



Key Questions

- What were the major turning points in the Chinese Revolution?
- What strategies did nations employ to escape the authority of Western powers?
- What events made possible the independence movements of the late 20th Century?
- What were the major turning points in India's Independence movement?

FAREWELL TO THE AGE OF EMPIRES

*Decolonization and Independence Movements –
1920 > 1970*

Dawn of Decolonization

If ever there was the perfect opportunity for the age of empires to end, it was going to be the years following World War II.

In 1945, all the conditions looked ripe for decolonization, for outright independence, for the dawn of a new era where the peoples of the world were free to choose their own economic, cultural and political paths, free from the soft and hard influence of foreign powers bent on pursuing their own selfish goals.

The European continent sat in utter ruin. Surely, the major Western powers would prioritize getting their own people back to work and feeling safe before they'd ever again concern themselves with some far off, uncivilized colored peoples. Surely, the citizens of Western Europe would rather prevent revolutions in their own backyards before they would allow their politicians to funnel much-needed recovery funds to maintain colonies a continent away. And if Western indifference wasn't enough of a deterrent to re-colonization, surely there was no way the Soviet Union or the United States would allow global power to return to Old Europe. The two surviving superpowers had no intention of seeing the tremendous cost they bore during the war, both in lives (especially for the USSR) and in economic resources, go for naught. Their uneasy alliance existed almost exclusively to end the new empirical designs of Japan and Germany – that didn't mean they in any way approved of a return to the status quo of the early 20th century. The United Nations put in writing what the victors felt, declaring that empires would no longer be tolerated, that instead the world would strive "to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions."

As for the "them" in the previous sentence, the conquered peoples of the world, this appeared their moment in world history to declare and achieve independence. The nations of Africa, the Middle East and East Asia had been teased with independence since World War I, only to see their colonial masters renege on their promises when the probable outcomes appeared to be too expensive or too messy. But just because few nations broke free from their colonial oppressors in the 1920s and 1930s didn't mean that the independence movements had been squashed.

And when the German and Japanese forces unveiled their own armies of imperialism, the global colonial holdings were again pulled into regional clashes. Resources were drained from local economies at a fraction of their value, citizens were drafted to fight in distant theaters and entire colonies were overrun by Axis belligerents. Not only did these invasions remove the European perception of invincibility (Britain surrendered a mere seven days after the Japanese invaded Singapore), but they also fueled nationalistic movements that united local forces to expel this new set of foreign invaders. When World War II ended, victorious colonial forces felt their pivotal role in defeating the Axis powers earned them the right to see the promises of self-determination finally come to fruition.

And at first, it looked like they were getting what they asked for. A ton more countries were actually put on the map. Two decades after Germany and Japan surrendered, four times as many nations existed on the earth than did before the war began. One by one, the nations of the developing world had earned their independence. By the 1960s, on paper, decolonization looked like it was well underway.

Impacts of Colonization

But there was no singular story of decolonization. How could there have been when there was no singular story of “colonization”?

Types

On one extreme, you had the settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand and the United States where native populations were subjugated, interned or even massacred, essentially wiping out any hint of an indigenous presence. Then there was the political imperialism of India, East Asia and Africa where European authorities dictated their laws from the safety and insulation of their colonial mansions. And then, on the other extreme, there was the more hands-off approach of commercial imperialism where European traders made deals with locals, trading their Western finished goods for some much needed natural resources (but other than that not leaving any noticeable imprint on local culture).

So yes, in 1914, Europe might have economically or politically influenced 80% of the planet, but in no way were 1.53 billion individuals following the lead of one tiny little continent northeast of the Atlantic Ocean. In fact, for most of the people living in one of Europe's holdings, from Indonesia to Burma to Zambia to Algeria, once you travelled a few miles from the region's main port city, you'd quickly realize that native life was still ruled by the rhythms of nature and the needs of the family, not the whims of European oppressors.

Positives from Colonization

Yet still, though the degree of domination might have differed, a few patterns of influence popped up regardless of how embedded European authority was in the other nations of the world. And not all Western influences were evil. Everywhere Europeans went, they brought improved communication and transportation networks. They built telegraph lines, paved roads, dug canals, dredged canals and laid down railroad lines. They shared their technology, improving medical care, farming techniques and methods for extracting natural resources. Income levels rose, standards of living increased and overall health and life expectancy rates improved. They brought their education systems to these foreign worlds, and even sent elite students back to Europe to study at the finest institutions. Europeans also set up the institutions that ironically later formed the foundations for the independence movements that eventually became their own undoing.

