tactics in World War One). The poor performance of the Russian military caused a political crisis in Russia and a popular revolt against the Russian Czar in 1905.

The Russo-Japanese War ended in 1905 when the Russia accepted an offer from United States President Theodore Roosevelt to act as mediator between Russia and Japan. The Treaty of Portsmouth recognized Japan as controlling Korea and Manchuria. For his role in ending the war, Theodore Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The fact that an Asian power dealt a crushing defeat to a major European nation was seen as alarming to many European countries. Amongst Asians, particularly the Chinese, the Japanese victory was seen with pride and as a reason for following the Japanese model of development.

European Imperialism in South East Asia

The areas of South East Asia, between India and China, formed an intersection of British, French, and Dutch colonial interests in Asia. In general, the European colonies in this region were developed as plantation agriculture for the purpose of growing rubber, sugar, and other products Europeans demanded. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the Dutch East Indies Company established its control over the Indonesian Islands. The British moved out of India to take Burma and Malaysia. The British encouraged Chinese to move to Malaya as a labor force, which made the Malayans a minority in their own country. The French took over the region of Indochina (modern nations of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos). Siam (the modern nation of Thailand) was the only nation in South East Asia to maintain its independence during this period. The king of Siam, Mongkut, was able to play the British and the French against each other to keep Siam independent.

European Imperialism and the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Turks began as nomadic warrior tribes in Central Asia. Over time, the Turks migrated westward where they met the Muslim Caliphate. The Caliphate had a policy of converting captured Turkish warriors to Islam and using the enslaved converts as soldiers called “ghazis”.

The Ottomans rose to power on the edge of the Byzantine Empire following the decline of the Mongol Empire. By 1350, the Ottoman had taken most of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) from the Byzantine Empire. In 1354, the Ottomans moved into the Balkans in Southeastern Europe. In 1389, the Ottomans destroyed the Serbian army in the Battle of Kosovo. This victory placed Ottoman control over the lands that surrounded the Byzantine city of Constantinople. In essence, the once mighty Byzantine Empire was reduced to Constantinople, a Christian island in a Muslim sea. Sultan Mehmet II was laid siege to the city not out of hatred for the Byzantines, but to unite the lands under Ottoman control.

After Sultan Mehmet II conquered Constantinople in 1453 (renaming it Istanbul and making it the capital of the Ottoman Empire) the Ottoman Empire continued to expand. Under Sultan Selim the Grim, the Ottomans, a Sunni Islamic Empire, defeated the Safavid Empire (Persia), a Shiite Islamic Empire, and conquered the three holiest cities of Islam, Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. Control of these cities gave the Ottoman Sultans an elevated position of power in the Muslim world – at times, they would claim the title of Caliph, the spiritual and political Islamic leader in the Muslim world. In addition, Selim conquered the Mameluke Dynasty of Egypt, which expanded Ottoman power all the way across North Africa.

The Ottoman Empire reached it greatest point under Sultan Suleyman I. Suleyman
became sultan in 1520 and ruled the empire for 46 years. The political stability created by a long reign enabled the Ottoman Empire to develop militarily and economically. Suleyman, named for the Biblical king Solomon, was a multitalented leader. He excelled as an administrator, general, and poet. The Ottomans remember him as Suleyman the Great or Suleyman the Lawgiver. Under Suleyman’s rule, the Ottomans expanded into Europe all the way to the gates of Vienna. The siege of Vienna marked the high water mark of the Ottoman Empire. Despite numerous attempts, the Ottomans never managed to capture the city. Still, the fact that the Ottomans could threaten the center of Europe scared many Europeans. Starting in Suleyman’s reign, the Ottomans established diplomatic ties with countries across Europe, including forming alliances with England and France.

While the Ottomans still controlled southeastern Europe, beginning in the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire began to change in several ways that marked the empire’s long decline. At the root of the problem was that once the Ottoman Empire stopped expanding and conquering other wealthy empires, they needed to raise enough money to maintain their army and imperial administration. While the Ottomans still collected revenue through controlling the spice trade to Europe, European overseas exploration made more difficult to finance the army and government.

