CHAPTER 39
The End of European Empire

Following World War II, the spread of nationalism among the peoples of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa brought an end to the great empires of the European powers.

In the Middle East, the withdrawal of the British and French was followed by the decades-long conflict between the Arab states and Israel. In Asia, the Europeans

recognized the independence of most of their former colonies by the early 1950 although in Indochina the United States gradually replaced the French in the struggle against Ho Chi Minh. During the 1950s, the rising tide of nationalism engulfed black Africa, and by the early 1960s,a number of independent African states had come into being. In South Africa, however, there was a continuing struggle over the policy of apartheid (the separation of the races) enforced by the white-dominated government.

The Middle East
The Arab World

Between the two world wars, Arab nationalism emerged as a powerful force in the Middle East. Arab nationalism was directed primarily against the British and French, who dominated most of the area. Although the Arab states of the Middle East-Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia-secured their independence, considerable distrust of the Western powers remained. In 1945, the Arab states organized the Arab League to promote cooperation among them, although behind the facade of Arab unity, differences persisted.

In North Africa, the former Italian colony of Libya became an independent monarchy in 1951. In 1969, a group of army officers seized power, and Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi (b. 1943) soon emerged as Libya's strongman. Qaddafi used the income from Libya's rich oil reserves to buy arms from the Soviets and to aid terrorist activities in a number of countries.

In 1956, Tunisia and Morocco gained their independence from France, and following a bitter colonial war, the French acknowledged the independence of Algeria in 1962.

The Founding of the State of Israel

Following World War 11, powerful pressures mounted for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, which the British had acquired as a League of Nations mandate after World War I.

Zionism

In biblical times, Palestine had been the home of the Jewish people, and a desire to reclaim the Holy Land remained a part of the Jewish religious tradition. In the late nineteenth century, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), an Austrian Jew, and others founded the modem Zionist movement, which actively sought the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

During World War I, the British issued the Balfour Declaration, pledging the establishment of such a national home. Faced with Arab opposition, however, the British did not fulfil1this pledge, and they also restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine.

Israel's War of Independence

The World War I1Holocaustbrought the issue to a head. The Jews and their supporters demanded the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, while the Arabs remained adamant in their opposition. The British found themselves trapped between these, competing demands.

In 1948, the British pulled out of Palestine, turning the problem over to the United Nations. The Jews proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel, accepting the frontiers proposed by the UN in its effort to partition Palestine between the Jews and the Arabs. The Arab League refused to accept partition, however, and went to war against Israel.

Israeli Victory and Arab Refugees

The Israeli war of independence ended in 1949 with an Israeli victory. A number of Arabs were expelled from Israel, while others fled. The issue of the Palestinian refugees and their descendants would remain a troubling problem in the continuing conflict in the Middle East.

The Suez Crisis of 1956

In 1952, a revolution in Egypt overthrew King Farouk (r. 19361952). Game1 Abdul Nasser (1918-1970), an ardent Egyptian nationalist and advocate of Arab unity, soon established his dictatorship. Nasser developed an ambitious plan for Egypt's economic development, centered on the construction of a high dam at Aswan on the Nile River. Egypt received pledges of loans to help build the dam from the United States, Great Britain, and the World Bank.

Nationalization of the Suez Canal

When Nasser tried to play the two Cold War antagonists off against one another and secured arms and a loan from the Soviets, the United States responded in July 1956 by canceling American support for the Aswan high dam. Great Britain and the World Bank did the same. At the end of July, Nasser retaliated by seizing the privately owned Suez Canal Company. Although Nasser agreed to compensate the company's owners, the British and French were troubled by Egyptian control of the strategically important canal.

The Invasion of Egypt

Great Britain and France entered into a scheme with Israel, which feared an Egyptian attack. Acting in accord with London and Paris, Israel launched a preemptive strike against Egypt on October 29, 1956. Britain and France quickly moved into the canal zone, ostensibly to separate the antagonists but in reality to take control of the canal.

World opinion joined in condemnation of the British, French, and Israelis. Isolated diplomatically, they withdrew. Egypt paid the Suez Canal Company's stockholders $81 million for the canal, and the Soviets helped the Egyptians build the Aswan high darn.

The Suez Crisis of 1956 had settled little, and Nasser remained implacably hostile toward Israel. The Middle East arms race intensified, as the Soviets supplied the Arab states with arms and the United States aided Israel.

The Six-Day War

In 1967, a new Middle East crisis erupted. Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian troops massed along Israel's borders. On June 5, Israel attacked, beginning the Six-Day War. Catching their enemies off balance, the Israelis occupied Egypt's territory east of the Suez Canal (the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula), Syria's Golan Heights, and Jordan's holdings on the West Bank of the Jordan River. On June 10, an armistice was signed.