Negatives from Colonization

However, these contributions are almost always ignored as it is far easier to fixate on the numerous, and sometimes horrific, examples of exploitation and oppression. Locals were taxed, enslaved, mutilated and murdered. Europeans sat in their conference tables thousands of miles away, determining arbitrary borders that forced rival tribes to interact and divided clans that had survived together for centuries. Natives were driven off their land, taken away from their families or forced to abandon their farms to cultivate commodities whose value rose and fell based on international demand outside their control. When the demand for cotton

or opium or sugar or tea dropped, millions found themselves without the money needed to purchase the necessities of life, and unlike before the implementation of these commodity crop economies, they couldn't exactly eat their opium or cotton harvests to survive during the off years. Europeans further crippled these developing economies by establishing the precedent that their lone value in the global trading networks was the exporting of natural resources to the industrialized nations. They were never given the capacity to turn the cotton into cloth or the diamonds into jewelry. Their economies were trapped in their infancy.

End of Colonization

By the mid-20th century, the time appeared ripe for the oppressed to free themselves from their oppressors. Western institutions had proved defective and vulnerable. The Great Depression revealed the weaknesses of capitalism. Conquered peoples were inspired and demanded liberation. And one by one they got their wish. The end of the 20th century paralleled the end of the age of European dominance, and not only created opportunities for some nations to thrive in the world community, but also left behind dangerous power vacuums that were filled with chaos and civil war.

China

For China, the stakes were the highest. For nearly four thousand years, China stood out as the preeminent civilization in the world, but the Opium War and the incursion of European traders in the mid-19th century triggered a brief blip in China's story where their future no longer rested solely in the hands of their dynastic emperors. Like the periods following previous dynastic failures, the decades following the fall of the Qing Dynasty saw the countryside regress into civil war, but this time foreigners from Europe stood on the sidelines waiting to see if a new empire would earn the Mandate of Heaven or if the regional lords would keep the nation in chaos opening up new avenues for exploitation. It wasn't clear in 1912 what direction China would adopt. Would it partner with European business interests to Westernize the economy? Would it expel all foreigners and isolate itself from the world? Would it revert to the traditional values of Confucianism or adopt the more liberal values pressing in from all sides? Would it look to its scholars for guidance or would the mantle of power be passed to the capitalist entrepreneurs looking to turn China into an industrial giant? And what form of government would it become? A democratic republic? And by doing the one thing that has proven able to unite a people, autocratic dictatorship? Or what about that new form of government being tested by their neighbor to the north - Russia? What about communism?

Experimenting with Democracy

Initially, the Chinese experimented with democracy. In 1912, they created a Senate, elected a president and then started to write a constitution. But it didn't last. Their first elected president didn't really understand the whole democracy thing. Once in power, he charged his army with destroying all political parties and ceasing any chatter about creating a republic. He ruled as dictator until 1916 when he died and the nation regressed into despair. Power reverted to the regional lords that controlled the countryside. China's future was in doubt. How long would this latest era of crisis last before a new dynasty arose? Or would Western democracy be given another chance?

The Europeans helped the Chinese answer these questions locked in regional madness – create a common enemy. And in this case the common enemy would again be the Europeans.

After the end of World War I, the European powers gathered in Versailles to punish the Germans and divvy up the spoils of war. In China, since 1897, the Germans had controlled the eastern Shandong province, after the war, the Chinese only assumed that control of the region would revert back into their hands. They were wrong. The British, the Americans and the French awarded control of Shandong to the Japanese, ignoring the Chinese diplomats at Versailles who pleaded for autonomy.

For the Chinese, the writing was on the wall – the Europeans cared little for Chinese interests. Europeans controlled the game and they would make any rules that would benefit Europeans. Even if that meant allying themselves with the Japanese.

