CHAPTER 29 - THE NEW IMPERIALISM, 1869–1914

I. The New Imperialism: Motives and Methods
   A. Introduction
      1. The New Imperialism was a tremendous explosion of territorial conquest in which the
         imperial powers used economic and technological means to reorganize dependent
         regions and bring them into the world economy as suppliers of foodstuffs and raw
         materials and as consumers of industrial products.
      2. In Africa and in other parts of the world this was done by conquest and colonial
         administration; in Latin America, the same result was attained by indirect means.
   B. Political Motives
      1. One political motive for imperialism was the desire to gain national prestige.
      2. The actions of colonial governors also led to the acquisition of new colonial possessions.
         Colonial agents often sent troops to take over neighboring territories first and informed
         their home governments afterwards.
   C. Cultural Motives
      1. The late nineteenth century Christian revival in Europe and North America included a
         commitment to exporting Western “civilization” through Christian missionary activity.
      2. Persons other than missionaries also believed that Europeans and Americans were
         morally and culturally superior and that their technological prowess was proof of this
         superiority. Some used racist ideas in order to justify this superiority and to relegate non-
         Europeans to a permanent state of inferiority.
      3. Imperialism was attractive to young men who found opportunities for adventure and
         glory in the imperialist enterprise. By the 1890s, imperialism was a popular cause; it was
         the overseas extension of nationalism.
   D. Economic Motives
      1. The industrialization of Europe and North America stimulated a demand for minerals,
         industrial crops, and stimulants (sugar, coffee, tea, and tobacco). The economic
         depression of the mid-1870s to the mid-1890s gave the industrialized countries an
         incentive to seek control of the sources of raw materials and the markets for their
         industrial products.
      2. Entrepreneurs and investors looked to profit from mines, plantations, and railroads in
         Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In order to minimize their risks, these entrepreneurs
         sought the diplomatic and military support of their governments.
   E. The Tools of the Imperialists
      1. The Industrial Revolution provided technological innovations that made it possible for
         Europeans and Americans to build the “New Imperialism.”
      2. Steamships, the Suez Canal, and submarine cables gave European forces greater mobility
         and better communications than Africans, Asians, or Latin Americans. The discovery
         that quinine could be used to prevent malaria allowed Europeans to enter Africa in large
         numbers for the first time.
      3. The invention of the breechloader, smokeless powder, and the machine gun widened the
         firearms gap and made colonial conquests easier than ever before.
   F. Colonial Agents and Administration
      1. Colonialism is the system of administering and exploiting colonies for the benefit of the
         home country. In applying modern scientific and industrial methods to their colonies,
         colonialists started the transformation of Asian and African societies that has continued
         to our day.
The forms of colonial administration varied with the social and economic conditions of the colonies. Some colonies were protectorates that retained their traditional governments, and some were administered directly.

Colonies were administered with the cooperation of indigenous elites. Colonial administrations used two different types of indigenous elites: traditional rulers and youths trained for “modern” jobs as clerks, nurses, policemen, customs inspectors and the like.

European and American women seldom took part in the early stages of colonial conquest. When they did arrive in the colonies, the presence of European and American women led to increased racial segregation.

II. The Scramble for Africa

A. Egypt

1. The Egyptian khedives carried out a number of expensive modernization projects in the mid-nineteenth century. These projects were financed with high-interest loans from European creditors.

2. French and British bankers lobbied their governments to intervene in Egypt in order to secure their loans. In 1882 the British sent an army into Egypt and established a system of indirect rule that lasted for seventy years.

3. The British worked to develop Egyptian agriculture, especially cotton production, by building a dam across the Nile at Aswan. The economic development of Egypt only benefited a small elite of landowners and merchants, and it was accompanied by the introduction of Western ways that conflicted with the teachings of Islam.

B. Western and Equatorial Africa

1. In West Africa, the French built a railroad from the upper Senegal River to the upper Niger in order to open the interior to French merchants. In the Congo Basin, King Leopold II of Belgium claimed the area south of the Congo River, while France claimed the area on the northern bank.

2. German chancellor Bismarck called the Berlin Conference on Africa in 1885 and 1886 in order to lay out the framework under which Africa would be occupied by the European nations. In practice, the division and occupation of Africa met with resistance and required many years of effort.

3. In West Africa, the new colonial powers took advantage of and developed the existing trade networks. In Equatorial Africa, where there were few inhabitants and little trade, the colonial powers granted concessions to private companies that forced Africans to produce cash crops and to carry them to the nearest navigable river or railroad.

C. Southern Africa

1. Southern Africa had long been attractive to European settlers because of its good pastures and farmland and its mineral wealth. The discovery of diamonds at Kimberley in 1868 attracted European prospectors and Africans; it also set off the process by which the British Cape Colony expanded, annexing Kimberley and defeating the Xhosa and the Zulu.

2. Cecil Rhodes used his British South Africa Company to take over land in central Africa, where he created the colonies of Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia.