At the peak of its power, the Ottoman Empire stretched from North Africa, across the Middle East, through Anatolia into the Balkans to Central Europe. As a result of the large region it covered, the Ottoman Empire was a complex multi-ethnic and multi-religious society ruled by the tribal Ottoman Turks and their military.

The Ottomans devised a system of government that gave the sultan power and prevented inter-ethnic or religious violence from destroying the empire. At the top of the Ottoman Empire was the Sultan who ruled the empire with the assistance of his family and palace advisors. An interesting aspect of Ottoman culture was that the Sultan’s advisors – called the Divan – and his elite soldiers, the Janissaries, were actually the personal slaves of the Sultan. The Ottomans entrusted these slaves with power because the slaves only had personal loyalty to the sultan. Unlike advisors of noble birth, the slaves had no family or clan to show favor towards. These slaves were recruited through a policy called the Devshirme system, in which young Christian boys were taken from their families, converted to Islam, and trained as soldiers or advisors.

The Janissaries, who took their name from the Turkish words “yeni cheri” meaning “new troops”, were the foremost soldiers in the world for their time. They were the first European army to be uniformed and to employ gunpowder weapons in battle. One of the reasons the Ottoman forces were so advanced was because they hired European military designers and purchased European weapons for their armies. In the long run, this strategy of depending on Europeans for military technology proved dangerous because the Ottomans never developed its own armaments industry.

For purposes of governing the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire, each religious group – Muslim, Orthodox Christian, and Jewish – were divided into Millets, which were self-governing, tax collecting, and subject to their own religious laws. As a result, the Ottoman Empire developed as a patchwork of different ethnic groups that never developed a unified national identity.

The religion of Islam also became more conservative during the period of the Ottoman Empire. In contrast to the early Islam that borrowed and improved upon ideas and technologies of other civilizations, the conservative Islam of the Ottomans tried to isolate itself and ignore developments in other civilizations, particularly Europe. As a result, the Ottomans began to fall behind Europe in areas of science and technology – which meant their military also became relatively weaker. Beginning in the 1600’s, the Ottomans slowly declined in power and to the point where they were viewed as the “sick man of Europe”.

As the Ottoman Empire weakened, Russia began to expand its power into the Balkans, the southeastern part of Europe, with the goal of gaining control of Istanbul and access to the Mediterranean Sea. In 1853, the Russians invaded the areas of Ottoman controlled Moldova. In November 1853, the Russian navy destroyed the Ottoman navy in the Battle of Sinope. The fact that it took days for word of the defeat to reach Istanbul is an indication of the poor quality of communication within the Ottoman Empire. Faced with the reality that the Russian military would defeat the Ottomans and could potentially gain control of the Eastern Mediterranean, the British, French, and Austrians, intervened on the side of the Ottomans. The threat of Austrian invasion in the Balkans forced the Russians to pull back their armies.

Despite the fact that the Russians had withdrawn its armies, the British and the French invaded Russia and landed an army in Crimea, on the Black Sea. Their motivation was to prevent Russia from expanding its power into the Mediterranean, which threatened British and French interests. The fighting in the Crimean War was focused around the Russian city of Sevastopol, which finally fell to the British and French in September 1853.
The Crimean War had an impact on the Ottomans. It brought home the reality of how far behind Europe, in terms of technology and military power, the Ottomans had fallen. In response to the war, the Ottoman Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz began a period of reform called the Tanzimat. British, French, and Austrian businessmen and experts began to work with the Ottomans to reform and rebuild its economy by introducing railroads, telegraphs, and modern legal systems to the Ottoman lands. It was during this time that the Berlin to Istanbul Orient Express was built, which led to more trade and contacts with Europe.