Boxer Rebellion

Enough was enough. European imperialism in China had to end. But it wouldn't be warlords or political leaders who confronted the foreign foe. It would be university students. On May 4, 1919, students from the thirteen universities across Beijing gathered at Tiananmen Square (where 70 years later, students would again protest before being sent home by tanks and armed forces). They demanded a reversal of the Shandong agreement and blasted Chinese officials for allowing the spread of the European values of materialism and individualism. These students protested for days and their message spread into the countryside. Their initial goal of a free Shandong never materialized, but they did succeed in uniting China and igniting a sense of nationalism that had gone into hiding for a few generations. The Chinese were proud again to be Chinese, and they began to believe they could expel the barbarians. They also recognized that this revolution would not come from the elite of society. It would have to come from the masses. They would need to unite across the countryside to share the fruits of the economy. This conviction gave birth to the rise of communism.

Communist Revolution & Japanese Invasion

And once there was the Communist Party, the death of European influence in China was just around the corner. Well, maybe not just around the corner. It still took thirty years, over forty million deaths and a civil war for the soul of China. On one side of this war were the Communist forces of Mao Zedong who spent the 1920s and 1930s recruiting peasants to overthrow their feudal bonds and raise their standard of living. On the other side was the Nationalist Party of Chiang Kai Shek that promised to advance China's interests by going the more Western route of supporting businesses, improving the nation's infrastructure (roads, roads and communication networks) and bringing banking into the 20th century. Both sides wanted an independent China – the Communist Party wanted the Westerners out unconditionally, the Nationalist Party was more willing to work with Westerners to gradually reverse the unjust treaties of the previous century. The Communists fought guerrilla battles from the countryside. The Nationalists built up a strong national military with moneys they earned from imports and from loans secured from European banks. The Nationalists ran the government and the Communists relentlessly pestered their forces across the indefensible Chinese countryside. By the mid-1930s, it appeared the Nationalist Party had the advantage. Mao's forces had retreated to the hills and appeared on their last legs.

Then the Japanese invaded and the tides of China's future turned not on the actions of Mao or Chiang, but on the choices of a warlord from the north – Zhang Xueliang. Zhang's family had controlled Manchuria for decades, but when the Japanese invaded in 1928 and planted a bomb that killed Zhang's father, he flipped into revenge mode and vowed to expel the Japanese. But he had a problem. He couldn't do it alone. He needed help from the Communists and the Nationalists. Divided, China had no chance. United, they might be able to defeat Japan, or at least keep them from pushing their forces inland. If he could just find a way to In 1948, Mao used this support to dominate Chiang's their forces so they might one day return to the mainland and convince the Communists and Nationalists to stop fighting each other and direct their venom against the more dangerous foreign forces. But how could he convince Chiang Kai Shek to sign a truce with his enemy Mao Zedong? How? He kidnapped Chiang, put a gun to his head and encouraged him to stop fighting the Communists.

It worked. The Communists and Nationalists agreed to not kill each other for a few years. They would just kill the Japanese. Mao's Communists used this reprieve to scatter across the nation, securing more and more peasants attracted to the ideology of redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor, but more drawn to the opportunity to attack Japanese forces. The Nationalists continued to fight the Japanese, tying themselves

closer and closer to their Western allies who offered money and weapons to help slow down the Japanese onslaught. This uneasy truce flipped the tide of national support in the Communists' favor, as time and again it appeared the Communists were the better fighters and the Nationalists were merely the soft allies of the West, unable to truly protect China's interests. When the war ended and Japan was no longer the enemy that necessitated a truce, Mao and Chiang resumed their war, but by this time, the Nationalist's credibility had been shot. Mao's party skillfully exposed incidences of Nationalist corruption, highlighted the oppressive taxes of the Nationalist government and circulated stories of Nationalist soldiers dressing in peasant clothing to avoid protecting innocent women and children. If the Chinese people had to choose a horse, they were putting their money on Mao and the Communist Party.

In 1948, Mao used this support to dominate Chiang's forces, eventually forcing him to retreat across the Taiwan Strait with two million of his Nationalist supporters, hoping to fortify restore the Nationalist government to its rightful place.

Birth of the People's Republic of China

They never returned. In 1949, Mao proclaimed the birth of a new nation - The People's Republic of China – a nation that would be a republic in name only. Mao was the lone man calling the shots, and his often-misguided efforts lead to millions of deaths.

Both the European and American interests were left supporting a loser. They continued to throw money and weapons at Taiwan (and even still do to this day), but it would be another three decades before mainland China again reopened its doors to Western influence. But by then, China would have regained its national prestige and would never again deal with the West on foreign terms. China would control its destiny and if the West wanted to play along, they would have to adapt to the whims of the reborn Middle Kingdom.