3. British control over South Africa was consolidated when Britain defeated the Afrikaaners in the South African War (1899–1902). In 1910 the European settlers created the Union of South Africa, in which the Afrikaaners emerged as the ruling element in a government that assigned Africans to reservations and established a system of racial segregation.
D. Political and Social Consequences
1. Africa at the time of the European invasion contained a variety of societies. These societies responded differently to the European invasion; some welcomed the Europeans as allies against local enemies, while others resisted European rule.
2. Pastoral and warrior states like the Zulu and the Ndebele resisted European invasion, as did some commercial states like the kingdom of Asante and Benin. Ethiopia successfully defended itself against an Italian invasion in 1896.
3. In the face of European invasion most Africans simply tried to continue living as before, but colonial policies made this difficult. Colonial emphasis on the production of cash crops, the assignment of land to European companies and planters, and the imposition of hut taxes or head taxes proved highly disruptive. The need to pay taxes in cash forced African men to take low-paid jobs and to migrate to the cities and mining camps in search of work.
4. Some African women welcomed colonial rule because it put an end to fighting and slave trading, but most women benefited less than men did. Women’s property rights were undermined by colonial policies that assigned property rights to the head of the household—that is, to the man.

E. Cultural Responses
1. Missionaries were the main conduits by which Africans came into contact with European culture. Missionaries taught both practical skills (crafts and domestic skills) and western ideas. Africans educated in mission schools found that Christian ideals clashed with the reality of colonial exploitation; they began using Christian ideas to critique colonialism.
2. Islam continued to spread southward during the colonial period. Colonialism contributed to the diffusion of Islam by building cities, increasing trade, and allowing Muslims to settle in new areas.

III. Asia and Western Dominance
A. Central Asia
1. Between 1865 and 1876 Russia was able to use modern weapons to advance into Central Asia. The nomadic Kazhaks resisted fiercely, but by the end of the nineteenth century they were reduced to starvation, their grazing lands fenced off and turned over to Russian farmers.
2. South of the Kazhak steppe the decline of Qing power allowed the Russian Empire to take over the oases with their Muslim populations and their productive cotton-growing land. Russian rule brought few benefits and few changes to the lives of the people of the oases.

B. Southeast Asia and Indonesia
1. Burma, Malaya, Indochina, and northern Sumatra, all independent kingdoms in the first half of the nineteenth century, were conquered by stages between 1850 and the early 1900s. Only Siam remained independent.
2. All these areas had fertile soil, a favorable climate, and a highly developed agriculture. The colonial regimes introduced Chinese and Indian laborers and new crops, increasing agricultural production and providing peace and a reliable food supply that fueled a substantial rise in the population.
3. Colonialism contributed to an expansion of the agricultural population, immigration from China and India, and the spread of Islam. Education in European ideas led to the development of nationalism.

C. Hawaii and the Philippines, 1878–1902
1. By the late 1890s the U.S. economy was in need of export markets and the political mood was favorable to expansionism. The Hawaiian Islands, controlled by American settlers since 1893, were annexed in 1898.
2. In the Philippines, Emilio Aguinaldo led an uprising against the Spanish in 1898. He might very well have succeeded in establishing a republic if the United States had not purchased the Philippines from Spain at the end of the Spanish-American War.
3. In 1899 Aguinaldo rose up against the American occupation. The United States suppressed the insurrection and then tried to soften its rule by introducing public works and economic development projects.

IV. Imperialism in Latin America

A. Railroads and the Imperialism of Free Trade
   1. The natural resources of the Latin American republics made them targets for a form of economic dependence called free-trade imperialism.
   2. British and the United States’ entrepreneurs financed and constructed railroads in order to exploit the agricultural and mineral wealth of Latin America. Latin American elites encouraged foreign companies with generous concessions because this appeared to be the fastest way both to modernize their countries and to enrich the Latin American property owning class.

B. American Expansionism and the Spanish-American War, 1898
   1. After 1865 the European powers used their financial power to penetrate Latin America, but they avoided territorial conquest. The Monroe Doctrine prohibited European intervention in the Western Hemisphere, but this did not prevent the United States from intervening in the affairs of Latin American nations.
   2. After defeating Spain in the Spanish-American War, the United States took over Puerto Rico, while Cuba became an independent republic subject to intense interference by the United States.

C. American Intervention in the Caribbean and Central America, 1901–1914
   1. The United States often used military intervention to force the small nations of Central America and the Caribbean to repay loans owed to banks in Europe or the United States. The United States occupied Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Haiti on various occasions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
   2. The United States was particularly forceful in Panama, supporting the Panamanian rebellion against Colombia in 1903 and then building and controlling the Panama Canal.

V. The World Economy and the Global Environment

A. Expansion of the World Economy
   1. The industrial revolution greatly expanded the demand for spices, silk, agricultural goods, and raw materials in the industrialized countries. The growing need for these products could not be met by traditional methods of production and transportation, so the imperialists brought their colonies into the mainstream of the world market and introduced new technologies.
   2. The greatest change was in transportation. Canals, steamships, harbor improvements, and railroads cut travel time and lowered freight costs.

B. Transformation of the Global Environment
   1. The economic changes brought by Europeans and Americans altered environments around the world. Forests were felled for tea plantations, plant species were identified and classified, and commercially valuable plants were transported from one tropical region to another.
   2. The expansion of permanent agriculture and the increased use of irrigation and water control led to increased agricultural production in both well-watered and dry areas of the tropics. Agricultural development supported larger populations, but it also put more pressure on the land.
3. Railroads consumed vast amounts of land, timber, iron, and coal while opening up previously remote land to development. The demand for gold, iron, and other minerals fueled a mining boom that brought toxic run-off from open mines and from slag heaps.