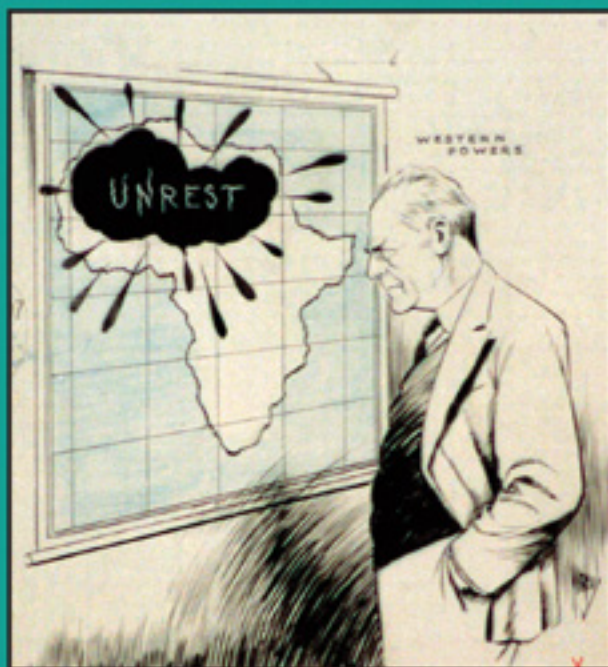


History
UNFOLDING

THE END OF THE IMPERIAL AGE



MindSparks
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

Contents

Introduction	2
Lesson 1	Decolonization Struggles: Asia	4
Lesson 2	Decolonization Struggles: Africa	8
Lesson 3	The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire	12
Lesson 4	World Reactions, Alternative Views	16
Appendix	Image Close-ups	21

Introduction

The End of Empire

Speaking in South Africa in 1960, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan made this dramatic claim about trends in Africa at that time:

Ever since the break up of the Roman Empire, one of the constant factors of political life has been the emergence of the independent nations. The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept this fact and our national policies must take account of it.

By the time of Macmillan's speech, the age of empire was in fact already all but over for Great Britain and the other nations of Western Europe.

World War II had the most to do with triggering this collapse of empire and of Europe's will to impose its rule on others. Europe itself was in ruins. And its legitimacy as a civilizing force was in tatters after the self-inflicted butchery of two world wars and the horror of totalitarian genocide. Also, as Macmillan noted, a sense of "national consciousness" was growing rapidly, at least among educated elites throughout the colonial lands.

At the same time, World War II helped give new life to another, vastly different imperial system—the Soviet imperial system. Soviet conquests in Eastern Europe triggered a Cold War. And this created an ironic context for decolonization, since the Soviets themselves often aided anti-colonial movements directed against the older, Western empires. Yet in the 1980s, the Soviets themselves learned that the drive for national independence could not be so neatly channeled only against the West. In 1991, the Soviet empire itself disintegrated.

This set uses 12 visual displays to focus on several of the key themes in this dramatic turning point in world history. Each lesson uses three visual displays to explore one broad topic. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

Decolonization Struggles: Asia

The illustrations focus primarily on Mohandas Gandhi and India, with one cartoon on more violent independence struggles in Southeast Asia.

Decolonization Struggles: Africa

Here the illustrations call attention to the wide variety of African liberation movements in the 1950s and '60s. Some were peaceful; others were not. All of them confronted challenges, both before and after decolonization.

The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire

The Soviet Union itself has often been described as an empire. With the conquest of Eastern Europe that empire expanded enormously. However, in historical terms, it also perished in a very short space of time.

World Reactions, Alternative Views

The process of decolonization became caught up in the Cold War rivalries of Western and communist-bloc nations. This produced complex reactions to it around the world, some of which are explored here.

Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Many textbooks are full of colorful visuals. However, all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. Only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

DIGITAL IMAGES The booklet's PDF allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the projected images. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small-group or all-class activities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will better understand the struggle for independence in India and elsewhere in Asia.
2. Students will debate the relevance of Gandhi's approach to other decolonization struggles.

Decolonization Struggles: Asia

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

After World War II Europe lay in ruins. Its power had shrunk, its prestige had vanished, its colonial subjects no longer held it in awe. Clearly, time was running out on Europe's age of empire. Of all the struggles against colonial rule, the largest occurred in India, the jewel of the British imperial system. It was led by Mohandas Gandhi, whose campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience wore down the British and led them to grant India independence in 1947. In the top photo here, Gandhi is seen with Jawaharlal Nehru, a follower who became India's first prime minister. Gandhi's simple lifestyle and long struggle made him a hero to millions around the world. He seemed proof that under some circumstances, at least, a relatively peaceful struggle for social change could succeed.

Illustration 2

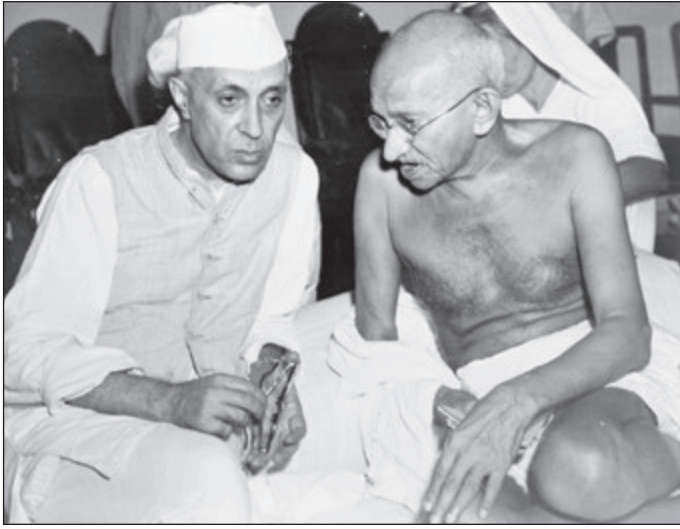
Decolonization, however just, rarely fulfilled the high hopes of former colonial subjects. In India, for example, Muslims and Hindus clashed even during the anti-colonial struggle. Gandhi hoped the groups would unite. But with independence, India was split into a mostly Hindu India and a largely Muslim Pakistan. Violence resulted in more than a million deaths during and just after independence. In early 1948 a Hindu fanatic assassinated Gandhi. Nehru led India from 1947 until his death in 1964. Two years after his death, in 1966, his daughter Indira Gandhi, no relation to Mohandas Gandhi, became prime minister. This cartoon comments on some of the huge problems she still faced as she took office.