For China, escaping European influence meant half a century of civil war while embracing a Communist doctrine of peasant revolution. Other countries would likewise feel the pull of capitalism and communism as they wrenched themselves away from colonial shackles, but unlike the violent path taken by China, their neighbor to the west offered another option – civil disobedience.

India

For India wasn't anything like China. It wasn't merely a nation where a few ports were controlled by Western authorities. India was a colonial holding of Great Britain, utterly subjugated by a foreign nation unwilling to relinquish its dominion. If India was to break free, they couldn't afford a civil war. They had to find a way to unite their four hundred million people to pressure Great Britain to withdraw their forces. They could never match Britain on the battlefield, but maybe they could induce sympathy in the media. Maybe if they followed a man with a revolutionary idea of how to protest nonviolently (instead of a military leader or a political mastermind), maybe they could convince the British public that their independence was a natural right.

Revolution for Independence

For this revolution, they would follow Mahatma Gandhi. A lawyer and a philosopher, Gandhi became the inspiration for a movement that had been decades in the making. Like so many times in history, he was the right man at the right time.

The Great Britain of the 1920s was not the Great Britain of the turn of the century. WWI proved the Brits were not an infallible force. Their century reign of pretty much uninterrupted military successes came to an end. Sure, they might have won World War I, but in 1919, their nation didn't feel too victorious. It was plagued by debt, close to a million of their young men were slaughtered on the battlefields of France and their citizens were left to wonder if they truly were the most civilized people on the planet. Britain could have withdrawn

from international affairs and focused on repairing the lives of their countrymen, but instead they attempted to merely pick up where they left off. India was their crown jewel in Asia and they had no intention of granting them independence, no matter what they had promised their South Asian subjects to ensure full support during the war.

In 1919, India was not only further away from independence, it was actually feeling the even deeper sting of colonialism due to the war's carnage. 60,000 Indian men paid the ultimate price of supporting the crown, perishing in the trenches of East Africa and the Western front. To add insult to injury, the Indians were then charged exorbitant taxes to help pull Britain's economy out of turmoil. Like the American colonists 150 years earlier, the Indian colonists had a little trouble swallowing the fact that they not only were responsible for dying in a foreign power's war, but they also then had to illogically pay for this war. But also like the Americans, merely being frustrated wasn't enough to foment a revolution. The people had to be roused out of their passive acceptance of subordination, snapped out of their haze of merely accepting the leftover scraps of their British lords. For the thirteen colonies of America, there was the "massacre" at Boston.

For India, it was the Amritsar Massacre.

But unlike the Boston Massacre where only a handful of Bostonians died, many of whom had spent the afternoon badgering the British redcoats, throwing out a series of slurs and pelting them with rocks and snow balls, this Indian tragedy was truly an example of innocents being butchered by seemingly sadistic bullies. On April 13, 1919, in the northern region of Amritsar, a few thousand men, women and children gathered at a public garden to protest their spiraling downward standard of living. Alarmed by recent riots in neighboring counties, the head of the British forces, Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer, ordered that fifty of his soldiers set up around the periphery of the square and mow down the gathering protesters. They obliged, and within minutes, hundreds of defenseless civilians lay murdered and another thousand were wounded. Word quickly spread of the tragedy and the Indian subjects looked to their hypothetically civilized authorities to right this wrong. Dyer was taken before a military tribunal and forced into an early retirement, but when he returned to Britain he was greeted as a hero.

How could this murderer be celebrated as a hero? Weren't the Brits the ones who championed themselves as enlightened elites, who spent the last few centuries admiring the works of 18th century philosophes who demanded the protesting of unjust political systems and the protection of individual freedoms like assembly and speech? Or maybe in the world of Great Britain, human equality and freedom were rights only granted to Europeans.

Whatever moral authority Britain once held died that spring day. Indians would never be treated as equals as long as they were simply a source of labor and resources that Great Britain could tap into whenever its economy needed a boost.

Gandhi

Enter Gandhi. Gandhi returned to India in 1915 a hero. He had spent the previous two decades in South Africa, after earning his law degree in England. He had become a sort of celebrity in the decade before World War I for standing up to British authorities in South Africa, attempting to end the apartheid system that saw races separated and a caste system propped up where white people had access to the highest paying jobs, while the coloreds were relegated to whatever manual labor they could find. Gandhi himself was thrown off trains for sitting in the white section and refused entry to hotels and restaurants based on his color. It was in South Africa where we first saw the man's methods. He would use the law, he would use the press and he would use the crowds to shine an unflattering light on the inequities of the British realm.

