

Chapter 12

Anticolonialism, Nationalism, and Revolution in Africa, Asia, and Latin America

DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, the industrialized nations of Europe and the United States—"the West"—achieved unprecedented global dominance. For India and most of Africa and Southeast Asia, this meant colonial status and outright political control by Western nations. For China, Persia, the Ottoman Empire, and many states in Latin America, it meant the subordination of their economic interests to those of the West and erosion of their political sovereignty. Most Europeans and Americans viewed these developments as just and inevitable. Their preponderance confirmed their intellectual and moral superiority to black-, yellow-, and brown-skinned people, whom the English writer Rudyard Kipling had depicted in his poem "The White Man's Burden" as "half devil and half child."

In the first half of the twentieth century, however, Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans challenged the West's ascendancy. In areas of formal empire, mounting anticolonialism gave rise to organized parties and movements whose supporters demanded more political power and, ultimately, independence. Such movements were strongest in India, where opposition to British rule escalated from polite requests by educated Indians for greater political responsibility to nationwide boycotts and mass demonstrations for independence. Despite French, British, and Dutch

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repression in Southeast Asia, dozens of political parties and underground organizations worked for the peaceful end or violent overthrow of colonial regimes. In Africa—although colonized only in the late 1800s and despite its ethnic and linguistic diversity—articulate and forceful proponents of pan-Africanism, anticolonialism, and nationalism also emerged. In the Arab Middle East, where nationalist aspirations after World War I were dashed by the mandate system and the continuation of the British protectorate in Egypt, opponents of Anglo-French political control sought independence for Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria.

While nationalism in colonial areas was directed against foreign rule, in those parts of Asia and Latin America where states were independent but nonetheless subservient in many respects to U.S. and European interests, it focused on overcoming economic dependency and political weakness. In Turkey, this meant a sharp break from its past and implementation of a program of secularization and modernization under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In China, nationalism resulted in a struggle to rebuild the country and end foreign interference in the face of warlordism, civil war, and Japanese invasions of Manchuria in 1931 and China itself in 1937. In Latin America, nationalism inspired new plans for economic development after the Great Depression of the 1930s ruined the worldwide market for the region's minerals and agricultural products. In several Latin American countries, such efforts intensified conflict between entrenched elites and populist leaders who promised the masses social reforms.

When World War II ended in 1945, many Western leaders thought they could return to the world they had dominated before the war. In the immediate postwar years, the Dutch, French, and British all used force to maintain their empires but soon realized the futility of their efforts. Based on developments in the first half of the twentieth century, Asian and African demands for independence proved irresistible.

African Society and Identity Under Colonial Rule

Compared with the experience of India, the unfolding of colonialism in Africa resembles watching a film shown at high speed. The European "scramble for Africa" began in the early 1880s, and after overcoming resistance and deciding among themselves who controlled what, Africa's new masters gave serious thought to what policies would determine the future of their new acquisitions. Not long after these issues had been resolved, World War II was fought, and independence movements

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swept through Africa. In 1957, the Gold Coast, a British colony, became the independent nation of Ghana, sparking a chain of events that resulted in the establishment of dozens of new independent states within the next decade and a half.

So brief was Africa's colonial experience, and so rapid was the Europeans' exit, that nationalism in Africa never became the broad popular movement that emerged in India during the long struggle against British rule. In addition, nationalist movements in Africa were hampered by other factors: the indifference of many chiefs, farmers, and petty traders who benefited from European rule; the paucity of Africans with formal education and political experience; the gap between educated city-dwellers and the rural masses; and rivalries among ethnic groups. Nevertheless, Africans in the interwar years found ways to express their opposition to colonial rule. They demonstrated against labor conscription, new taxes, and government-mandated land confiscations. They organized political associations, published journals, wrote books and editorials, joined independent African Christian churches, attended international meetings, and sent representatives to European capitals to state their grievances. A new generation of African nationalist leaders emerged, and a growing audience listened to what they had to say.

