

# GROWTH OF IMPERIALISM

3

## **Imperialism**

Empires have existed from ancient times. You have learnt about the Mauryan Empire and the Roman Empire. But imperialism is a new phenomenon. It was the developed form of capitalism which emerged in Europe after the Industrial Revolution. Industrial capitalism exported finished goods from the European countries to the distant colonies through oceanic routes and imported raw materials necessary for the manufacture of these goods. Each European country competitively produced more than what was necessary for its consumption. This caused tough commercial competition among the European countries. This search for markets led to the colonisation of the Afro-Asian and American countries.



*Was the surplus production caused by Industrial Revolution a factor in colonisation?*

You know about the emergence of working class movements along with the growth of capitalism. The growth of working class movements forced the capitalists to accede to some of their demands. Besides, the cost of transportation of raw materials from and finished products to far off colonies increased. Thus the profit of the capitalists began to diminish. This led capitalism to a crisis. The attempts made to overcome this crisis led to the development of imperialism. This is how imperialism becomes a new experience despite the existence of empires in the past.

The colonies were centres for the collection of raw materials and markets for the finished goods. Then why should not production itself be shifted to the colonies? Cheap labour and raw materials were aplenty in the colonies. Capital was the only factor necessary for commodity production to be brought from outside. Thus the system of export of capital in lieu of commodities began. This particular stage in the growth of capitalism is known as imperialism.

When money itself had become a commodity, there arose institutions necessary for its marketing. Thus began modern banking system. Neither a particular entrepreneur nor a group of entrepreneurs alone could mobilise capital necessary for starting an industry. This led to the practice of raising capital by collecting money from many individuals. This was the beginning of share capital.

When capitalism developed into imperialism, it also faced a new crisis. Capitalists of particular countries began to compete among themselves. Tension also arose between the capitalists and working class. To control world market, competition

arose among the capitalist countries themselves. This led to the outbreak of a series of wars. Conflict arose between the capitalist countries and the colonised people. This was the background of the liberation struggles which occurred in the colonies.

Imperialist countries adopted many strategies to continue their policy of exploitation. The liberation movements were suppressed by military force. The colonial people were exploited through the collection of taxes, administrative measures and judicial system. The people were intimidated and suppressed by the bureaucracy, judiciary and police. Literature, arts and local education system were either discouraged or destroyed. They were substituted by the western systems. Lord Macaulay stated that the aim of education was to bring up a new generation of people who were Indian by birth and colour and European by attitude and dress. The aim of imperialism was to create a generation in the colonies owing allegiance to Western civilization.



*Western education was one of the strategies adopted by imperialism to strengthen colonisation. Analyse.*

## India

The conditions in the colonies were congenial to the expansion of imperialism. By the 18th century the ruling Mughal dynasty had become weak. Similarly other princely states were also weak. The quarrels among these petty kingdoms, socio-economic decadence and the consequent anarchy were the features of India at that time. Taking advantage of this situation, Europeans tried to strengthen their position. They interfered in the internal affairs of these



Illustration of the Battle of Plassey

states. The British and French Companies were in the forefront of this. Each one of them tried to oust the other from the country. Their enmity in Europe was continued here also. This led to three wars in India between 1744 and 1763, known as the Carnatic Wars. The English East India Company became victorious in the war. The Battle of Plassey of 1757 and the battle of Buxar of 1764 brought the Mughal province of Bengal (present day Bangladesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa) under British control. As a result of the Battle of Buxar, the British obtained Diwani Right from the Mughal Emperor. Diwani was the authority to collect taxes from the conquered province. The British expanded their power by conquering other provinces and bringing some kingdoms under their control by the Subsidiary Alliance system. Thus by 1856 most parts of the Indian subcontinent including Burma (present Myanmar) were annexed to the British Empire.