Unfortunately, for the Ottomans, the crash of the Vienna Stock Market in 1873 created political and economic chaos in the Ottoman Empire, since it stopped investment money from coming into the empire. In the Balkans, the Russians and the Serbians supported the Bosnians and the Bulgarians in taking advantage of this economic crisis to rebel for their independence. The Russians and the Serbian support for the Bosnians and the Bulgarians was based on a common identity of being Slavic and Orthodox Christian. This was an extension of nationalism called Pan-Slavism based on the Slavic people being united. In the Russo-Turkish War of 1878, the combined Russian – Slavic Balkan army was successful and pushed close to Istanbul. In order to save the Ottoman Empire, and prevent Russia from gaining access to the Mediterranean Sea, the British intervened again on behalf of the Ottomans by positioning its navy so that the Russians could not attack Istanbul. While the British intervention had saved the Ottomans, the Ottomans felt humiliated by the British action and it ended the close connection between the British and the Ottomans, and moved the Ottomans closer to the Germans.

The Treaty of San Stefano ended the Russo-Turkish War. Under the treaty, the Ottoman Empire granted independence to Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, and Macedonia. In addition the region of Bosnia-Herzegovina came under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was already struggling to contain the forces of nationalism within its own borders, tried to incorporate this region into its empire. However, Serbia, which viewed itself at the leading Slavic nation in the Balkans, wanted to gain control of the Serbian sections of Bosnia as a way of forming a unified Slavic nation in the Balkans. As a result of the weakening Ottoman position in the Balkans, the Russians, in support of Serbia, and the Austrians would come into conflict over Balkans. This conflict created the spark that would ignite World War One.

Ottoman Problems in the Arab World

In addition to external pressures, Ottoman power became subject to greater internal threats from nationalistic and religious forces that wanted to break away from the empire. For example, in the 1700’s on the Arabian Peninsula, a Muslim scholar, Muhammed ibn-Abd-al-Wahhab led a puritanical religious revival based on a strict interpretation of the Quran and a government based on Islamic law. Wahhab allied his religious cause with Muhammed ibn-Saud, the leader of the Saudi family. The combination of Saudi power and Wahhabi religious fundamentalism led to the Saud family conquering all of Arabia. In 1818, the Ottomans were able to recapture Arabia and banished the Saud family from Arabia. In 1902, the descendents of the Saud family returned to Arabia. Since the foundation of the modern nation of Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism has been the dominant form of Islam in Saudi Arabia. Osama bin Laden and other radical Muslim terrorist are ardent believers in Wahhabism.

In North Africa, since 1517, Egypt had been under a mixed system of control involving the Ottoman Empire, ruling through pashas or overlords, and Mamlukes, descended from slave-soldiers, who ruled through beys or governors. In general, this combined rule resulted in corruption, poverty and heavy taxation for the Egyptian population.

Ottoman control of Egypt virtually ended in 1798, when Napoleon invaded Egypt. The Ottoman pasha of Egypt, Mohammed Ali, Albanian by birth, led the resistance to the Napoleon’s French occupation. Napoleon abandoned Egypt, after the British destroyed his navy at the Battle of the Nile, so that he could return to France and seize power. Having driven the French from Egypt in 1801, Ali proceeded to rule Egypt as an independent country. In essence, he declared independence from the Ottomans. Ali wanted to unite the Arab lands under his control. The Ottomans were not Arabs, but Turkish. With this goal, he led his army to capture Sudan and Syria and prepare an assault on Istanbul. However, he was persuaded against doing this by the threat of British and French intervention on behalf of the Ottomans. The Western powers wished to preserve the “sick man of Europe” rather than have to deal with a modernized united Arab state.
Ali and his successors wanted to modernize Egypt. He reformed the military (importing weapons and advisors from Europe), improved education by building schools and factories. In order to pay for his reforms, Ali ordered farmers to grow cash crops such as cotton, sugar, and tobacco, which could be sold in Europe for money. However, these reform projects were very expensive and Ali had to borrow from European banks to maintain his reform. The national debt of Egypt grew from 250 million francs in 1865 to 2 billion by 1875. As Egypt grew more in debt, European governments began to use this debt as a way to take over Egypt. This was a case of economic imperialism. Instead of using weapons and war to take over a country, countries that practice economic imperialism use money and investments to dominate the economic resources and political structures of another country.