Eagles into Chickens

92 • JAMES AGGREY, PARABLE OF THE EAGLE

James Aggrey, an educator and clergyman who was among the most prominent Africans of his day, was born in 1875 in the Gold Coast, a British colony. He was educated in a Protestant mission school, became a convert to Christianity, and at age 23 traveled to the United States to study for the ministry. He remained in the United States for 20 years, studying economics and agriculture, speaking out against racial prejudice, and working among poor blacks of South Carolina. He returned to Africa in 1918 and died in 1927. "Parable of the Eagle" was written in the early 1920s.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to the lesson of Aggrey's parable, what psychological and emotional damage results from colonialism?
2. If the lessons of Aggrey's parable had been translated into actual policy by colonial administrators, what aspects of colonial rule would have been affected?

A certain man went through a forest seeking any bird of interest he might find. He caught a young eagle, brought it home and put it among his fowls and ducks and turkeys, and gave it chickens' food to eat even though it was an eagle, the king of birds.

Source: James Aggrey, "Parable of the Eagle," in Edwin Smith, *Aggrey of Africa* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1929).

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Five years later a naturalist came to see him and, after passing through his garden, said: "That bird is an eagle, not a chicken."

"Yes," said its owner, "but I have trained it to be a chicken. It is no longer an eagle, it is a chicken, even though it measures fifteen feet from tip to tip of its wings."

"No," said the naturalist, "it is an eagle still: it has the heart of an eagle, and I will make it soar high up to the heavens."

"No," said the owner, "it is a chicken, and it will never fly."

They agreed to test it. The naturalist picked up the eagle, held it up, and said with great intensity: "Eagle, thou art an eagle; thou dost belong to the sky and not to this earth; stretch forth thy wings and fly."

The eagle turned this way and that, and then, looking down, saw the chickens eating their food, and down he jumped.

The owner said: "I told you it was a chicken."

"No," said the naturalist, "it is an eagle. Give it another chance tomorrow."

So the next day he took it to the top of the house and said: "Eagle, thou art an eagle; stretch forth thy wings and fly." But again the eagle, seeing the chickens feeding, jumped down and fed with them.

Then the owner said: "I told you it was a chicken."

"No," asserted the naturalist, "it is an eagle, and it still has the heart of an eagle; only give it one more chance, and I will make it fly tomorrow."

The next morning he rose early and took the eagle outside the city, away from the houses, to the foot of a high mountain. The sun was just rising, gilding the top of the mountain with gold, and every crag was glistening in the joy of that beautiful morning.

He picked up the eagle and said to it: "Eagle, thou art an eagle; thou dost belong to the sky and not to this earth; stretch forth thy wings and fly!"

The eagle looked around and trembled as if new life were coming to it; but it did not fly. The naturalist then made it look straight at the sun. Suddenly it stretched out its wings and, with the screech of an eagle, it mounted higher and higher and never returned. It was an eagle, though it had been kept and tamed as a chicken! My people of Africa, we were created in the image of God, but men have made us think that we are chickens, and we still think we are; but we are eagles. Stretch forth your wings and fly! Don't be content with the food of chickens!

The Value of African Tradition

93 • **KABAKA DAUDI CHWA, EDUCATION, CIVILIZATION, AND "FOREIGNIZATION" IN BUGANDA**

The Great Lakes region of east-central Africa, dominated by the kingdom of Buganda, was an area of extensive European missionary activity in the nineteenth century. British Protestant missionaries arrived in 1877 and were followed by French Catholic missionaries in 1879. With the hold of traditional religion already weakened by conversions to Islam, the missionaries made numerous converts, especially among young courtiers in the entourage of Buganda's hereditary ruler, known as the *kabaka*. In the 1880s, Protestant-Catholic rivalries among the chiefs led to civil war, the weakening of the *kabaka*'s power, and the

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establishment in 1894 of the British protectorate of Uganda, of which Buganda was the largest part.