## China



India under British rule

From the 16th century onwards the European commercial powers began to knock at the gates of China. The Chinese rulers were successful in keeping them at bay. Realising the potential of Chinese trade, the Europeans refused to turn back. They decided to take on lease some islands adjacent to the Chinese mainland for trade and thereby tried to establish good relations with China. The Chinese refused to purchase anything from the British as they were considered foreign devils by the Chinese. Thus the Chinese trade was unilateral. The British resorted to certain crooked means to get control over China. They began smuggling opium to China. Through opium trade the English



Illustration of the Opium War

East India Company became rich; but it ruined the Chinese materially and morally. The opium trade drained Chinese wealth in a big way. This compelled the Chinese rulers to ban opium trade. The strict measures adopted by the Chinese led them to wars with the British. These were known as Opium Wars in which the Chinese were defeated.

The Opium Wars exposed the weakness of the Chinese. European powers began to infiltrate into China. The sovereignty of China was weakened. European powers partitioned China into their spheres of influences. Virtually China became an international colony.



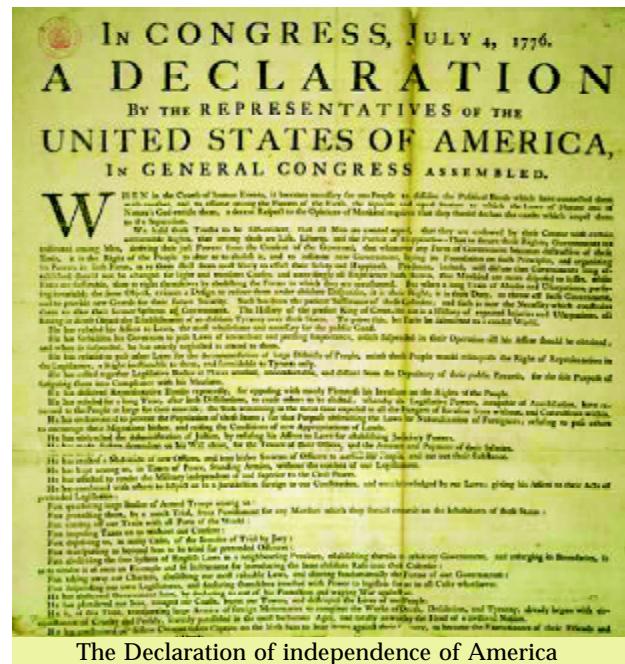


Were the policies adopted by the English to colonise India repeated in the case of China also? In which factor did they differ?

The strategies adopted by imperialism to colonise the world were adopted by the English in India also. Analyse the statement.

## America

Several families from European countries migrated to the American continent in order to escape religious persecution and overcome financial difficulties. The traders who followed them established many settlements there. The French were the first to reach Canada. The British traders settled down in the east coast in places like Jamestown, Virginia, Plymouth, Massachussets, etc. The British founded thirteen colonies in north America. The English, French and the Portuguese conducted explorations for mining gold and silver. But they failed in this. They started large scale cultivation of tobacco, indigo and paddy and exported them to Europe.

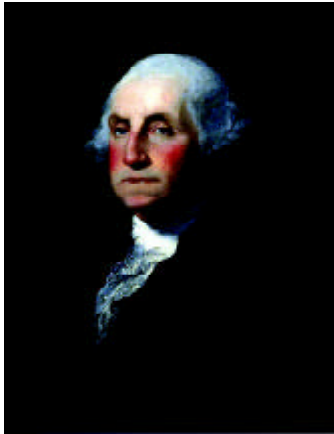


The Declaration of independence of America



The British demanded money from the American colonies to compensate for the loss that they incurred in the Seven Years' War with France fought in both Europe and America. But the colonies turned it down. The British Parliament imposed several new taxes on the colonies. The imposition of these taxes generated anti-British feelings in the colonies. They held the view that the British Parliament had no right to impose tax on the colonies because they were not represented in the Parliament. The colonists raised the banner of revolt against the British by shouting the slogan 'no taxation without representation'. In 1774 the representatives of the thirteen colonies met at Philadelphia in the First Continental Congress and formed a provisional government. In 1776 they passed the Declaration of Independence in the Second Continental