Another way Europeans began to take over Egypt was through the building of the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal connected the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea, and by connection the Indian Ocean. Built by French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps between 1859 and 1869, the Suez Canal cut 7000 miles and two weeks off the journey from Europe to India. Mohammed Ali had opposed the building of the canal when he ruled Egypt because he feared it would cause the Europeans to become more involved in Egyptian affairs. However, his successors approved of the project because of the wealth it might bring to Egypt. Originally, the canal was controlled by the Egyptians and owned by private investors. The Egyptians earned 15% of the canal’s profits. However, the growing indebtedness of Egypt to European creditors and the growing chaos of Egyptian finances drove the Egyptian government to bankruptcy.

At this point, the British, who believed that in order to secure their colonies in Asia, they needed to control the Suez Canal. They considered the canal to be the “Lifeline of the Empire” and sought to gain control of the canal. At first, the British planned to take over the canal through buying the private stock in the company that owned the canal. The British government used the debt of the Egyptian government to force it to sell its 200,000 shares of stock in the canal to them for about $6 million. The Egyptian government spent all the proceeds from the sale within a year.

In 1882, in order to protect its investment in the canal and to insure that Egypt could continue to repay its debts, the British stationed an army in Egypt and declared it a protectorate. This meant that Egypt was not part of the British Empire, but under the military control and protection of Britain.

Using Egypt as a base, Britain attempted to extend its influence south into the area of Sudan to take the lands that Egypt ruled. However, a fundamentalist Muslim army under the control of Muhammad ibn Abdalla, who claimed to be the Mahdi or Islamic Messiah, repelled the British advance into Sudan. After driving out the initial British invasion in 1885, the Mahdi established a Muslim state that lasted until 1898, when the British launched a second invasion that destroyed the Mahdi state. The Mahdi state brutalized the non-Muslim population of Sudan, which was treated as slaves. It is estimated that upwards of half the population of Sudan died during this period. The second British invasion was successful because it was based on using superior fire power, particularly Maxim machine guns, and building rail roads to support the advancing British Army. The Battle of Omdurman in September 1898 pitted the Mahdi army of 52,000 against the British force of 30,000. In the course of five hours, the Mahdi lost 11,000 to 40 British killed. Later, the British consul general of Egypt described Sudan as, “Large tracts of useless territory that it would be difficult and costly to administer.” The modern term “Fuzzy Wuzzy” was first used by the British soldiers to denote the fighters that supported the Mahdi and was made part of popular language by Rudyard Kipling.

Meanwhile, the increasing weakness of the Ottoman Empire led a group of young Ottoman army officers to organize the Committee of Union and Progress to modernize the Empire. In 1908, the CUP, often called the “Young Turks, organized the military to overthrow the government. Once they took power, they began to modernize the Ottoman Empire by establishing a constitution and creating a parliament, yet they kept the Sultan as the head of the government. Unfortunately, World War One broke out six years later, before any of the reforms could take hold. However, the actions and attempts of the Young Turks inspired the later Turkish nationalistic leader Mustafa Kamal.

Imperialism in Africa

African Slavery

The history of modern Africa is rooted in the insidious slave trade. Unfortunately, both Europeans and Muslims viewed Africa as a source of labor, and the institution of slavery distorted and crippled the development of Africa. While slavery was an
ancient institution in Africa, this form slavery was not a permanent condition and the children of slaves were not kept as slaves. European and Muslim participation in the African slave markets, changed the nature of African slavery.

Muslims in North and East Africa had long treated Africa as a source of slaves for other parts of the Muslim world. This was because Muslims could not enslave other Muslims, therefore non-Muslim areas were raided for slaves. Slaves were traded on the, north to south, gold for salt trade route in West Africa and in the Swahili city-states of East Africa. Between 650 and 1600, as many as 4.8 million African slaves were transported to other parts of the Muslim world.

With the discovery and colonization of the Americas, Europeans also became interested in the Africa as a source of slaves. The Portuguese had been aware of the African slavery since the early 1400’s, when their ships had begun exploring down the coast of West Africa. In the early 1500’s, both the Portuguese and Spanish began transporting slaves to their American colonies. Between 1500 and 1870, over 9 - 15 million African slaves were transported to the Americas.