Illustration 3

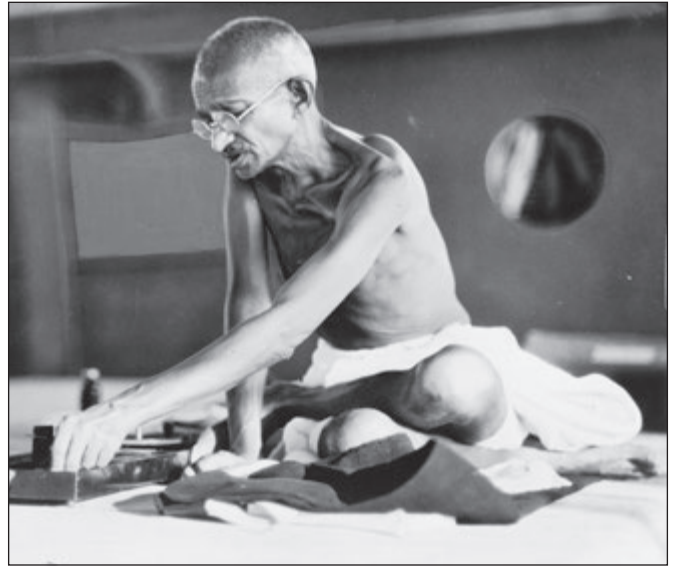
India's independence struggle had its violent moments, but it strove to remain peaceful. Elsewhere in Asia, struggles against colonialism took a much more violent form, also often getting caught up in Cold War rivalries. After World War II, for instance, the U.S. supported France's fight to regain control of Vietnam against the communist rebels fighting for that nation's independence. The U.S. concern was with the spread of communism, but France's goal was to reestablish its colonial empire in Southeast Asia. This U.S. cartoon from the early 1950s reflects the irritation Americans felt at France's lack of gratitude for U.S. help. Eventually, the French pulled out of Vietnam, and colonialism came to an end. But the U.S. continued the fight against the communists, a fight it would finally lose in 1975.

Lesson 1—Decolonization Struggles: Asia

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. After World War II, movements all over the world arose calling for an end to Europe's colonial empires. What is meant by the term "colonial empire"?
2. Of all the independence struggles, perhaps the most famous was led by the man in these two photos. Who is he, which nation did he lead to independence in 1947, and who ruled that nation as a colony?
3. Mohandas Gandhi is famous for his philosophy of nonviolent civil disobedience. What do you know about this philosophy and the effect it had on the way Gandhi conducted India's independence struggle?
4. On the left, Gandhi is shown with Jawaharlal Nehru, a key supporter and the man who became India's first leader. Can you explain why Gandhi himself never had a chance to lead India as an independent nation?
5. Some people say nonviolence in India worked mainly because the British were reasonable colonial rulers. What do you think these people mean? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Mohandas Gandhi and Winston Churchill, two giants of the 20th century, disagreed about India. Here are two quotes from them:

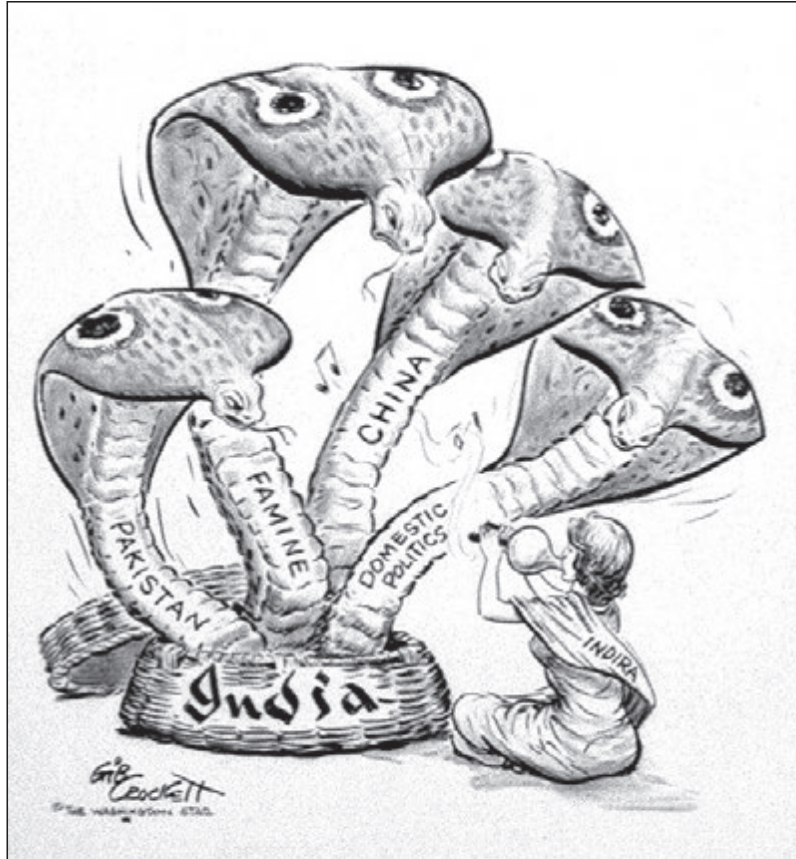
Gandhi: *"India's destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West, but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life."*

Churchill: *"Democracy is totally unsuited to India. Instead of conflicting opinions you have bitter theological hatreds."*

Read more about these men and their ideas about India. Organize a debate with half of the group taking Gandhi's position and the other half, Churchill's.