Congress and elected George Washington as President. This led to a direct war between the colonists and the British. The colonists fought the war against the British with the help of the French. The American colonies were led in this military campaign by



George Washington

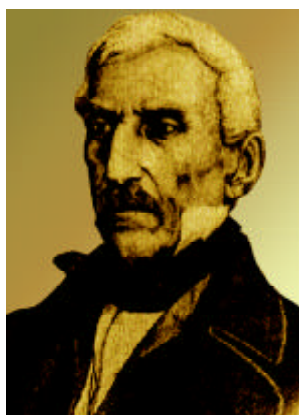
George Washington. In 1781 the British army commanded by Lord Cornwallis surrendered to the combined forces of the colonists and the French. The British were compelled to recognise the independence of the American colonies by the Treaty of Paris of 1783. Thus the United States of America came into being.

## South America

You are already aware of the Spanish presence in South America. More European powers reached that continent in search of gold and silver. The gold and silver mines



Simon Bolivar



Jose San Martin



South America in 1825

of Peru and Mexico were controlled by the Spaniards. The Portuguese who followed the Spaniards discovered gold in the Minas Gerais province of middle-east Brazil. The explorations for gold and other resources ruined the native population. In their place a mixed stock of people called Mestizoes emerged and in due course they became the majority. By the end of the 18th century the people of South America revolted against the Spaniards and the Portuguese. Haiti, which freed itself from French domination in 1804, became the first independent state in South America. By this time the rise of Napoleon in France led to the decline of Portuguese and Spanish power. The British and French took their place. The USA motivated other South American states to revolt against their masters. Venezuela under Simon Bolivar and Argentina under Jose San Martin declared their independence. In 1822 Brazil and Mexico became independent. By 1825 almost all the states of this region except Puerto Rico and Cuba had won their freedom.



## Working Class Movement

You have studied the Industrial Revolution. One of the results of this was the emergence of the working class movement. On the one hand, Industrial Revolution brought about tremendous increase in production and wealth and on the other, it made the life of workers hard. Surrounding industrial centres, there arose filthy and unhygienic slums where thousands of workers had to settle down. The workers who were really responsible for the profits of the capitalists got only poverty and misery in return. Low wages, dangerous working conditions, excessive hours of work, etc. made the life of the workers miserable. In this situation the workers organised themselves and formed labour unions. In 1830 John Doharthy formed the Confederation of National Association for the Protection of Labour. The others who gave leadership to this organisation were Robert Owen and William Levit. The labour organisations lay emphasis on improving the conditions of labour and giving wages to workers. The socialist ideology was the guiding spirit of these organisations. As a result of these struggles led by he workers, improvements were made in the conditions of work including reduction in the hours of work and increase in wages.

The struggle for reducing hours of work and increasing wages resulted in the increase of the cost of production and reduction of profit. This was a crisis in capitalism. As a result, the capitalists began to invest capital in colonies. The availability of cheap labour, plenty of raw materials and market in and around the colonies made these industries profitable. This motivated the entrepreneurs to invest more in the colonies. Besides industries, the entrepreneurs invested



A slave from Louisiana in North America. Note the scars of whipping

capital in plantations also. The profit thus earned from the colonies flowed to the metropolis and was used to purchase new machinery from other countries. The plantations and mines in the colonies necessitated the employment of labour at low wages. This led to the capture of slaves from Asia and Africa and exporting them to other colonies.

Though slave trade was begun by the Portuguese and the Spanish, by the 17th century it was taken over by the British. Slave trade continued to flourish till the middle of the 19th century. Millions of people were captured from Asian and African countries and sold as slaves to work in the plantations and mines. The life of slaves was miserable. They were forced to do any work under their masters. If they tried to escape, they were put to severe torture and if they revolted they were put to death by the masters. Those who prevented such escapes and put the erring slaves to death were liberally rewarded. Thus the slave system became an integral factor of colonisation.