The Six-Day War humiliated not only the Arabs, but the Soviet Union as well. The Soviets provided the Arab states with a new supply of arms. In 1970, following Nasser's death, Anwar el-Sadat (1918-1981) became Egypt's leader, and tension with Israel continued.

The Yom Kippur War

In October 1973, Egypt and Syria renewed their war against Israel, beginning the so-called Yom Kippur War. This time the Israelis were caught off guard, and they were pushed back. Israel gradually recovered its poise, however, and drove across the Suez Canal into Egypt and advanced toward the Syrian capital of Damascus.

Golda Meir (1898-1978), Israel's prime minister, agreed to a cease-fire, but the Israelis remained adamant in their refusal to give up the territories they had occupied in 1967, insisting they were necessary for Israel's security.

Arab Oil Embargo

Following the Yom Kippur War, the Arab oil-producing states placed an embargo on the shipment of oil to the United States and Western Europe in an effort to force them to put pressure on Israel to make concessions. In addition, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) began

a round of increases in the price of petroleum that helped spur an inflationary spiral in the industrialized countries.

Accords Between Egypt and Israel

Recognizing the negative impact that the continuing conflict with Israel had on Egypt's economic development, Sadat sought a normalization of relations between the two countries.

In September 1978, American President Jimmy Carter (b. 1924) invited Sadat and Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin (b. 1913) to meet with him at Camp David, Maryland. Carter succeeded in inducing the two leaders to sign the Camp David Accords, which established a framework for a peace treaty. In March 1979, Sadat and Begin returned to Washington to sign a formal peace treaty in which Israel agreed to return the occupied Sinai peninsula to Egypt. No agreement was reached, however, on an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank of the Jordan River, and the Golan Heights or the troublesome issue of the Palestinian refugees.

In October 1981, Egyptian nationalist extremists assassinated Sadat. Egypt's new president, Hosni Mubarak (b. 1928),continued the moderate foreign policy **of** his predecessor, and the peace settlement between Egypt and Israel remained intact.

Civil War in Lebanon

The question of the Palestinian refugees remained as a major obstacle in the path of a broader Middle Eastern settlement. Under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), headed by Yasir Arafat (b. 1929), the Palestinians demanded the return of the Israeli-occupied lands and the creation of a separate Palestinian state. Many Palestinians had taken refuge in Lebanon, creating **a** virtual state-within-a-state beyond the ability of the Lebanese authorities to control. In 1975,the Palestinians joined with the Lebanese Moslems in an attempt to overthrow the Christian-dominated government. As Lebanon sank deeper in the abyss of a vicious civil war, Syria moved in and established its military control over much of the country.

The Middle East

UN Intervention

Palestinian terrorism enraged the Israelis, who moved into southern Lebanon on several occasions to strike at PLO bases. In June 1982, the Israelis pushed deep into Lebanon. A cease-fire was arranged, and the United Nations organized an international peacekeeping force to establish a buffer zone between contending elements in Lebanon. Tension continued to run high in

the area, however, as a result both of ongoing civil conflict in Lebanon and the uprising of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Iran

In 1951, Mohammed Mossadegh (1880-1967) became Iran's prime minister. He pursued an anti-Western policy, nationalizing the country's petroleum industry. Iran's ruler, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi (**r.** 1941-1978), lost power and fled the country. With the support of a coup engineered by the American CIA, Mossadegh was overthrown in 1953 and the shah's authority was restored. The shah returned ownership of the petroleum industry to private hands and established close ties with the West.

The Shah's Regime

With American aid and oil royalties, the shah built up his military power and launched the White Revolution, which sought to promote Iran's industrial and agricultural development. The modernization campaign offended many of Iran's traditionalist Moslems, and it was accompanied by political repression and widespread corruption, which also increased opposition to the shah's regime.

Khomeini's Islamic Republic

In 1978, a revolt broke out against the shah's rule, and he left the country in early 1979. Power now passed into the hands of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989)' who proclaimed an Islamic republic. Khomeini was both an ardent Moslem and an ardent nationalist, strongly anti-American, anti-soviet, and anti-Israeli in his views.

When the United States gave refuge to the exiled shah, who was dying of cancer, Iranians seized the American embassy in Tehran in November 1979, taking more than fifty Americans as hostages. Complex negotiations finally brought the release of the hostages in January 1981.

Asia

China

The victory of the Communists in 1949 reduced Western influence in China. While Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong, 1893-1976) formed an alliance with the Soviet Union and initiated a five-year plan, in imitation of the Soviet pattern of economic development, Sino-Soviet relations gradually cooled, and China moved to improve relations with the West. Following Mao's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping (**b.** 1904?)emerged as the key figure in the government. Deng adopted reformist policies in an effort to promote China's economic development.