2. Along with his ideas on nonviolent civil disobedience, Gandhi's unique dress and lifestyle were important expressions of his ideas about India and its future. Read more about Gandhi and the lifestyle he adopted during India's independence struggle. In a brief essay, explain and evaluate these aspects of his life and their role in Gandhi's struggle and leadership.

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This cartoon comments on some of the more challenging problems India faced in the years after it won its independence from Great Britain. Why do you think the artist chose cobras as symbols to get across how challenging these problems were?
2. The cartoon actually comes from 1964, just after a new leader took over. She is shown here on the right. From the word on her back, can you identify her?
3. One huge problem for India since independence and continuing to this day has been Pakistan. What deeper division in India was related to the birth of Pakistan and to its dealings with India since 1947?
4. The cartoon makes a point about India. But it could also be made about many other nations after the end of colonialism. The point is that independence did not solve all their problems. Why do you think so many of these nations have faced such severe problems?

Follow-up Activities

1. In 2002, tensions between India and Pakistan nearly led these two nuclear nations to blows over the issue of Kashmir. The crisis soon eased, but it did not go away. Read more about the history of India-Pakistan relations since the two nations came into existence in 1947. Create a time line summarizing the key moments in this history. Explain your time line in a brief presentation to the class.
2. **Small-group activity:** This activity asks your group to compare India today to India in 1947. Summarize the differences and similarities between India now and India then using several key measures, such as population, per-capita income, major industries, urban growth, famine dangers, agricultural development, environmental conditions and the level of political freedom. Have each member of the group pick one of these measures and learn more about how it has changed during India's history since independence. As a group, present your findings to the class.

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. Elsewhere in Asia, some independence struggles became much more violent than India's. This early 1950s cartoon comments on one such struggle, in a nation then fighting to free itself from its colonial ruler. Can you name that nation and its colonial ruler?
2. France had been fighting the Vietnamese rebels since the end of World War II. But by the early 1950s, the U.S. had begun to aid the French, mainly because the conflict in Vietnam had become a part of the Cold War. Can you explain? What point of view about the French and U.S. roles in Vietnam at that time does this cartoon express?
3. In spite of U.S. support, the French were unable to maintain control of their colony. How did Vietnam's status change in 1954?
4. In the early 1960s, the conflict in Vietnam began to be more of an American war. Some say this put the U.S. in the role of a new colonizing power in Vietnam. Is this judgment fair? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. Ho Chi Minh led the Viet Minh, the Vietnamese forces fighting France. After World War II, Ho asked the U.S. to support his drive for independence. But the U.S. backed the French, in part because Ho was a communist. Many historians debate whether Ho was a communist first or a nationalistic Vietnamese patriot first. Read more about Ho Chi Minh. Write an essay defending your opinion regarding this question. In your essay, be sure to deal with U.S. rejection of Ho's requests for support following World War II and whether or not the U.S. acted wisely.
2. This cartoon reflects the irritation many Americans felt in the early 1950s at what they saw as France's lack of gratitude for the U.S. support it was getting in Vietnam. Read more about the "Indochina War," as the conflict between France and the Viet Minh was called. Based on what you learn, write a letter to the editor of the newspaper in which this cartoon appeared. Voice your views about the cartoon and the issue with which it deals.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand more about some of the independence struggles in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s.
2. Students will better appreciate some of the huge challenges facing Africa's first independent rulers.

Decolonization

Struggles: Africa

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

Western educated elites often sparked Africa's wave of anti-colonial struggles in the 1950s and '60s. In 1957, the Gold Coast in West Africa became the first British African colony to achieve independence, soon changing its name to Ghana. The top photo shows Kwame Nkrumah, on the stool, being sworn in as Ghana's first ruler. On the bottom is Jomo Kenyatta, to the left of U.S. civil rights lawyer Thurgood Marshall. In 1963, Kenyatta led British-ruled Kenya to independence after a good deal of bloodshed there. Both Nkrumah and Kenyatta hoped to overcome tribal loyalties and build new nations within boundaries set by their former colonial masters. To foster a new sense of national identity, they often tried to adapt traditional African culture and customs to the modern age—as is suggested here especially by the photo of Nkrumah.

Illustration 2

The struggles in Ghana and Kenya, though at times violent, were smooth compared to others, such as in South West Africa, where the South West African People's Organization, or SWAPO, led an armed rebellion. The poster on the left supports that struggle. In the Belgian Congo, unrest led Belgium to grant independence hastily in 1960 to an unprepared nation. A highly complex civil war followed in which tribal loyalties and Cold War rivalries added to the tensions. The cartoon on the right criticizes the Congo's first president, Patrice Lumumba, for seeking help from Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev after UN Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld refused to use UN forces to put down one province's rebellion against Lumumba.

Illustration 3

By the end of 1963, most of the African continent was independent. Many who had struggled against colonial rule hoped to be able to work together. In fact, Nkrumah and others wanted something like a United States of Africa, placing the whole continent under one authority. Nkrumah is on the far right in this 1961 photo with several other African leaders. Few African leaders really favored this idea. Instead, in 1963, they set up the less powerful Organization for African Unity, or OAU, to foster cooperation. But the OAU rarely achieved much unity. Meanwhile, within Africa's new nations, old tribal loyalties continued to cause instability, leading all too often to dictatorship, corruption and thwarted development.