Advertisements for the sale of slaves

In addition to slavery, indentured labour was also utilised in the plantations and mines. Such labourers mustered from India and other colonies under jobbers were exported to West Indies, New Zealand, South Africa, Malaya, Singapore, etc. Their conditions were no better than that of the slaves. Many of them settled down permanently in the colonies.

*The Indianness in the names of the West Indies Cricketers like Alvin Kallicharan, Shivnarain Chanderpaul etc. indicates this relation*



*Improvement of implements in each mode of production led to changes in life and rise of classes (Capitalist- worker, master-slave). Evaluate this statement.*

## Conditions in the colonies

The colonies were politically weak in the 18th century. For example in India there were several petty kingdoms such as Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and those of the Marattas and the Sikhs. They quarrelled among themselves. This led to their subjugation by the colonial power. The colonial powers gained supremacy by making the native princes to fight among themselves. Though the Europeans were numerically weak, they were able to win by resorting to this strategy. Their officers were greedy. They suppressed the local population. They never bothered about the

welfare of the people. Life of the people became miserable.

Besides, the colonial masters exaggerated the weakness of the colonies. They justified their domination as 'Civilising Mission' and 'White Man's burden'. They claimed that it was a 'holy mission' to civilise the pagan Arabs, Africans and Asians. It was necessary for them to justify their civil conquest of the colonies and ill treatment of the native people before the Parliament and the world at large. Racial purity and religious supremacy were utilised by them to establish their hegemony.

The colonial masters introduced several administrative measures to carry on their exploitation. The colonial state was built on the civil service, the army and the police. These three pillars maintained law and order in the colonies and enhanced the fame and prestige of the colonisers. The traders and capitalists could not have sold their products in the colonies unless law and

order were maintained. Besides these three pillars, western jurisprudence was also introduced in the colonies which legalised the innumerable commercial treaties concluded by them. In order to create a class of trusted servants to carry out the colonial administration, western education was also introduced. It was a powerful means to effect social and cultural transformation.



*"More than military occupation, colonisation was an approved form of slavery. It was difficult to lead a people who considered the colonial masters as their protectors to freedom." Explain the nature of the colonial society by analysing the above statement.*

## The Balkan Crisis

Imperialism wished to bring more states under their administrative control. We can see such attempts in different parts of the world. By the beginning of the 19th century the Sultanate of Turkey (Ottoman Empire) became weak. It was known as the 'Sick Man of Europe'. By exploiting the weak position of the Empire, the West European powers tried to annex the various provinces under its control. The crisis created by this power struggle was known as the Eastern Question. The Balkan peninsula was a part of the Turkish empire.

## Balkan Provinces

*The Balkan peninsula is situated in Europe, surrounded by sea on three sides. Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Transylvania, Bosnia-Herzegovina etc., which came under the Turkish Empire, were known as Balkan provinces.*

Russia tried to occupy the Slav territories lying adjacent to the Balkan provinces. The West European powers feared that the Russian occupation of these territories would alter the prevailing balance of power. This was the Eastern Question. It reflected itself in many ways. One among them was the Crimean war.



*Florence Nightingale was a military nurse who nursed the wounded soldiers at one of the battle fronts of Crimea, namely, Scutari. She nursed the soldiers day and night which earned for her the title 'Lady with the Lamp'.*



This war smashed the Russian plan of imposing its domination over Turkey by occupying the Slav territories. The Russians had to give up their pretensions of protecting the Orthodox Christian subjects of Turkey. The Eastern Question proved that it was not a mere a boundary dispute among the European nations. Many issues of imperialist and colonial policies were involved in this crisis.