Typically, the Europeans did not directly enslave Africans. Rather, Europeans paid costal African merchants and rulers for slaves. These coastal Africans raided the African interior for the slaves and then traded them to the Europeans for guns and metal tools. The slave trade changed the balance of power within Africa. Coastal tribes became wealthy and powerful trading captured people for more guns with which to expand their territory. At the peak of the slave trade, West Africa was losing 900,000 people a year.

European Industrialism in Africa

The Industrial Revolution caused Europeans to look to Africa as a source of raw materials for their factories. Europeans had been in contact with Africa since Portuguese expeditions down the west cost of Africa in the 1400’s and knew that Africa had abundant resources in metals, oil, and rubber. However, historically, because of because of diseases and problems in transportation Europeans had not been able to get direct access to interior Africa, where they could find the natural resources.

The Industrial Revolution gave the Europeans the tools to conquer and exploit Africa. The three most important tools the Europeans had in building empires in Africa were:

- **Steam Engine** – Allowed Europeans to travel easily to remote parts of Africa - power boats up African rivers and run trains across plains and deserts to haul out valuable resources.
- **Quinine** – A drug that protected Europeans from the disease of malaria, carried by mosquitoes.
- **Modern Guns** – Breach loading rifles and the Maxim gun, an early version of the machine gun, allowed small numbers of European soldiers and explorers to defeat large African armies. A Maxim gun could shoot 600 rounds a minute – it was equal to 30 breach loading rifles. The power of the Maxim gun was shown in 1899 when 320 French soldiers were able to defeat a Chadian army of 12,000. Frenchman Hillaire Belloe said, “Whatever happens, we have got the Maxim gun and they have not.”

European Explorers

Using the new technologies, Europeans began to explore the African interior. These early explorers concentrated on exploring along the major rivers of Africa such as the Nile, Congo, and Zambesi, because it was easier to travel along rivers than over land. Two of the most famous of these explorers were David Livingstone and Henry Stanley who explored large areas of southern Africa and published stories of their explorations around the world. When Livingston went missing while searching for the source of the Nile, Stanley was dispatched to find him. After trekking across southern Africa, in 1871, Stanley met Livingstone for the first time on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Although both men were world famous and the only European explorers at than time in central Africa, upon their meeting, Henry Stanley said, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”

While both Livingstone and Stanley were world famous explorers, their motivations for being in Africa were very different. Livingstone was fascinated by Africa. He learned African languages and customs. He saw his mission as converting Africans to Christianity and using modern medicine and science to improve the lives of African. In addition, Livingstone was determined to end the slave trade in East Africa. Stanley was not driven to explore by an interest in Africa and remarked of Africa, “I detest the land most heartily”. Instead, it was the wealth and fame of exploration that drove him. It was the work mapping out thousands of miles of previously unexplored Africa and writing about African culture that gave Europeans the interest and
knowledge to conquer the continent. In fact, Stanley worked directly for King Leopold II of Belgium to explore and gain control of the Congo River Basin, which would become the Congo Free State.

**European Colonies in Africa**

The Industrial Revolution in Europe drove the major European countries to take over lands that could supply their factories with resources. Africa, because of its close proximity to Europe and weaker societies, became the focus of European imperial ambition. Beginning in the 1800’s, the most powerful European nations began to claim African lands as part of their overseas empires, often without a care or interest in what the Africans thought about these actions. French prime minister Jules Ferry described it as the “Scramble for Africa”.

With the inventions and development of the **maxim gun** and the **steam engine**, small groups of European explorers and soldiers were able to easily conquer and control large areas of Africa. The Europeans also used one group of Africans against other groups of Africans. This is how the Europeans originally operated the slave trade, by paying one tribe to enslave another. Now, in return for basic tools and privileges, the Europeans employed tribes of Africans to be soldiers to help in conquering other tribes. This legacy of the European favoring some tribes over others has caused long-standing hatred between tribes that continue to the modern day. For example, in Rwanda in 1994 members of the **Hutu** tribe massacred over 100,000 people in the **Tutsi** in less than a month.