Lesson 2—Decolonization Struggles: Africa

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

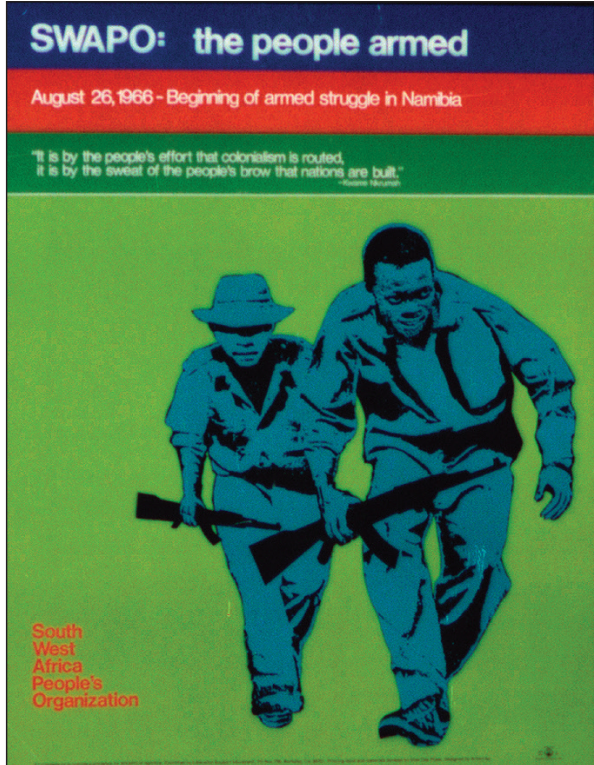
1. On the left, Kwame Nkrumah is sworn in as the first leader of the British Gold Coast, which won its independence in 1957. What is this nation's current name? Much of Africa was decolonized in just two decades after World War II. Why do you think colonial empires collapsed so soon after World War II?
2. Europe's colonial powers had often carved up Africa without regard to ethnic, religious or tribal boundaries. But African nationalists basically accepted these boundaries in their independence struggles. Why do you suppose this was so?
3. On the right are Jomo Kenyatta and Thurgood Marshall in the early 1960s. What is historically important about each man? Why might Kenyatta have especially valued this friendly support from Marshall?
4. Both photos suggest how the new African leaders tried to adapt traditional African culture and customs to the task of creating a new national identity for their peoples. From the photos, can you explain?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Create a map and time line bulletin board exhibit on African independence movements. Divide up key African nations among your group members. Have each person learn more about one or two countries. Then, on the time line, list these countries, their European colonial rulers and when each became independent. List key facts about independence movements, the first leaders of the new nations, the governments they established and other interesting facts to help make the display as interesting and educational as it can be.
2. Learn more about the life and times either of Kwame Nkrumah or Jomo Kenyatta. Your goal is to write a brief biography that could be useful in teaching younger students about colonialism in Africa and the struggles to end it. Keep the biography to about two or three pages only. Share what you have written with the class, and explain why your biography could be used in teaching younger students about this figure and his place in history.

Lesson 2—Decolonization Struggles: Africa

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. In many cases, colonial powers first resisted but then peacefully gave in to nationalist demands for independence. However, this was not so in all cases. The poster on the left supports SWAPO, a group that in 1966 began seeking independence for a former German colony then ruled by the government of South Africa. What was that colony's name? What is its name today? From the poster, can you tell what form SWAPO's struggle took?
2. The cartoon on the right shows Patrice Lumumba speaking against UN Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld. In 1960, Lumumba became the first president of what newly independent nation?
3. Independence struggles in Africa often got caught up in the Cold War. In the Congo, this took the form of Soviet aid to Lumumba at a time when the UN had refused him such help. How does the cartoon make this point, and what opinion of it does the cartoon express? Why do you suppose the Soviets offered this help to Lumumba?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** The cartoon on the right appeared in the *Washington Star* in August 1960. What it shows is part of a complex process that unfolded in the late 1950s and much of the 1960s. Use the cartoon as the centerpiece of a mini-lesson for the class on the Congo. Create a time line and a series of short written summaries (two or three paragraphs each) on all key phases of the history of the Congo in the 1950s and '60s. Your aim in this mini-lesson is to get the class to fully understand the cartoon and be able to debate whether or not the point of view it expresses is fair.
2. Pretend you are a TV producer who has been asked to come up with a "treatment" (a detailed outline or scenario) for a one-hour documentary on the history of Namibia. Do research on Namibia's history, and create a two or three page treatment for the documentary. Think about the scenes and events you would like to include, the script you would write, the people you'd like to interview, etc.

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. Kwame Nkrumah is on the far right in the photo on the right. He wanted to unite the newly independent African nations under one authority, creating a sort of “United States of Africa.” Few other African leaders wanted to go that far, but they did organize the OAU, a poster for which is on the left. What do the initials “OAU” stand for, and what was the organization’s purpose?
2. Based on what you know of the nations making up the continent of Africa, why do you suppose Africans might have wanted a group like the OAU?
3. Many newly independent African nations also sought to remain “non-aligned” during the Cold War. What did that mean? Why might they have wanted to do this? How realistic do you think that goal was? Why?
4. The OAU has rarely been able to achieve much unity among the nations of Africa. What factors might explain this failure? Do you think Africans still need this sort of unifying force? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. To fully understand a visual historical document such as the photo above on the right you usually need a great deal of background information. The photo shows a group of African leaders arriving at the Casablanca airport in 1961. In front, from left to right, are Modibo Keita of Mali, Sekou Toure of Guinea, King Mohammed of Morocco and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Your job is to find out as much background information as you can about these men. Using that information, and taking into account the date of the photo, explain what you think these men were up to and what they were talking about when the photo was taken. Write a brief report and share it with the class.
2. The Organization for African Unity, or OAU, was set up in 1963 to foster continent-wide cooperation. Write a brief essay on the history of the OAU. Focus your essay on answering the following question: “Has the OAU been a success or a failure?” Be sure to back up your conclusion with specifics.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will better understand the Soviet-dominated communist bloc as a kind of colonial empire.
2. Students will better understand the dramatic and sudden nature of the collapse of the Soviet system.