Daudi Chwa (1897–1939), as a 2-year-old, was named kabaka of Buganda after his father had been deposed and exiled for leading a campaign against the British. A convert to Christianity, he was a figurehead, since the British gave his major chiefs a free hand to administer the colony. He did play an active and successful role in opposing the plan to consolidate Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika into one colony in the 1930s. Toward the end of his life, Daudi Chwa developed reservations about the effects of colonial rule, especially in the cultural and religious spheres. In 1935, four years before his death, he expressed his views in a pamphlet, “Education, Civilization, and ‘Foreignization’ in Buganda.”

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. How would you characterize the traditional system of justice of the Baganda? By what means did this system deter behavior that was counter to the people's rules and customs?
2. According to the kabaka, in what ways do traditional Baganda moral values resemble those of Christianity?
3. According to the kabaka, what have the people of Buganda (the Baganda) gained and lost as a result of European colonization?
4. What sort of thinking about the “backwardness” of the Baganda does the kabaka try to counter in his letter?
5. In the kabaka's view, what should be the proper balance between traditional and European beliefs and practices?

Everyone knows that education and civilization were started simultaneously in this country in their respective rudimentary forms by the kind efforts of the members of the various Missionary Societies and have now been enhanced largely due to the assistance rendered by the Protectorate Government.

Naturally, Education and Civilization gained tremendous favour among the Baganda,¹ and as a consequence there are numerous Schools in remote villages in Buganda Kingdom for the Education of the young generations. . . .

Now my fears are that instead of the Baganda acquiring proper and legitimate education and

civilization there is possible danger that they may be drifting to “foreignization.” . . . To be more explicit, what I mean by the word “foreignization” is that instead of the Baganda acquiring proper education at the various Schools and of availing themselves of the legitimate amenities of civilization, I am very much afraid the young generation of this country is merely drifting wholesale towards “foreignization” of their natural instincts and is discarding its native and traditional customs, habits and good breeding. . . .

I am well aware that it has been said more than once that the Baganda have neither morals nor public opinion. . . . I do not wish . . . to uphold

Source: Donald A. Low, *The Mind of Buganda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 134–138. Reprinted by permission of the University of California Press.

¹The Baganda are the people of the kingdom of Buganda.

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the Baganda as a Nation of Angels—But what I do maintain is that prior to the advent of the Europeans the Baganda had a very strict moral code of their own which was always enforced by a constant and genuine fear of some evil or incurable or even fatal disease being suffered invariably by the breaker of this moral code. In fact I maintain the Baganda observed most strictly the doctrine of the Ten Commandments in spite of the fact that Christianity and the so-called Christian morals were absolutely unknown to the Baganda. . . .

(a) Theft was always punished very severely, invariably by the loss of the right hand of the offender, so as to render him incapable of committing the same offense again.

(b) Adultery was almost unknown among the Baganda and any man found guilty of such offense was always ostracized from Society.

(c) Murder was invariably followed by a very severe vendetta between the members of the family or clan of the victim and those of the offender.

(d) Filial obedience was most honored among the Baganda and disobedience or disrespect of one's parents was always supposed to be punished by some higher power by the infliction of some horrible or incurable disease upon the offender.

(e) False evidence was looked upon with contempt. The person who bore false evidence and the person against whom it was given were both subjected to a very severe test by forcing them to drink a certain kind of strong drug known as "Madudu," which was supposed to result in making one of the parties who was in the wrong unconscious.

In this connection I should like to point out that although polygamy was universally recognized among the Baganda and was never considered as immoral yet prostitution was absolutely unheard of. Civilization, education and freedom are the direct causes of the appalling state of affairs as regards prostitution and promiscuous relationships between the Baganda men and women. . . .