Japan

Following World War 11, the United States established its occupation of Japan, with General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) serving as supreme commander. Under American tutelage, the Japanese drafted a democratic constitution establishing a parliamentary monarchy.

The Japanese undertook a remarkable development **of** their economy, and by the mid-1960s, Japan had become the world's third greatest industrial power, behind the United States and the Soviet Union.

India

In 1947, the British withdrew from their empire in the Indian subcontinent, and two independent states came into being, predominantly Hindu India and mainly Moslem, Pakistan.

The establishment of the new India was largely the work of Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948), known as the Mahatma (Great Spirit), and Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964). Soon after the achievement of independence, Gandhi was assassinated, and Nehru, the leader of the ruling Indian National Congress party, had to bear the primary responsibility for building the new state.

In international affairs, India pursued a neutralist course, seeking to avoid direct involvement in the East-West conflict.

Economic Problems

With a huge population of 350 million, most of whom lived in poverty, India required massive infusions of aid from more highly developed countries to advance its own economic development. Most of India's economic growth, however, was offset by the country's growing population.

Pakistan

The 70 million people of Pakistan emerged into independence in 1947 under the leadership of Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), the head of the Moslem League, which had long sought the establishment of a separate Moslem state in the Indian Subcontinent. Jinnah did not long survive the achievement of independence, (dyingin 1948.

In foreign policy, Pakistan adopted a pro-Westem stance, joining both SEATO and the Baghdad Pact alliances during the 1960s (see Chapter 36). In later years, Pakistan adopted a more neutral posture.

Like India, Pakistan faced a host of problems, and economic underdevelopment increased political tensions. Pakistan's problems were compounded by the fact that the country was divided into two parts, with

some 1,000 miles of Indian territory separating West Pakistan from East Pakistan. In 1971, East Pakistan rebelled and with India's help, won its independence, becoming the Republic of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh

In the years following its achievement of independence in 1971, the political and economic history of Bangladesh proved to be unhappy. Efforts to establish a workable form of representative government were uncertain at best, with military dictatorship alternating with civilian rule. Economically, the country remained desperately poor, overpopulated, and dependent on foreign aid for survival.

Indonesia

Following World War II, the Netherlands attempted to reassert its control over its rich empire in the East Indies. In 1949, however, the Republic of Indonesia gained independence under the leadership of Achmed Sukarno (1901-1970). Indonesia was rich in tin, oil, rubber, and other resources and faced a more promising economic future than many of the other newly independent Asian states.

Sukarno gradually increased his dictatorial power, establishing what he called a "guided democracy." Sukarno's decision to increase Indonesia's ties with Communist China intensified opposition to his rule. An army revolt in the autumn of 1965 led to Sukarno's ouster.

Other Asian Nations

Elsewhere in Asia, the United States recognized the independence of the Philippines, while Ceylon (which became Sri Lanka), Burma, Malaysia, and Singapore secured independence from Great Britain.

The British retained the crown colony of Hong Kong, although a treaty signed in 1984 provided for its restoration to China in 1997.

Southeast Asia: The Vietnam War

The Origins of the Vietnam Conflict

Following World War II, nationalist elements in Indochina began a guerrilla war in an effort to prevent the reestablishment of French imperialist control. What made Indochinese nationalism different from nationalism elsewhere in Asia was the fact that Ho Chi Minh (1890

1969), the leader of the Indochinese nationalists, was a Communist. Because Ho bore that label, the conflict in Indochina became a part of the Cold War.

Asia

The Viet Minh

By 1950, Ho had united the nationalists in the part of Indochina that would become known as Vietnam into a movement called the Viet Minh. Ho's forces succeeded in inflicting a series of defeats on the French, and the

United States provided increasing support for the French cause. Despite this aid, the French stronghold of Dien bien phu fell to the Viet Minh in May 1954,and the French decided to withdraw from Indochina.

Geneva Accords

An international conference held in Geneva, Switzerland, in the summer of 1954 reached agreement on the Geneva Accords, which confirmed the division of Indochina into the three separate and independent states of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam and then further divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel. This separation of North and South Vietnam was supposed to be temporary, pending elections scheduled for 1956, which would determine the nature of Vietnam's government. Ho Chi Minh, who controlled North Vietnam, expected that these elections would give him control of the South, as well.

Start of U.S. Intervention

The United States began to provide assistance to South Vietnam and selected Ngo Dinh Diem (1901-1963), a fervent anti-Communist, to lead the country. With American support, Diem refused to carry out the agreement to hold elections in 1956. In response, Ho Chi Minh renewed the **war**

Increased American Involvement

During the 1960s, the United States increased its support of the Diem government in its struggle against the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong), guerrillas who were aided by North Vietnam. The American government viewed the situation in terms of the Cold War, regarding the war in Vietnam as part of the worldwide effort to contain the expansion of Communism and Soviet power, which were regarded as the same thing.

