**Decolonization and Nationalism**

In a Nutshell

* After the end of WWII, most European nations and the United States decided that their colonies were too expensive to maintain.
* After the end of World War II, some colonies negotiated their independence, while other colonies achieved independence through armed struggle.
* Nationalist leaders and parties in Asia and Africa sought varying degrees of autonomy within or independence from imperial rule.
* The Mexican Revolution arose in opposition to neocolonialism and economic imperialism, and movements to redistribute land and resources developed within states in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, sometimes-advocating communism or socialism.
* Groups and individuals challenged the many wars of the century, and some, such as Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela, promoted the practice of nonviolence as a way to bring about political change.

**A. What was Latin America like after WWII?** The end of WWII was not a turning point for Latin America, which was only modestly involved in the war, though economies of many countries grew because of wartime demand. The cold war helped stimulate new revolutionary agitation in Latin America, partly under Marxist inspiration and with some Soviet backing. Although Latin America had been independent of foreign rule for more than a century, the third world decolonization movement encouraged restiveness about continued economic dependency.

B. **Where and how did the Cold War affect Latin America?** After WWII, key Latin American nations continued earlier political patterns. However, a surge of radical unrest in several smaller countries quickly brought cold war tensions into play. In Bolivia, Guatemala, and Cuba, revolutionaries tried to change the nature of government and society, but they had to accommodate the realities of the cold war and the interests of the United States.

**C. How did many Latin American countries try to reform?** Latin Americans continued to seek solutions to their problems using Catholic, Marxist, and capitalistic doctrines. In the 1960s and 1970s nationalistic, pro-capitalist military governments created new “bureaucratic authoritarian” regimes which, for a while, served the cold war interests of the United States. By the 1980s, a new wave of democratic regimes was emerging.

**D. What were some of the challenges faced by Latin America?** Social relations changed slowly in Latin America. Population growth, urbanization, and the migration of workers continued to challenge the region.

**E. What were some of the challenges of independence that former colonies faced?**  In the early decades of independence, the very existence of the nation-states that were carved out of the Western colonial empires was often challenged by internal rivalries, and in some cases civil wars, between different social and ethnic groups. Economic growth was hampered by unprecedented rates of population increase, the structure of the international market, and the underdeveloped state of most colonial economies at the time of independence.

**F. How was Israel created?** In 1947, the British announced they were withdrawing from Palestine, leaving the United Nations to determine its fate. Demands for a Jewish homeland had been growing louder following the Holocaust, and Arabic nationalist sentiment had also increased, In response, the United Nations agreed to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab homelands. On May 14, 1948, the Jewish state of Israel was founded, but its Arab neighbors immediately attacked it. Surprisingly, the small Jewish state pushed back its enemies.

**G. What happened to British influence in Egypt?** Great Britain maintained significant influence in Egypt, even though the latter had been an independent nation since 1922. This began to change when Abdul Nasser (1918-1970) became president. In 1956, he announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal, which the British still controlled. In response, Britain, France, and Israel planned a surprise attack on Egypt. The immediate outcry from the American and Soviet governments made it quite clear to Britain and France exactly who were the dominant powers in the postwar world. They bowed to the American and Soviet demands to withdraw.

**H. What is apartheid?** In South Africa, the white settler population was divided almost equally between Afrikaners and English settlers. Although the white settlers were a minority, by 1948 the Afrikaners had imposed upon South Africa a highly restrictive form of racial segregation known as apartheid. Apartheid prohibited people of color from voting, and from having many contacts with whites. The best jobs were reserved for whites only. Apartheid continued after South Africa gained its independence from Great Britain in 1961.

**I. What were the effects of decolonization in Africa?** Independence did not bring peace or prosperity to most of the new African nations. New states tended to maintain colonial boundaries, meaning they often cut through ethnic and cultural groups. Sometimes ethnic conflicts turned violent.

**J. How did India gain its independence?** Indian independence from Great Britain was accomplished largely through the efforts of Mohandas Gandhi, who believed in passive resistance to accomplish his goals. In 1935, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act, which increased suffrage and turned provincial governments over to Indian leaders. Indian independence was delayed by the instance of some Muslims on a separate Muslim state. In 1947, the British granted India its independence.

**K. Who was Margaret Thatcher and what were her policies?** In 1979 Margaret Thatcher of the Conservative (Tory) party became Britain’s first female prime minister. She stated, “I am not a consensus politician, I am a conviction politician.” Thatcherism, the term for her economic policies, included tight control over the money supply to reduce inflation, sharp cuts in public spending, and a cut in taxes, particularly for higher earners.

Significant Events

Diaspora – Jewish revolted against the Roman rule in 70AD, as a result the majority of Jews were forced from Palestine and scattered throughout southwest Asia and Europe.

San Remo Agreement – Britain would take control of Palestine under the mandate system

Good Neighbor Policy - FDR’s foreign policy regarding Latin America; rejected the use of US military force.

Green revolution – development of new strains of rice, corn, and other grains that have greater yields

Islamic revolution - events involving the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who was supported by the United States, and eventual replacement of 2,500 years of continuous Persian monarchy with an Islamic Republic under the Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, 1979

NAFTA - The North American Free Trade Agreement is an agreement among the United States, Canada and Mexico designed to remove tariff barriers between the three countries.