The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

After World War II, U.S. forces were rapidly sent home. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union continued to occupy much of Eastern Europe, which it had freed from Nazi Germany's control. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin rapidly undermined efforts at democratic change in Eastern Europe and set up communist governments throughout the region. In doing this, he greatly extended a very different kind of colonial empire. In 1949, Communists led by Mao Zedong and backed by the Soviets took over in China—adding to the sense conveyed by this cartoon of a new Soviet imperialist power on the march. Yet in only two or three decades after Europe's empires collapsed, the Soviet empire would also.

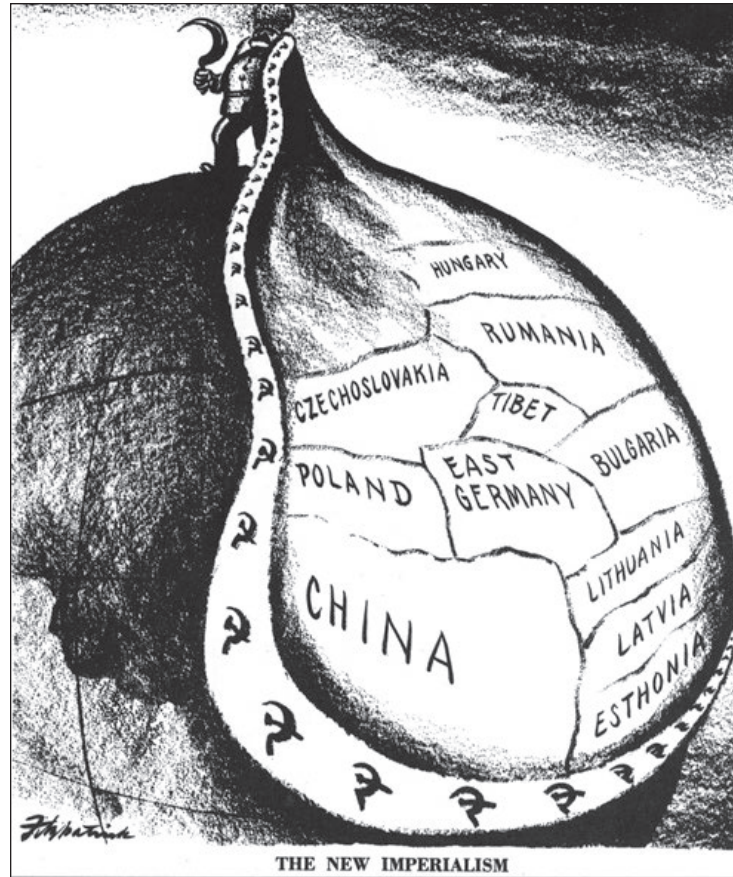
Illustration 2

The German city of Berlin soon became a prime symbol of resistance to the Soviet empire. Following World War II, Germany was divided into a Soviet-controlled East Germany and a democratic West Germany. Berlin lay inside East Germany, but it was also divided into a Soviet-controlled East Berlin and a democratic West Berlin. For a while, it was easy for East Germans to escape to freedom simply by walking into West Berlin. From 1949 to 1961, at least 2.7 million people fled East Germany, more than half through West Berlin. Then the Soviets constructed a wall dividing the city and keeping East Germans from escaping. The cartoon on the right refers to the flight of East Germans to West Berlin in the spring of 1953.

Illustration 3

What made the Cold War so terrifying was the threat of nuclear war, but nuclear annihilation never came. Instead, the idea of a free and open society proved stronger even than many of communism's greatest foes had dared to hope. In 1989, popular upheavals throughout Eastern Europe overthrew weak and corrupt communist regimes. And by 1991, the Soviet Union, itself an empire of sorts, disintegrated and disappeared. Arguments will go on for a long time about the causes of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Some say it was due to the strength and the determination of the Western nations to contain Soviet expansion. This cartoon suggests it was also communism's own deeply flawed nature that did it in.

Illustration 1



Fitzpatrick in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

Discussing the Illustration

1. This cartoon is from the year 1950. It comments on the spread of another, different kind of empire. This editorial cartoon's caption is "The New Imperialism." What does the word "imperialism" mean?
2. The phrase "new imperialism" in the cartoon is about Joseph Stalin's post-World War II empire. Who was Stalin? How can you tell the cartoon is about him, his nation and the empire it controlled?
3. World War II gave Stalin the chance to set up this empire. From the huge robe, can you explain which nations made up this empire and how Stalin came to control them?
4. Some say the Soviets needed to control Eastern Europe to protect against future attacks, like the one Germany launched in World War II. Others say this was just an excuse for Stalin to spread communism to Eastern Europe and get control of its people and its resources. With which of these views do you agree more? Why?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Each group member should choose one of the following nations and learn more about its history from 1945 to 1989:

Poland
Hungary
Bulgaria
Czechoslovakia

Create a detailed time line of important events in these nations from 1945 to 1989. Use this time line to help in presenting brief reports to the class on these nations. In each report, answer this question: "Did people in this nation ever fully accept the communist ideas of their Soviet-controlled rulers?"