American Opposition to War

In 1965, the United States assumed the primary military responsibility in South Vietnam. As the ground combat intensified and the American bombing of North Vietnam increased, American losses mounted and popular opposition to the war grew in the United States.

The End of the Vietnam War

When Richard Nixon (b. 1913) became president in 1969, he regarded finding a solution to the problem of the Vietnam war as one of the main tasks of his administration.

The Paris Accords

Following long and complex negotiations, the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the Viet Cong signed the Paris Accords in January 1973. The agreement provided for an immediate cease-fire and United States withdrawal of its remaining troops. In the spring of 1975, the North Vietnamese intensified their attacks on South Vietnam, and South Vietnamese resistance quickly collapsed. At the end of April 1975, North Vietnamese troops took the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon, and it was renamed Ho Chi Minh City. The long war in Vietnam had finally reached its end.

Africa

Decolonization in Black Africa

In black Africa south of the Sahara Desert, nationalism became a potent force during the 1950s.

The Gold Coast

The British West African colony of the Gold Coast gained independence in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972). It became the nation of Ghana.

Nigeria

The British colony of Nigeria, also in West Africa, secured independence in 1960. Nigeria was fortunate in possessing oil reserves, and it used the income from this resource to finance its economic development.

Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya

In East Africa, Tanganyika, a British possession, became independent in 1961 under the leadership of Julius Nyerere (b. 1922). In 1964, the island colony of Zanzibar joined with Tanganyika to form the new country of Tanzania. Uganda gained independence from Great Britain in 1962.

In Kenya, another British East African possession, white settlers fought for several years against the terrorist Mau Mau organization. In 1962, however, Kenya became independent, and Jomo Kenyatta (1893-1978), a founder of the Mau Mau movement, became the country's first president.

Malawi and Zambia

In southern Africa, the British colonies of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia became independent in 1964, taking the names of Malawi and Zambia, respectively.

Former French Possessions

The French West African colony of Guinea gained its independence in 1958. Sekou Touré (1922-1984), Guinea's president, pursued a pro-Soviet foreign policy. France's other possessions in black Africa became independent in 1960. Unlike Guinea, they became members of the French Community and maintained close economic and cultural relations with France.

The Congo (Zaire)

Belgium hoped to maintain control over its rich colony of the Congo in Central Africa. The Belgians confronted mounting demands for independence, however, and abruptly withdrew in 1960. The new Republic of the Congo quickly **sank** into chaos, which persisted for several years.

In 1965, General Joseph Mobuto (b. 1930) seized power and established a dictatorship. Mobuto soon began to change names to erase the colonial past. The Congo became Zaire; its capital of Leopoldville became Kinshasa; and Mobuto Africanized his name, becoming Mobuto Sese Seko.

Angola and Mozambique

Of all the European colonial powers in Africa, Portugal held on to its possessions the longest, finally granting independence to Angola and Mozambique in 1975.

Southern Africa

In southern Africa, both the Union of South Africa and Rhodesia (formerly Southern Rhodesia) had sizable white populations, although in both cases they were small minorities.

Zimbabwe

In 1965, when the British attempted to secure equal political rights for blacks in Rhodesia, the white-dominated government issued a unilateral declaration of independence. The 250,000 whites feared they would be overwhelmed by the black majority,whonumbered6million. Several years of controversy and conflict followed. Finally, in 1980,a government controlled by the black majority took power, and Rhodesia became Zimbabwe.

The Union of South Africa

Farther to the south, the Union of South Africa had been a self-governing dominion within the British Empire since 1910. Following World War **11,** the white minority in South Africa numbered about **4** million. These whites were primarily of British and Dutch ancestry. The latter, known as Afrikaners, became a majority of the white population in the post-World War I1 period and were determined to maintain white control, even though blacks and other nonwhites totaled some 18 million.

Apartheid

The Afrikaners' Nationalist **Party** imposed and maintained a system of rigid racial segregation known as apartheid. Blacks were compelled to live in separate townships and had little opportunity for higher education or occupational advancement. Black activists were imprisoned, often without trial, and strict censorship laws were enforced.

In the face of mounting pressure from Great Britain and other members of the British Commonwealth, the Union of South Africa pulled out of the Commonwealth in 1961, becoming the Republic of South Africa. The government remained firm in its determination to maintain apartheid.

The end of European empire did not bring stability to much of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. In the Middle East, there was no resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the policies of both Libya and Iran also continued to contribute to international instability. In Asia, Japan succeeded in becoming both a viable democracy and an industrial giant, while China appeared to be making economic progress under a modified Communist system. Other Asian countries4outh Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia, among them-were also advancing economically, but elsewhere in Asia, serious problems of overpopulation, poverty, and political instability persisted. Similar problems affected much of Africa, while in South Africa the conflict over apartheid was becoming more bitter.