### Partition of Africa

The Partition of Africa was another example of imperialist aggrandisement and colonisation. By the middle of the 19th century the intensity of slave trade began to diminish. Thereafter the Europeans who reached Africa were engaged in the collection of raw materials necessary for the industries in their own countries. As a result, the Europeans competed among themselves and Africa was sliced into many colonies. This partition had two important features. First, it was effected without any war. Second, it was executed in a speedy

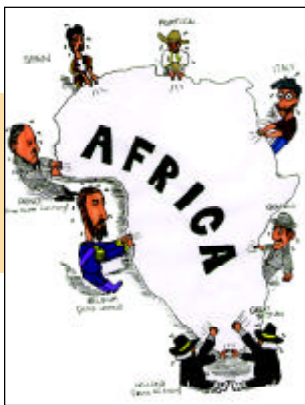


Partition of Africa

manner. This eventually led to colonial conflicts. For the most part, it was settled through bilateral discussions and agreements. Thus by 1914 all African countries except Abyssinia and Liberia became European colonies.

Chart showing partition of Africa

African Countries	Colonial power
Egypt, Sudan, Rhodesia, Uganda, British East Africa, Sierra Leon, Gold Coast, Nigeria, South Africa	Britain
Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Sahara, French Congo, French Guiana, Senegal, Madagascar	France
German East Africa, South West Africa, Cameroon, Togoland, Tanganica	Germany
Libya, Somaliland	Italy
Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Giunea	Portugal
Rio de Oro, Spanish Guinea	Spain



*"Imperialism is greed and an aggression against humanity." Examine this statement in the context of the partition of Africa.*