2. One nation on this robe is China. Read more about China and its dealings with the Soviet Union from 1949 to 1963. Based on what you learn, write a letter to the editor about this cartoon. In your letter, be sure to comment on the appearance of China on the robe. Should it be there? Why or why not?

Lesson 3—The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. The growth of Stalin's empire helped trigger a long "Cold War" rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. What do you know about the origins of the Cold War? Could the Cold War have been avoided? Why or why not?
2. The German city of Berlin became a key flash point in the Cold War. That's mainly because of where it was located in Germany and how it was divided. Can you explain?
3. Between 1949 and 1961, at least 2.7 million people fled East Germany, more than half of them through West Berlin. The cartoon on the right refers to the flight of East Germans to West Berlin in the spring of 1953. Eventually, how did the communist East German government deal with this problem?
4. Many people say the Berlin Wall soon became a symbol of both the harshness and the failure of the Soviet empire in all of Eastern Europe. Can you explain why and how it became such a symbol?

Follow-up Activity

1. Historians have argued for years about the Cold War. Some arguments have to do with its causes; others have to do with the nature of the conflict. Was it simply a rivalry between two powerful and equally assertive superpowers? Or was it a battle between two very different moral systems and ways of life? One group of historians describes the Cold War simply as:

"The sword play of the Soviet Union and the United States . . ."

But another historian says:

"The agonies of Stalin's Russia, where about 500,000 people were judicially murdered (or just murdered) by the state [after World War II], . . . formed a gruesome contrast to the America against which it was pitted."

With which view do you agree more? Write an essay on the nature of the Cold War and the lessons you think Americans most need to learn from it.

Illustration 3



Clyde Wells, courtesy of *The Augusta Chronicle*

Discussing the Illustration

1. This cartoon is about one of the most dramatic moments in modern history. This “moment” took place in November of 1989. Briefly, describe the event that is depicted in this cartoon.
2. Just as the Berlin Wall was a symbol of sorts, so also its fall in 1989 came to symbolize a far more sweeping change that took place during and after 1989. Briefly, what change was that?
3. And as for symbols, the men tearing down the wall are using a hammer and a sickle. We saw these in a design in the cartoon in the previous illustration as well. Together what do these two tools symbolize?
4. What point about the collapse of communism do you think the cartoon is making by showing the men using this famous symbol of communism to take down the wall? Is this a way of suggesting what caused the collapse of communism? If so, do you agree with the cartoon’s point about what caused that collapse? Explain your answers.

Follow-up Activities

1. Find several cartoons about communism in Eastern Europe from 1989–1991. (You can find many in the collections by Charles Brooks, ed., *Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year*. Look for the collections for 1989, 1990 and 1991.) Photocopy several cartoons that show differing points of view about what caused the collapse of communism. Use the cartoons in a bulletin board display. Add to the display by writing your own interpretation of each cartoon.
2. **Small-group activity:** Each group member should read more about one of the following: Margaret Thatcher, Mikhail Gorbachev, Erich Honecker, Vaclav Havel, Lech Walesa, Helmut Kohl, Ronald Reagan. Pay especially close attention to what this leader did during the 1800s, and what his or her role was in the fall of communism. Pretend you are this person, and write a diary entry responding to this cartoon. Describe in detail all the thoughts, memories and feelings the cartoon helps you recall. Display the cartoon and the diary entries on the bulletin board.

OBJECTIVE

1. Students will understand as well as debate and discuss some of the more typical reactions to decolonization by people all over the world.

World Reactions, Alternative Views

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

Decolonization sparked debate and intense emotion all over the world in the decades after World War II. The Soviet Union and other communist nations backed anti-colonial movements against the Western powers and tried to link them to its own socialist struggle. The 1970 Chinese poster on the right calls on Chinese citizens to “resolutely support the struggle of African peoples against colonialism,” claiming that “nations want liberation, the people want revolution.” Some in the West shared this point of view. The poster on left, produced by American radicals, for example, supports communist-backed political movements in Chile and Nicaragua.

Illustration 2

In time, most Western governments accepted the end of their colonial empires as inevitable—though many worried about unrest and threats posed to their national interests. The cartoon on the left, on the French-Algerian conflict in the 1950s, expresses this concern. Some also worried about Soviet or Chinese communist support for radical movements of “national liberation.” Those backing such movements said Soviet aid was needed to counter Western support for less worthy political forces in these former colonial lands. But others said this Soviet aid was itself a new form of colonialism, a way for the Soviets to dominate new nations. The cartoon on the right, from 1961, makes exactly this point about Soviet influence on Cuba’s communist revolution and its leader, Fidel Castro.

Illustration 3

By the early 1960s, decolonization had brought dozens of new nations into existence. Ethnic tensions and national conflicts that had been held in check by colonial control emerged anew and spread. In addition, drastic post-colonial economic and social problems cried out for attention. These issues all put a severe strain on the new United Nations, created in 1945 to promote world peace and cooperation. This cartoon comments wryly on the way these “new” nations—with problems and rivalries going back hundreds of years—threatened the functioning of the new and untested UN, represented here by a frightened little boy. As this cartoon makes clear, the problems of colonialism and decolonization are likely to persist for many years to come.