For the European imperialists, the greatest obstacle in conquering and controlling large sections of Africa was not African resistance, but other European countries. Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal, all wanted their “place in the sun” and were willing to fight each other for these places. In order to avoid a European war over African territory, in 1884 to 1885, the leaders of fourteen European nations met at the Berlin Conference to divide Africa between them. No Africans were invited to this meeting. At the Berlin Conference, the Europeans, largely ignorant of the African interior, divided Africa into colonial areas with borders that did not match either the physical or social realities of Africa. African tribes were divided among several European colonies and were often forced to live in the same colonies as their enemies. This is how countries like **Rwanda** (which would suffer a brutal inter-tribal genocide in 1994) came into existence. Berlin Conference said that European countries had to demonstrate “effective occupation”, which meant they needed to pacify, administer and tax the region.

The modern country of Nigeria is another example of how the Berlin Conference created countries of mixed groups. Before the Berlin Conference, the land of Nigeria had been controlled by the **British Royal Niger Company**, and as result of the Berlin Conference became part of the British Empire. The agents of the Royal Niger Company had put this colony together by getting tribal chiefs to sign over their lands with written treaties. Company agents carried blank treaties to be signed during negotiations with African tribes. The first paragraph of the treaty used by the Royal Niger Company read, “We, the undersigned chiefs of……, with the view to the betterment of the condition of our country and people do on this day cede to the Royal Niger Company, forever, the whole of our territory…” As a result, the country of Nigeria consists of 250 different ethnic groups. These groups have different religions, cultures, and forms of government. To govern Nigeria, the British depended on and gave the Africans, typically to tribal leaders, some power in governing themselves. But the British kept all the real power for themselves. One result of this type of leadership was that Nigeria never developed a national identity. Even today it is a country of different types of people that is difficult to govern and elections in Nigeria often result in violence between tribal groups.

The Berlin Conference also created cases of small European countries winning much larger pieces of land in Africa. The clearest example of this was **Belgium**, which gained a piece of Africa, called the **Belgian Congo**, which was 80 times larger than Belgium. Even stranger is the fact that the Belgian government did not directly control the Belgian Congo; rather it was the personal property of the King of Belgium **Leopold II**. Leopold II described Africa as “magnificent cake”. From 1885 to 1908, the Belgian Congo was controlled by Leopold II and was called the **Congo Free State**. Ironically, nothing was free in Congo Free
State. Leopold ran the Congo for his own personal profit, allowing European companies to plunder the Congo for ivory, copper, and rubber. It is estimated that the Congo made Leopold a personal fortune of $20 million. The Africans who lived in the Congo Free State were used as slave labor, and were often punished by having their hands and ears cut off if they refused to work (this punishment included children). During the period of the Congo Free State, over 10 million African Congolese died. The Belgians built a railway 241 miles long to haul resources over the area of rapids in the Congo River — at a cost of thousands of African lives from overwork and brutal treatment.

While European clearly brutalized the African Congo, not all Europeans supported these actions. In fact, the first human rights organizations in the world were formed to put an end to the inhumanity of the Congo Free State. The crimes of the Congo were first brought to the world’s attention through the writings of African-American missionary William Sheppard in the 1880’s. Sheppard spend 20 years in Africa documenting the Belgian abuse on the Congolese tribes. The real evidence of the deliberate intentions the Belgian had in exploiting the Congo was shown in the work of British Journalist Edmund Morel. In the 1890’s, Morel was able to view the accounts of the Congo Free State and noticed that ships going to the Congo only carried guns, chains and explosives and returned with rubber and ivory. Clearly, there was no intention to trade with or improve lives of the Congolese. Morel further investigated the Congo and wrote books with photographs of Congolese children with missing hands that were published across Europe and in the United States. In addition, Morel worked with Roger Casement, the British consul to Congo to form the Congo Reform Association in 1904, which had members in both Europe and the United States – including Mark Twain.