As an illustration of the strictness of the old moral code of the Baganda I should like to point out here one of the most important native customs of looking after the daughters in a Muganda's² home. It was one of the worst filial offenses for a daughter to become pregnant while living with her parents. As soon as she was discovered in that condition she was at once expelled from her parents' house, and was absolutely cut off from them. She could not eat with them nor would her parents touch her until the child was born and some rites had been gone through which necessitated a great deal of hardship and shame on the part of the girl and her seducer. This custom was intended to stimulate morality among the Baganda girls, since any girl who went astray before she was given in marriage suffered this indignity and was always looked upon with contempt by all her relatives and friends. Furthermore any girl who was given in marriage and was found not to be a virgin merited unspeakable disfavor in the eyes of her parents, relations and friends. All this, however, is of course, no longer the case. The present so-called education and civilization prevailing in this country has completely destroyed this moral code by removing the constant fear just referred to above from the minds of the young generation of the Baganda by the freedom and liberty which are the natural consequences of the present World civilization. . . .

I am strongly of opinion that most of the traditional customs and etiquette of the Baganda . . . were quite consistent with the principles of Christianity. In support of this argument it is only necessary to mention a few customs of the Baganda to show that they unconsciously possessed a sense of the modern Christian morality:

(a) It was one of the most important behaviors among the Baganda for one's neighbor to be considered as his own relative and to share with him in his happiness or unhappiness. . . .

²Muganda is the word for an individual Bagandan.

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(b) It was the recognized etiquette for a Muganda to salute every one that he met on the road, whether he knew him or not.

(c) When a Muganda was taking his meal and any one passed by, it was always the custom to invite him to share it with him.

(d) It was always the duty of everyone who hears an alarm at any time of day or night or a cry for help to go at once and render assistance to the party in distress or danger. . . .

(e) It was the duty of every Muganda, when requested, to assist any traveller in directing him to his destination, or to give him food or water, and even to give him shelter from rain or for the night. . . .

My intention therefore in this article is to emphasize the fact that while boasting of having acquired Western education and civilization in an amazingly short period, we have entirely

and completely ignored our native traditional customs. In other words we have "foreignized" our native existence by acquiring the worst foreign habits and customs of the Western people. I am only too well aware that this is inevitable in all countries where Western civilization has reached, so I have considered it my duty in this article to warn very strongly all members of the young generation of the Baganda that while they are legitimately entitled to strive to acquire education and civilization they should also take a very great care that acquisition of Western Education and Civilization does not automatically destroy their best inherent traditions and customs which, in my own opinion, are quite as good as those found among the Western Civilized countries but which only require developing and remodelling where necessary on the lines and ideas of western civilization.

New Leaders and New Sources of Conflict in the Middle East

The immediate aftermath of World War I brought political disaster to the Middle East. The Turks, who had fought on Germany's side, were forced in 1920 to accept the humiliating Treaty of Sèvres, which stripped Turkey of its Arab territories; limited the Turkish army to 50,000 men; gave France, Britain, and Italy control of its finances; and proposed to cede parts of Turkey itself to Italy, Greece, and the new states of Kurdistan and Armenia. The sultan, overwhelmed by problems of lawlessness, army desertions, and inflation, not only accepted the treaty but failed to offer resistance when the Greeks landed troops in western Anatolia in May 1919.

The Turks' former subjects, the Arabs, also experienced bitter disappointment. Promised self-rule for joining the Anglo-French alliance and fighting against their Ottoman overlords, they learned in 1919 that the British and French had agreed in 1916 to divide Arab lands between them and that this, rather than the promises of Arab independence, would determine the postwar settlement. In 1920, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan all became British or French mandates, a status that differed little from old-style colonialism. Arabs also were incensed by the continuation of the British protectorate in Egypt and by the British intention of honoring their wartime promises to support the establishment of a national homeland in

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Palestine for the Jewish people. Farther east, another major Islamic state, Persia, under the decrepit rule of the Qajar Dynasty, also seemed on the verge of becoming a British protectorate.