Lesson 4—World Reactions, Alternative Views

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. Generally, the communist nations were among the strongest supporters of anti-colonial movements all over the world. The poster on the right is from one such nation. Can you guess which nation?
2. The poster calls on Chinese citizens to “resolutely support the struggle of African peoples against colonialism,” claiming that “nations want liberation, the people want revolution.” As this suggests, communist nations pictured anti-colonial struggles as struggles for socialism or communism as well. Given what you know about anti-colonial movements around the world, how accurate do you think this view was?
3. Some in the U.S. and Europe have also supported communist-backed anti-colonial or other political movements in poor nations. The U.S. poster on the left is an example, with respect to Chile and Nicaragua. What do you know about political upheavals in these two countries in the 1970s and ‘80s? Why do you think small but vocal minorities in the West have often been strong backers of such movements?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Critics of U.S. policy in Central and South America often label it “neo-colonialism.” What do they mean by this label? And how might those who disagree with that label describe U.S. Latin American policy? To find out, locate articles about U.S. actions in Central America in issues of *The Nation* and *Commentary* magazines in the 1980s. Summarize the views found in the two magazines. Lead a class debate on the question of whether the term “neo-colonialism” fairly describes U.S. policy in Central America in the 1980s.
2. **Small-group activity:** Half of your group will learn more about the history of Chile from 1970 to the present and U.S. policies towards that nation. The other half will learn more about the history of Nicaragua from 1970 to the present and U.S. policies towards that nation. Report your findings to the class. Use this overhead as the backdrop and catalyst for a class debate on the pros and cons of U.S. policies toward these two Latin America nations.

Illustration 2



Darkest Africa

Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. By the late 1950s, most people in the West had come to see the end of the colonial empires as a good thing. But many also felt some real fears about the process of decolonization. How does the cartoon on the left show evidence of this fear?
2. In the cartoon, a large black splotch in Africa is labeled “unrest.” This cartoon comments on violence in North Africa, particularly in Algeria. Algeria turned out to be one of the bloodiest independence struggles in Africa. From what you know about it, why do you think the struggle there became so violent?
3. The cartoon on the right illustrates the fears many in the West had regarding communist influence on anti-colonial and other radical movements in the poor nations. Identify the two figures in the cartoon.
4. How does the size difference between Khrushchev and Castro add to the cartoon’s point? Also, what point do you think the cartoon makes by showing Khrushchev tearing up the “Monroe Doctrine”?

Follow-up Activities

1. The cartoon on the left appeared in October 1955. It refers to the Algerian independence struggle, one of the most bloody anti-colonial struggles in Africa. Learn more about the Algerian movement for independence, and give a report on it to the class. Be sure to put this overhead up during your presentation and explain the significance of the man looking at the map. For extra credit, discuss the lingering impact of this struggle within Algeria and within France today.
2. You are an editorial writer for your local paper. It is 1961, the year the cartoon on the right was actually published. Your paper will run this cartoon featuring Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and Cuban leader Fidel Castro. The cartoon will accompany an editorial, which you will write. Write your editorial. Be sure to fully explain the cartoon, including its reference to the Monroe Doctrine. Share your editorial with the class.

Illustration 3



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Discussing the Illustration

1. Independence movements brought dozens of new nations into existence soon after World War II. Most people consider this a good thing. But it also added to the world's problems in certain ways. What problem would you say this cartoon focuses on?
2. The cartoon is from 1947. Based on this and your history reading, why do you suppose the cartoonist used a small child for the United Nations and a huge giant for the idea of "national rivalries"?
3. What kinds of conflicts might the cartoonist have had in mind when he drew this cartoon in 1947? Has the problem, that is the focus of the cartoon grown larger or smaller since 1947? Explain your answer.
4. What other world problems have either been eased or made worse because of the huge increase in the number of nations in the world since 1947? How do you think the artist might feel about this same cartoon today? What is your opinion of the cartoon?

Follow-up Activity

1. **Small-group activity:** The United Nations has grown enormously since it was created in 1945 to promote world peace and cooperation. How has its growth affected its mission? To find out, have each member of the group study one of the following components of the UN:
 - The Security Council
 - The General Assembly
 - The United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC)
 - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),
 - The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
 - The United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

Have each group member write a brief report on one of these parts of the UN, explaining how effective it has been and how the growth of the UN has affected it. Share the reports with the rest of the class.