Once he returned to India, he was approached by the Indian National Congress, an organization of wealthy, educated, connected Indians who hypothetically represented Indian interests in colonial government. Yet many of these elite Congressmen had more in common with British authorities than they did with their own people. They had worked since 1885 to gain more privileges for Indians, but they did so within the law, hoping to work towards an amicable understanding with the respected British crown. Their movement never really gained traction, as it was never before a movement of the masses, but more a gathering of the upper class who talked of a better world. They were big on words but small on action. They had assured more power to local governments and expanded the voice of locals, but by the end of World War I, India was still not independent.

Yet when Gandhi arrived, the make-up of the Congress changed. It became less elitist and more welcoming to members of the other castes. It started listening to the grievances from the countryside. With the Amritsar Massacre, it was poised to take the protests to a higher level, and Gandhi would lead this movement.

Gandhi challenged the conventional Indian National Congress platform that supported an end-game where Brits running a British system were replaced with Indians running a British system. He saw how the American Revolution was a revolution in name only and he had no desire to simply replace one aristocratic ruling class with another aristocracy, even if this new one was from South Asia. He espoused the principles of home rule – where Indians would create a unique government system based on India's vibrant past, its complex diversity and its geographic realities. In his book *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi introduces a new type of freedom, a freedom where the West is rejected, where Indians don't see themselves as beneath the Europeans, but realize it was they who dominated a huge chunk of the planet for most of human history. He also wrote of how the one way to accomplish this true independence was through civil disobedience, by securing rights through suffering. Until Indians were willing to let their bodies, their minds and their pocketbooks suffer, the British would never leave.

Non Violence & Salt Marches

So Gandhi started his campaign of nonviolent resistance, a strategy that has since been borrowed countless times by disenfranchised peoples around the globe. He convinced Indians to boycott British goods. He argued they should stop buying British clothes and instead make their own (thus the trademark white outfit Gandhi spun from his own portable spinning machine). He marched across the country, gathering thousands along the way as he protested the British ban on Indian salt, choosing instead to make salt from the sea. He lobbied persecuted employees to go on strike until their companies granted them a fair standard of living. He himself willingly paid the price for independence. He fasted, he was beaten, he was arrested and his life was constantly under threat. But all the while, he moved forward. And all the while, he ensured the full participation of another partner – the media. Without both the British press and Indian press, his movement would have fallen on deaf ears (if even heard at all). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, one by one, nations were falling to fascist governments that persecuted the helpless. So when stories continued out of India of scores of people beaten by royal officers or of a gaunt, smiling man in rags staggering across the country speaking of the power of free will, England had to take a dose of hypocrisy medicine. Back in England, the powers-that-be started to listen. They realized the falseness of their claim of civilized, moral authority when reports kept rolling in of barbaric treatment of an oppressed people.

Not all approved of Gandhi's tactics. Some wished he would use his influence to foment a communist revolution (a la Mao to the east). Some thought he was an egotistical self-promoter who relished the attention. Others thought he favored Hindus over Muslims. Others thought he was too nice to the Muslims. And back in Britain, parliamentarian Winston Churchill was just annoyed with his entire existence, calling him a "half naked fakir."

Yet in a country of 390 million people, he was never going to get everyone on his side. He didn't need to. But he did move tens of millions. At the start of World War II, Britain had a tenuous hold on India, but it still wouldn't let it be free. When war broke out against Germany, Britain forced India to again support the cause, both with the lives of its young men and its resources needed at the front lines. Gandhi didn't believe India should support British forces, and he chose the heart of the war to launch a more rigorous campaign – the Quit India movement. Tens of thousands marched, protested and boycotted, but Britain had little patience for this resistance when they were trying to manage a war. They threw Gandhi in jail for a few years and focused their efforts on keeping Hitler from taking over the world.