Efforts to reverse the postwar settlements succeeded in Turkey and Persia. Under Mustafa Kemal, the Turks rallied to drive out the Greeks and smash the nascent Armenian state between 1919 and 1922. In 1922, they abolished the sultanate, and in 1923, the European powers agreed to replace the Treaty of Sèvres with the Treaty of Lausanne, which recognized the integrity and independence of the new Turkish republic. Assuming near-dictatorial powers, Mustafa Kemal now had an opportunity to transform Turkey into a modern secular state. In Persia, which barely avoided becoming a British protectorate in 1919, Colonel Reza Khan (1878–1944) was named shah in 1925 and, like his hero Kemal, sought to build up his country (which officially adopted the name Iran in 1935) through economic development, educational reform, and secularization.

Arab efforts to achieve independence and prevent Jewish immigration to Palestine were less successful. Of the 20 Arab states that stretched from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east, only Saudi Arabia and parts of Yemen were truly independent in the interwar years. Egypt and Iraq attained limited self-rule, but the presence of British troops and continuing British influence over foreign and military affairs were sources of resentment in both countries. The drive for independence was even more frustrating in French-controlled Lebanon and Syria. In the 1930s, the French reneged on promises to relinquish their authority, and Lebanon remained a mandate until 1943 and Syria until 1946. Arabs throughout the Middle East also were angered by growing Jewish migration to Palestine, especially in the wake of the Nazi takeover of Germany.

While confronting these postwar political problems, the people and leaders of the region faced other difficult issues. What could be done to end poverty and illiteracy? How could the teachings and expectations of Islam be reconciled with the realities and demands of modernization? Was modernization itself desirable, and, if so, how was it to be achieved? Was the goal of Arab nationalism the expulsion of the British and French and the stifling of Zionism, or was it the attainment of a single united Arab state? In the face of the changes that swept across the region in the first half of the twentieth century, finding answers to questions such as these became more urgent and more difficult.

Secularism and Nationalism in Republican Turkey

94 • MUSTAFA KEMAL, SPEECH TO THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLICAN PARTY

The arch-symbol of secularism and nationalism in the Muslim world in the interwar years was Mustafa Kemal (1881–1938), a military hero during World War I who went on to serve as the first president of the Turkish republic. Disgusted by

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the Ottoman sultan's acquiescence to the Greek occupation of the Turkish port of Smyrna (Izmir) in 1919, Kemal assumed leadership of a resistance movement that by 1923 had overthrown the sultan, defeated the Greeks, and won the annulment of the punitive Treaty of Sèvres. Exercising broad powers as president of Turkey, until his death in 1938 Kemal sought to transform Turkey into a modern secular nation-state. To accomplish this, he broke the power of Islam over education and the legal system, encouraged industrialization, accorded women full legal rights, mandated the use of a new Turkish alphabet, and ordered Turks to adopt Western-style dress. Directing all Turks to adopt hereditary family names, he took for himself the name Atatürk, or "Great Turk."

Having consolidated his authority, Kemal decided in 1927 to review his accomplishments and impress upon his subjects the need for continued support. He chose as the occasion the meeting of Turkey's only legal political party, the People's Republican Party, which he had founded. He delivered an extraordinary speech. Three months in preparation, it lasted six days.

In these excerpts he discusses Turkey's past and future; explains his reasons for abolishing the caliphate, the ancient office by virtue of which Ottoman sultans had been the theoretical rulers of all Muslims; and justifies his suppression of the Progressive Republican Party, which despite its name was a party of conservatives who opposed Turkey's modernization.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. According to Kemal, what were the "erroneous ideas" that had guided the Ottoman state in the past?
2. Why does Kemal argue that nation-states, not empires, are the most desirable form of political organization?
3. What is Kemal's view of the West?
4. What are his views of Islam?
5. What arguments does Kemal offer against the continuation of the caliphate?
6. How does Kemal justify his suppression of the Progressive Republicans? What, in his view, were the positive results of this step?