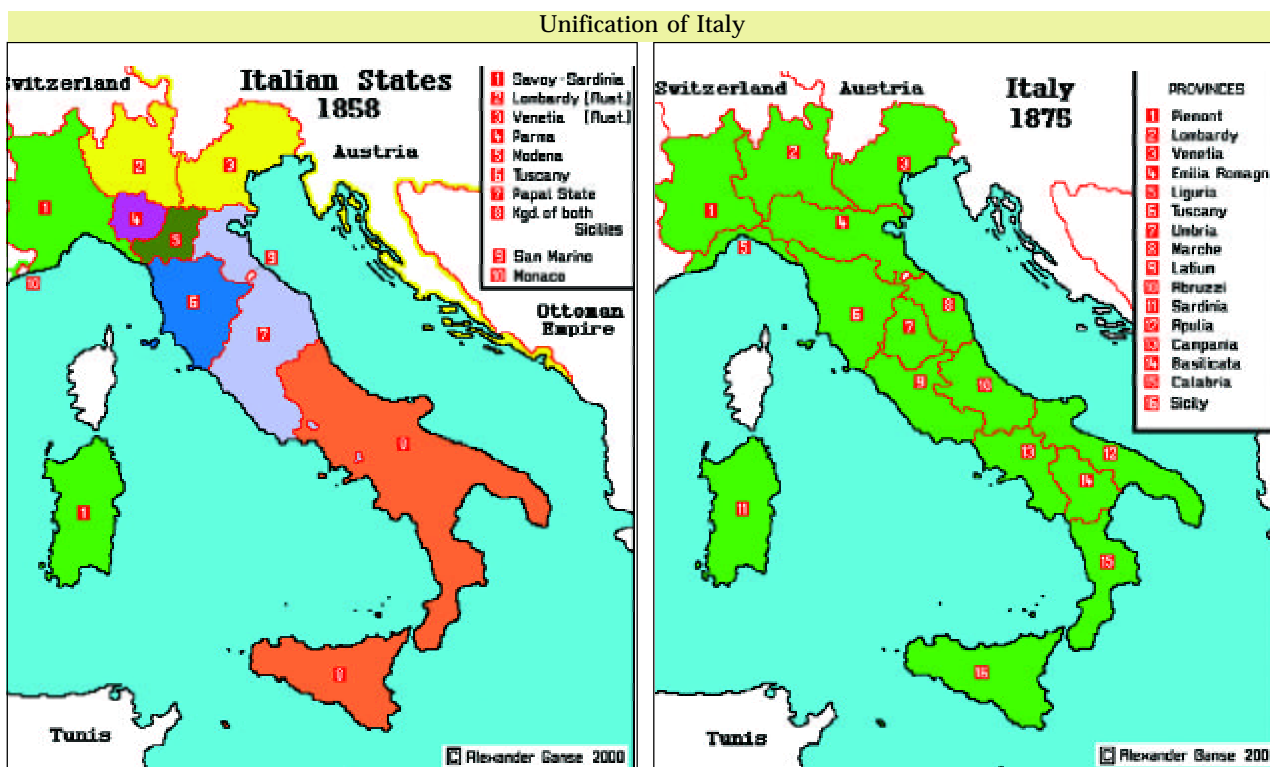
### Nationalism in Europe

You have studied about the national monarchies which arose in the wake of the decline of feudalism. In the modern sense, a nation is defined as a people settling in a definite territory, speaking a common language, having a common culture and historical tradition. The ideology and programme of action based on this concept is called nationalism. Towards the end of the 18th century, nationalism began to emerge in many parts of Europe. During the time of Napoleon this was further intensified. Nationalism became powerful after the revolutions of 1848 which brought an end



Joseph Mazzini

to the Vienna Settlement and the Matternich system. The best examples of this were the unification movements of Italy and Germany. Organisations like the Carbonari and Young Italy were functioning already for the unification of Italy. The leaders of



Italian nationalism were Joseph Mazzini and Garibaldi. The unification of Italy was completed in 1870 under the leadership of the Sardinian king Victor Emmanuel II and his Prime Minister Count Cavour.



Garibaldi

About 38 German princely states joined together and formed a customs union called Zollverein. But the unification of Germany



Otto von Bismarck

was realised under the leadership of the Prussian king Frederick William IV and his

able Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. In 1871 the Prussian king became the Emperor



Germany in 1871

(Kaiser) of united Germany after waging the Danish war, Austro-Prussian war and the Franco-Prussian war. The newly formed states of Italy and Germany began to compete with other European states.

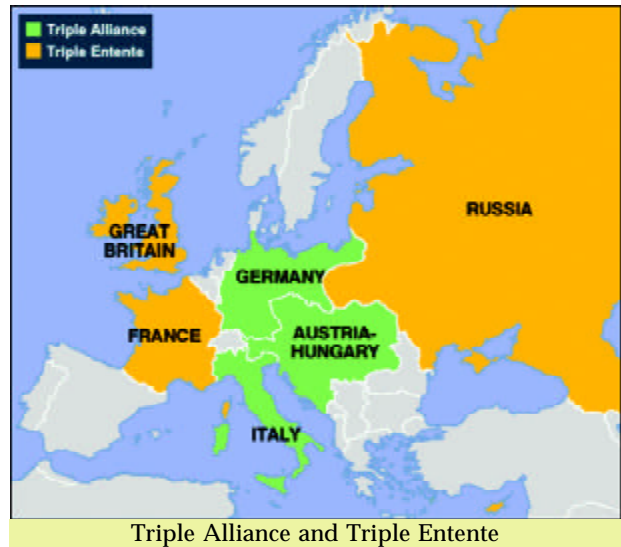
When nationalism was used to protect the rights and powers of a people within a state, it began to affect the interests of other states. The merits and traditions of nations were highlighted and the leaders appealed to the people to uphold and protect this tradition. Italy and Germany behaved like big powers. The Germans believed in the superiority and purity of their culture and they propagated it. The Italians tried to uphold the ancient Roman civilisation. This excessive nationalism led to militarization and mutual enmity among the states. This was known as aggressive nationalism.