The most famous writing testifying to the brutality of the Congo Free State was the book “Heart of Darkness” written by Joseph Conrad, who had worked as a riverboat captain on the Congo. Conrad described European imperialism in the Congo as, “the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience and geographic exploration.” In “Heart of Darkness”, the main character, Kurtz representing the European civilization uses his powers and talents to brutal and barbaric society in the Congo. In the end, Kurtz reacts to life he created in the Congo by saying, “The horror, the horror”. Responding to this international pressure, in 1908, the Belgian government took over the Congo Free State and ended the worst of the abuses.

By the end of the 1800’s, the only parts of Africa to remain independent of European colonization were the countries of Liberia and Ethiopia. Liberia had been colonized by former American slaves who had been freed and returned to Africa as part of a pre-Civil War program to end slavery. Ironically, the former American slaves promptly set up a plantation system of agriculture similar to the American South. Ethiopia was ruled by Christian Emperor Menelik and retained its independence after the Ethiopian army destroyed a 17,000 man Italian army in March 1896. However, Italy retained control over the coastal region of Eritrea.

Even after staking their claims in Africa, Europeans faced many revolts across Africa. In last quarter of the nineteenth century, the British fought three wars against the Asante people of West Africa. In the third war the Asante nearly drove the British from their lands. Only with heavy reinforcements did the British conquer the Asante. In 1905, the Germans brutally suppressed a series of uprisings in East Africa. The Germans systematically crushed the rebellious Herero tribe by driving them into the Kalahari Desert. It is estimated that up to 80% of the Herero people died as a result of the German policy. The contempt that Europeans had for African lives was shown by the French Governor of Ivory Coast Louis-Gabriel Angoulvant, who said, “That some natives should be killed in the struggle is inevitable, and even desirable.”

After conquering most of Africa, European governments recognized that most of Africa did not offer easy wealth or opportunities for European businesses. As a result, the Europeans established small colonial administrations to govern Africa. By the 1930’s, British tropical Africa, with a population of 43 million people, was ruled by 1,200 administrators. Sub-Saharan French Africa had slightly more than 600 administrators. The Belgian Congo has only 700 administrators. These Europeans literally acted as kings of their administrative districts. British administrator on the Gold Coast summerd up the European approach to governing Africa when he said, “as much as possible to rule the country as if there were no inhabitants.”
Imperialism in Southern Africa

During the Age of Exploration, the southern tip of Africa had been an important point along the trade routes from Europe to Asia. While it was originally discovered and navigated by the Portuguese, the first permanent European colonies were established by the Dutch as part of their worldwide trading empire. In 1652, the Dutch established the colony of Cape Town on the southern point of Africa. As the Cape Town colony became more prosperous, the Dutch settlers, known as Boers (Dutch word for “farmers”), began to spread out to claim more land in southern Africa. As they took more land, they came into contact with the local African tribes whom they enslaved. The Dutch Boers were Calvinists who viewed themselves as the Elect (meaning they were pre-destined to go to heaven), and this gave them the right to enslave Africans and take African lands.

The Dutch maintained control over the colony until 1806, when the British took over the colony. In the treaties that ended the Napoleonic Wars, the British took South Africa from the Dutch in order to protect its trade routes to its colonies in India. In 1820, 5000 British settlers arrived at the Cape Colony. The British colonial government and the Boers came into conflict over the issue of slavery. In 1833, the British had outlawed slavery and forced the Boers to free their slaves. The Boers believed God gave them the right to enslave the Africans. In the 1830s, large numbers of Boer settlers decided to leave the Cape Town colony and move northward. Ten thousand Boers migrated northward in an event called the Great Trek and established two new Boer colonies called the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

However, neither the Great Trek nor the establishment of the new colonies was simple. Along the Great Trek, the Boers came into contact with the Zulus, a militaristic Bantu people who lived in Southeastern Africa. The Zulus were not native to South Africa, but had been migrating southward in Africa. Around 1816, under the leadership of Shaka, the Zulus became the most powerful tribe in Southern Africa. Shaka had organized the Zulu into a unified fighting force, developed new tactics for fighting, and introduced new heavier spears as the main Zulu weapon. While he did know of European guns, he thought the thought process of reloading to be too time consuming to be practical in battle.