Partition of India

But when World War II ended, Britain realized enough was enough. Again, their economy was in turmoil, but this time their entire country lay in rubble. Britain had no idea how it was going to rebuild itself, let alone how it would finance India's recovery. In 1947, they decided to pull out their troops and their officials. The British forces had no idea what to do about the Muslim vs. Hindu conflicts that were bound to blow up at any moment. Would they turn the country over to a percentage of Muslim officials or a percentage of Hindu officials? Or would they just walk away and let them fight it out for themselves? Instead, the British authorities just invented a new country – Pakistan, and on August 14th and 15th, 1947, Indian and Pakistan became independent nations.

Though the struggle for independence had ended, the civil war began. After the partitioning of South Asia into a Muslim Pakistan and a Hindu India, over twelve million Indians packed up their lives and moved across the country, marking one of the largest migrations in human history. As homes were abandoned and villages were taken over by thousands of belligerent, hungry China and India took two completely different routes to refugees, there was bound to be conflict. Former allies turned against each other as Muslims fought Hindus for the spoils of independence. Anywhere from 500,000 to a million Indians perished in the beatings, shootings, burnings and famines that resulted from the mass migration. To this day, the legacy of this partition continues to fuel hostilities, as Pakistan and India refuse to accept that the partition and its arbitrary boundaries established by the British parliament should be respected as is.

Gandhi lived long enough to see his country free and then his people implode. A year after the partition he was gunned down by a Hindu extremist who felt Gandhi was too soft on Pakistan. The leader of the independence movement was dead, the two nations were in turmoil and like every other nation that broke free from colonial rule, life would get a heck of a lot worse before it got better.

Conclusion

China and India took two completely different routes to independence, but certain patterns emerged in their stories that would reoccur time and again as scores of countries believe the time was ripe for revolution.

First, across the world, patriotic feelings of nationalism sprouted, as the possibility of rallying against a common foreign enemy stirred many to put their differences aside for the sake of the movement. These nationalistic uprisings were almost always rallied by passionate, inspirational figures who spouted vitriolic attacks at their colonial masters. Second, many of these newly- freed countries experimented with democracy. China dabbled with a republic after the fall of the Qing, India stuck with a republic that has since evolve into the largest democracy in the world, Israel was created by the United Nations as a beacon of republicanism in the midst of a desert of autocratic regimes, and in Vietnam, America actually thought democracy could work, even though a man named Ho Chi Minh was less than thrilled with the notion. Nationalism and the promise of republican governments sparked the independence movements, but almost all decolonized regions soon learned inspiration and governance are two entirely different concepts. Keeping the country would be a lot harder than creating it.

Another pattern that emerged is that almost all decolonized regions immediately devolved into madness, civil war or political infighting. In regions where boundaries had been created haphazardly with no concern for ethnic rivalries (see map of Sub-Saharan Africa), this regression would be bloody and would cripple any chance of fostering stable societies. In nations where ethnicity wasn't the dividing factor, political ideology would rule the day and peoples would decide if they could resolve their differences amicably in a house of parliament (a la India) or have to fight a civil war for the hearts and minds of the nation (Vietnam). For some nations, resolution was impossible and independent nations would have to be created (Korea, Vietnam). For other nations, the conflicts were stopped, not by negotiation, but by force – which leads us to the third pattern.

Autocrats had proven effective at stopping (even if only temporarily) the ethnic hatred that had no clear solution. Often these figures aren't renowned today for their humanitarianism or their pacifist nature, but they did keep the peace in freed nations where rival groups wanted nothing less than total annihilation of their adversaries. Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Sukarno in Indonesia and Marshall Tito in Yugoslavia all stifled ethnic hostility through their ample usage of secret police and not-so-judicious judicial systems. But once these men died (either naturally or by the hands of people not so fond of their rule), tensions sprung again to the surface, meaning persecution and death tolls were soon to follow.

But the one pattern common to all of these decolonized societies was that their little foray into independence, free of outside influence, was always fleeting. Although the French, the British and the Dutch might have pulled back their colonial influence, two remaining superpowers would spend the rest of the 20th century pulling these fledgling nations under their own sphere of influence. For the five decades following World War II, Russia and the United States fashioned a new type of empire, a new way of controlling the economies and the governments of the world. They no longer would colonize. It was just too expensive. And also, the legacy of imperialism rightfully left a bad taste in the mouths of the freshly-freed.

These two new powers set out to carve up the world into a bipolar hegemony, where they each warned, "You're either with us or against us." This new era of imperialism would be known as the Cold War, and if nations thought their societies were shaped by foreign interests before, they hadn't seen nothing yet.

But that is for another chapter.