*Though nationalism tried to protect the interests and powers of the people of a country, it led to the exploitation of other people. Examine this statement.*



The enmity among the European nations was influenced by the aggressive nationalism among the European nations and the imperialist occupations of Asia and Africa. This raised the fear among the states. Fearing aggression each state had militarised itself. Each European state enhanced its military and naval forces. This mutual fear and mistrust led to the signing of military alliances. No state was able to tell which state was a friend or a foe. Russia which signed a secret treaty with Austria, threatened her over the issue of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In order to meet a possible Russian aggression, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy concluded the Triple Alliance in 1882. Russia met this challenge by signing a treaty with France. The Russo-French secret agreement later led to the signing of the Anglo-French treaty of Entete Cordiale. This



was later developed into the Triple Entente of Britain, France and Russia. These secret treaties and alliances increased mutual suspicion and fear. It was evident that if a war broke out between two countries, it would not be confined to them alone and would escalate into a great war.



*Treaties and agreements are concluded to avoid wars and crisis. But they became causes of war. Analyse this statement.*

## Anticolonial Movements

Anticolonial struggles emerged in Asia towards the end of the 19th and by the beginning of the 20th century. The policies adopted by the British in India led to the

emergence of anti-colonial national movement. People realised that the policies adopted by the British in India led to economic ruin, cultural decay and lack of

political development in the country. You have already studied how the anti-colonial national movement (defensive nationalism) was able to protest against the cultural enslavement sought to be imposed by English education in India.

Similarly Dr. Sun Yat Sen invoked the national feeling of the Chinese people, united the various revolutionary groups and led the country towards liberation. This movement was against the imperialist powers which occupied parts of China and evil policies of the decadent Manchu dynasty which ruled China. The leaders of the national movement tried to establish a republic by overthrowing the Manchu dynasty. The basic ideals which they upheld



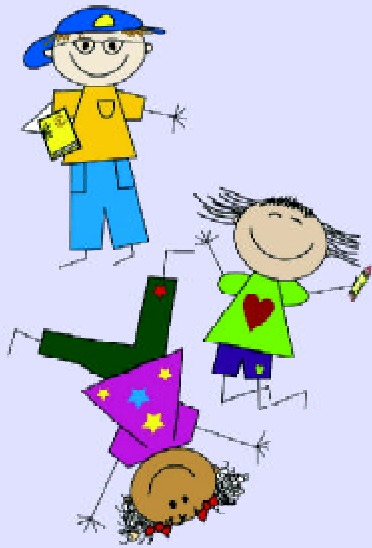
Dr. Sun Yatsen

were nationalism, democracy and socialism. The Americans under Commodore Perry became successful in opening the ports of Japan by the middle of the 19th century. Americans became successful in obtaining tax remissions for their goods and special privileges in the internal trade. Later other European powers also obtained similar rights. But the Japanese opposed these attempts of the foreigners. Their protest was aimed at the feudal administration of the Shogunate and their policy of concluding commercial treaties with foreigners. Struggles were organised to put an end to the Shogun rule. Several attacks were unleashed against the foreigners. In 1868 the Shogun rule came to an end and the Meiji dynasty was restored. In the next four decades Japan became a powerful state in the East under the Meiji rule. The growth of Japan as a nation which could compete with the European powers encouraged the anti-colonial struggles in Asia. The victory of Japan over Russia in the Russo-Japanese war exploded the myth of European invincibility. This incident speeded up the anti-imperialist agitations in Asia.



*The national movements were able to achieve the rights and powers of the people by recognising one's own strengths and weaknesses. Examine this statement in the light of the various anti-colonial struggles.*

## Activities



- The countries of North and South America achieved their independence through different means. Evaluate this statement by examining the freedom struggles of the colonies in the Americas.
  - What were the circumstances under which capitalism grew into imperialism? What was the crisis of imperialism?
  - How did the industrial progress of Europe lead to imperialism?
  - Prepare a note on the factors which helped Italian and German unification movements.
  - How did the working class movements inspire the anti-colonial movements?
- 
- The Eastern Question was not merely a boundary dispute. There were imperialist and colonial designs behind it. Discuss
  - The Partition of Africa was the best example of imperialist aggrandizement. Substantiate.
  - Aggressive nationalism and defensive nationalism caused colonisation and anti-colonial struggles respectively. Examine.