[Nationalism and Empire]

. . . Among the Ottoman rulers there were some who endeavored to form a gigantic empire by seizing Germany and Western Europe. One of these rulers hoped to unite the whole Islamic world in one body, to lead it and govern it. For this

purpose he obtained control of Syria and Egypt and assumed the title of Caliph.¹ Another Sultan pursued the twofold aim, on the one hand of gaining the mastery over Europe, and on the other of subjecting the Islamic world to his authority and government. The continuous counterattacks from

Source: Mustafa Kemal, *A Speech Delivered by Ghazi Mustapha Kemal* (Leipzig: F. F. Koehler, 1929), pp. 376–379, 589–594, 717, 721–722.

¹A reference to Selim I, who conquered Egypt and Syria in 1515–1516; it is doubtful that he actually considered himself caliph—that is, leader and protector of all Muslims.

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the West, the discontent and insurrections in the Muslim world, as well as the dissensions between the various elements which this policy had artificially brought together within certain limits, had the ultimate result of burying the Ottoman Empire, in the same way as many others, under the pall of history. . . .

To unite different nations under one common name, to give these different elements equal rights, subject them to the same conditions and thus to found a mighty State is a brilliant and attractive political ideal; but it is a misleading one. It is an unrealizable aim to attempt to unite in one tribe the various races existing on the earth, thereby abolishing all boundaries. Herein lies a truth which the centuries that have gone by and the men who have lived during these centuries have clearly shown in dark and sanguinary events.

There is nothing in history to show how the policy of Panislamism² could have succeeded or how it could have found a basis for its realization on this earth. As regards the result of the ambition to organize a State which should be governed by the idea of world-supremacy and include the whole of humanity without distinction of race, history does not afford examples of this. For us, there can be no question of the lust of conquest. . . .

In order that our nation should be able to live a happy, strenuous, and permanent life, it is necessary that the State should pursue an exclusively national policy and that this policy should be in perfect agreement with our internal organization and be based on it. When I speak of national policy, I mean it in this sense: To work within our national boundaries for the real happiness and

welfare of the nation and the country by, above all, relying on our own strength in order to retain our existence. But not to lead the people to follow fictitious aims, of whatever nature, which could only bring them misfortune, and expect from the civilized world civilized human treatment, friendship based on mutuality. . . .

[The Issue of the Caliphate]

I must call attention to the fact that Hodja Shukri, as well as the politicians who pushed forward his person and signature, had intended to substitute the sovereign bearing the title of Sultan or Padishah by a monarch with the title of Caliph.³ The only difference was that, instead of speaking of a monarch of this or that country or nation, they now spoke of a monarch whose authority extended over a population of three hundred million souls belonging to manifold nations and dwelling in different continents of the world. Into the hands of this great monarch, whose authority was to extend over the whole of Islam, they placed as the only power that of the Turkish people, that is to say, only from 10 to 15 millions of these three hundred million subjects. The monarch designated under the title of Caliph was to guide the affairs of these Muslim peoples and to secure the execution of the religious prescriptions which would best correspond to their worldly interests. He was to defend the rights of all Muslims and concentrate all the affairs of the Muslim world in his hands with effective authority. . . .

If the Caliph and Caliphate, as they maintained, were to be invested with a dignity embracing the whole of Islam, ought they not to have realized

²The program of uniting all Muslims under one government or ruler.

³These events took place in January 1923. After Sultan Mehmed V was deposed on November 1, 1922, his cousin was designated caliph. Because of their long rule and vast territories, Ottoman sultans by the nineteenth century

were viewed by many Muslims as caliphs—that is, successors of the prophet Muhammad, with jurisdiction over all of Islam. Shukri was a *hodja* (or *hujid*), a Turkish religious leader; he hoped that the new Turkish state would continue to support the caliphate even after the sultanate was abolished. In 1924, however, Kemal abolished the caliphate.