European Union - EU is a group of 28 countries that operates as a cohesive economic and political block.

Important People

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini – member of Muslim clergy; led the Islamic republic in Iran

Juan Vicente Gomez - dictator of Venezuela

Hipolito Irigoyen – 1916, leader of the Radical Party; elected President of Argentina

Getuulio Vargas – wealthy rancher; President of Brazil 1930-1945; appealed to workers by instituting an 8 hr. day and minimum wage; made himself dictator in 1937; no political parties, civil rights were restricted, secrete police tortured opponents;

Lazaro Cardenas – President of Mexico 1934-1940; distributed land to landless peasants; this made him very popular with the peasants seized control of US oil fields and property that was in Mexico

Diego Rivera – Mexican muralist; promote nationalism; his works were aimed at the masses of people, many of whom could not read; Portray Mexico’s past, esp. the Aztec legends, as well as Mexican festivals and customs; political and social messages

Mother Teresa - Saint Teresa of Calcutta was an Albanian-Indian Roman Catholic nun and missionary.

Corazon Aquino - Filipina politician who served as the 11th President of the Philippines and the first woman to hold that office. She is widely accredited as the Mother of Asian Democracy. The first female president in the Philippines,

Aung San Suu Kyi - Burmese politician, diplomat, and author, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate. She is the leader of the National League for Democracy and the first and incumbent State Counsellor, a position akin to a prime minister.

Osama bin Laden – leader of al-Qaeda; terrorist. a radical who employs terror as a political weapon; usually organizes with other terrorists in small cells; often uses religion as a cover for terrorist activities.

Golda Meir -  [Prime Minister of Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Israel" \o "Prime Minister of Israel), 1969 - 1974

Malala Yousafzai -  Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. She is known for human rights advocacy, especially the education of women and children

Salvador Allende - Chilean physician and politician, known as the first Marxist to become president of a Latin American country through open elections 1970-1973

Augusto Pinochet - Chilean general, politician and the dictator of Chile between 1973 and 1990 who remained the Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army until 1998 and was also President of the Government Junta of Chile between 1973 and 1981

Los Desaparacidos – Argentina; In a coup on March 24, 1976, a [military junta](http://www.yendor.com/vanished/junta.html) seized power in Argentina and went on a campaign to wipe out [left-wing terrorism](http://www.yendor.com/vanished/dissent.html) with terror far worse than the one they were combating. Between 1976 and 1983 - under military rule - [thousands of people,](http://www.yendor.com/vanished/how-many.html) most of them dissidents and innocent civilians unconnected with terrorism, were arrested and then [vanished without a trace.](http://www.yendor.com/vanished/junta/scilingo.html)

Oscar Romero - prelate of the Catholic Church in El Salvador, who served as the fourth Archbishop of San Salvador. He spoke out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations, and torture. In 1980, **Romero** was assassinated while offering Mass

Eva Peron -  Argentine President Juan Perón (1895–1974) and First Lady of Argentina from 1946 until her death in 1952

Mohandas Gandhi – Mahatma or “Great Soul” – wanted Indian self-rule; non-violence

Kwame Nkrumah- was a Ghanaian politician and revolutionary. He was the first prime minister and president of Ghana, having led it to independence from Britain in 1957.

Margaret Thatcher – see letter K

Nelson Mandela - South African statesman who was released from prison to become the nation's first democratically elected president in 1994;  nationalist leader

Martin Luther King, Jr. -  American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement from 1954 until his death in 1968. He is best known for advancing civil rights through nonviolence and civil disobedience

Taliban – Islamic rebel troops controlling Afghanistan; is a Sunni Islamic fundamentalist political movement in Afghanistan currently waging war (an insurgency, or jihad) within that country.

Additional Information

Promised Land – Land that had been given to the Jews in a covenant by their God in exchange for their promise to live according to God’s laws

Anti-Semitism –hatred and discrimination towards Jewish people

Zionism – moving to Israel and creating a Jewish state

Refugee - a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster

Oligarchy - a small group of people having control of a country, organization, or institution.

Feminists – a group of people who believe that women and men should have equal rights and opportunities.

Partition - the action or state of dividing or being divided into parts.

Nonaligned Movement - formed during the Cold War, largely on the initiative of then-Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, as an organization of States that did not seek to formally align themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union, but sought to remain independent or neutral.

Apartheid - see letter H

Afrikaners - Southern African ethnic group descended from predominantly Dutch settlers first arriving in the 17th and 18th centuries. They traditionally dominated South Africa's agriculture and politics prior to 1994.

Civil disobedience – refusal to obey laws considered to be unjust

Palestine - a geographical and historical region in the Middle East

Sharia law - religious law forming part of the Islamictradition. It is derived from the religious precepts of Islam, particularly the Quran and the Hadith.

Terrorism - the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.

Pentagon - the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense, located in Arlington County, Virginia, across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.; a symbol of the U.S. military

Coup d’etat - a sudden decisive exercise of force in politics; especially : the violent overthrow or alteration of an existing government by a small group

Tariff – tax on imported goods

Ethnic cleansing - the mass expulsion or killing of members of an unwanted ethnic or religious group in a society

Pan Africanism – the need for the unity of all Africans