In the fighting between the Zulus and the Boers, in the early hit and run attacks, the Zulus were very successful. However, the Boers had the upper hand through the use of guns. This was clearly demonstrated in the Battle of Blood River when five hundred Boers fought off 10,000 Zulu warriors. At the end of the battle, the Boers had lost 3 and the Zulus had more than 3000 casualties. While the defeat resulted in a civil war among the Zulu, the Zulu remained a powerful force in Southeastern Africa and the neither the Boer of Zulu was able to win a decisive victory that gave it control of the land. As the Boers moved inland and attempted to establish their own countries, the British, who considered them subjects, pursued and annexed the new Boer territories. This conflict led to the Anglo-Boer War of 1877 that ended in Boer victory. After the war, the Boers formed the South African Republic.

The Boer-Zulu wars were ended by the discovery of gold and diamonds in the Transvaal. In 1879, the British, who had largely ignored the Boer-Zulu wars, now moved north to seize the diamonds and gold for themselves. The British found the Zulus to be a difficult enemy and suffered many losses to the Zulus, including the Battle of Isandlwana, where only 8 soldiers out of an entire British regiment survived the battle (this was because they were using a new rifle that was prone to jamming up under heavy use). Despite the setbacks, the British were able to draw on their world-wide empire to build an army to crush the Zulus and divide Zululand into 13 separate territories. This broke up the Zulu tribe.

Cecil Rhodes came to symbolize the economic interest of the British in Southern Africa. Rhodes was a diamond miner who established the De Beers Mining Company that came to control 90% of the world’s diamonds. Rhodes used his economic power to gain political power. He became the leader of the British Cape Colony. Rhodes wanted to establish a British Africa that stretched from Cape Town to Cairo. Acting as an independent agent, Rhodes negotiated a treaty with the king of the Matabele, Lobengula. Through trickery, Rhodes got a treaty with Lobengula, king of the Matabele, in which Lobengula signed away his kingdom for 1000 rifles and 10,000 rounds of ammunition. After he realized what he did, he said, “Did you ever see a chameleon catch a fly? England is the chameleon and I am the fly.” When Lobengula refused to honor the treaty, Rhodes sent in his personal army armed with Maxim guns to defeat the Matabele. The value of the Maxim gun was demonstrated
by on battle in which fifty of Rhodes’ men held off a force of 5000 Matabele. After a series of short one-sided battles, Rhodes conquered the Matabele lands and made it into Rhodesia.

After this victory, Rhodes used this power to push Britain to take control of the diamond mines in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, including sending British soldiers to attack the Boers. In addition to the British, the Boers faced internal problems. The discovery of gold and diamonds resulted in many non-Boer Europeans settling in the Boer Republics, which eroded the Boer culture and dominance. In 1899, the British demanded that the “foreigners” living in the Boer Republics be given the right to vote. This issue provoked the second Anglo-Boer War, better known as the Boer War.

At the outset of the war, the Boers had the upper hand with an army of 35,000 against a British force of 27,000. In addition, the Boers were largely fighting a defensive war and were supported by Germany, who supplied them with rifles. The Boers failed to use this advantage to rapidly defeat the British. Instead, with time, the British brought in re-enforcements from the rest of the Empire and tried to use their overwhelming military power (almost half a million soldiers) to crush the Boers. The Boers responded by fighting a guerrilla war against the British Army. To defeat the Boer guerrilla tactics, the British created the first concentration camps to imprison Boer women and children and destroyed Boer settlements. In the concentration camps, the British imprisoned more than 200,000 Boers – mostly women and children – of whom 26,000 died of disease (70% of the Boer losses in the war. The war ended in 1902, with the Boer republics joining the Union of South Africa, a self-governing country under the control of the British. However, the Boers made up a majority of the white population in South Africa and quickly took political control of the country.