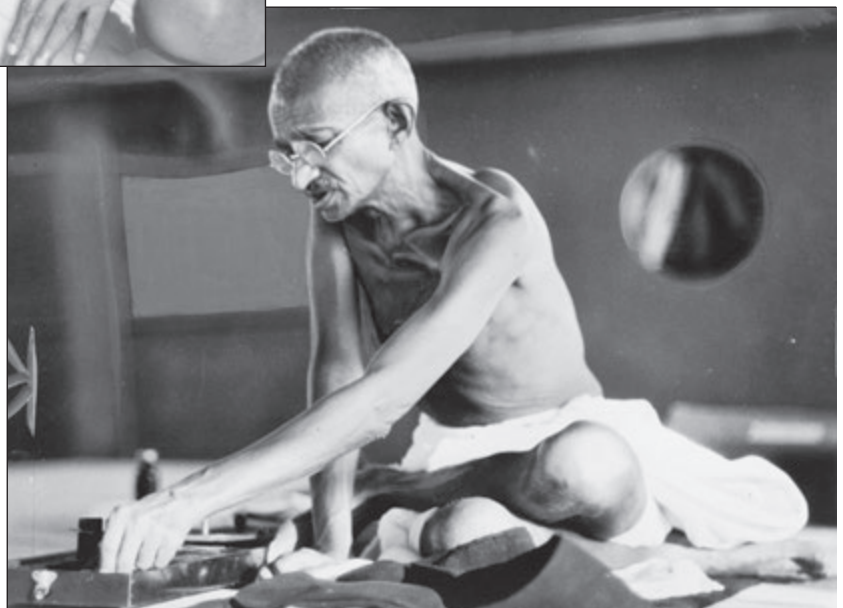
Image Close-ups

Decolonization Struggles: Asia

Illustration 1



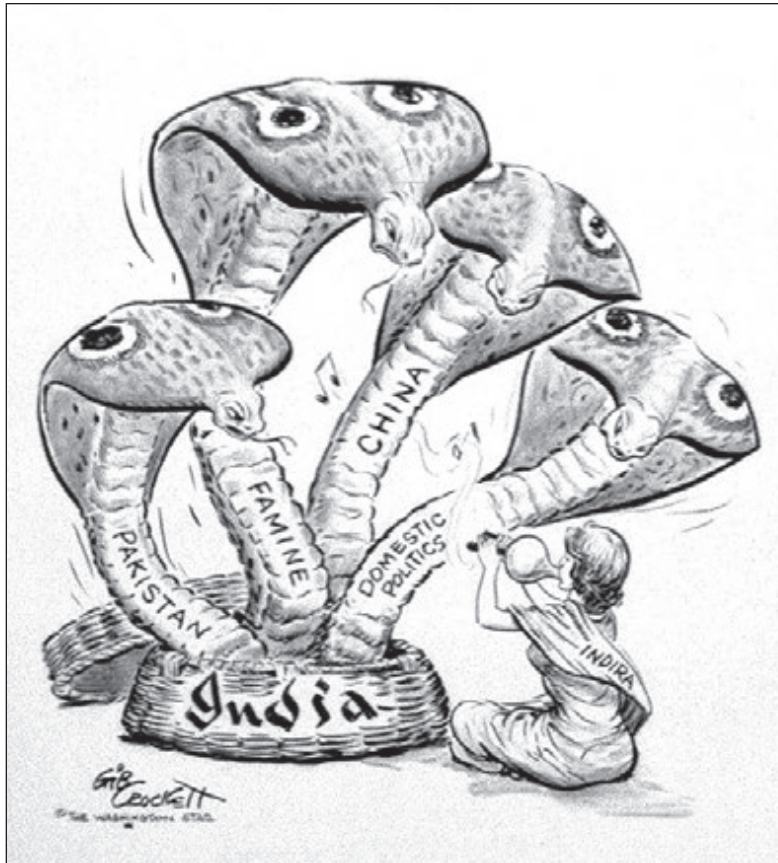
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Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Decolonization Struggles: Asia

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Decolonization Struggles: Asia

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Decolonization Struggles: Africa

Illustration 1



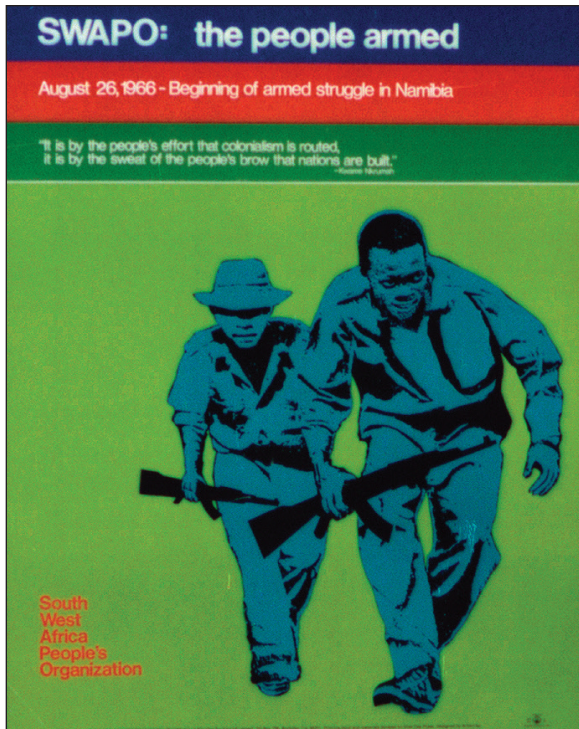
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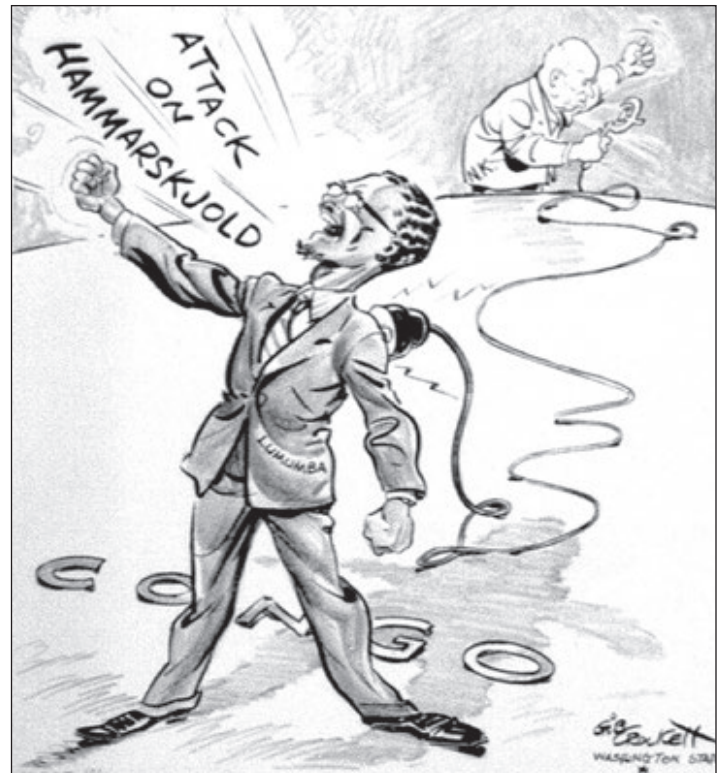
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Decolonization Struggles: Africa

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Decolonization Struggles: Africa

Illustration 3



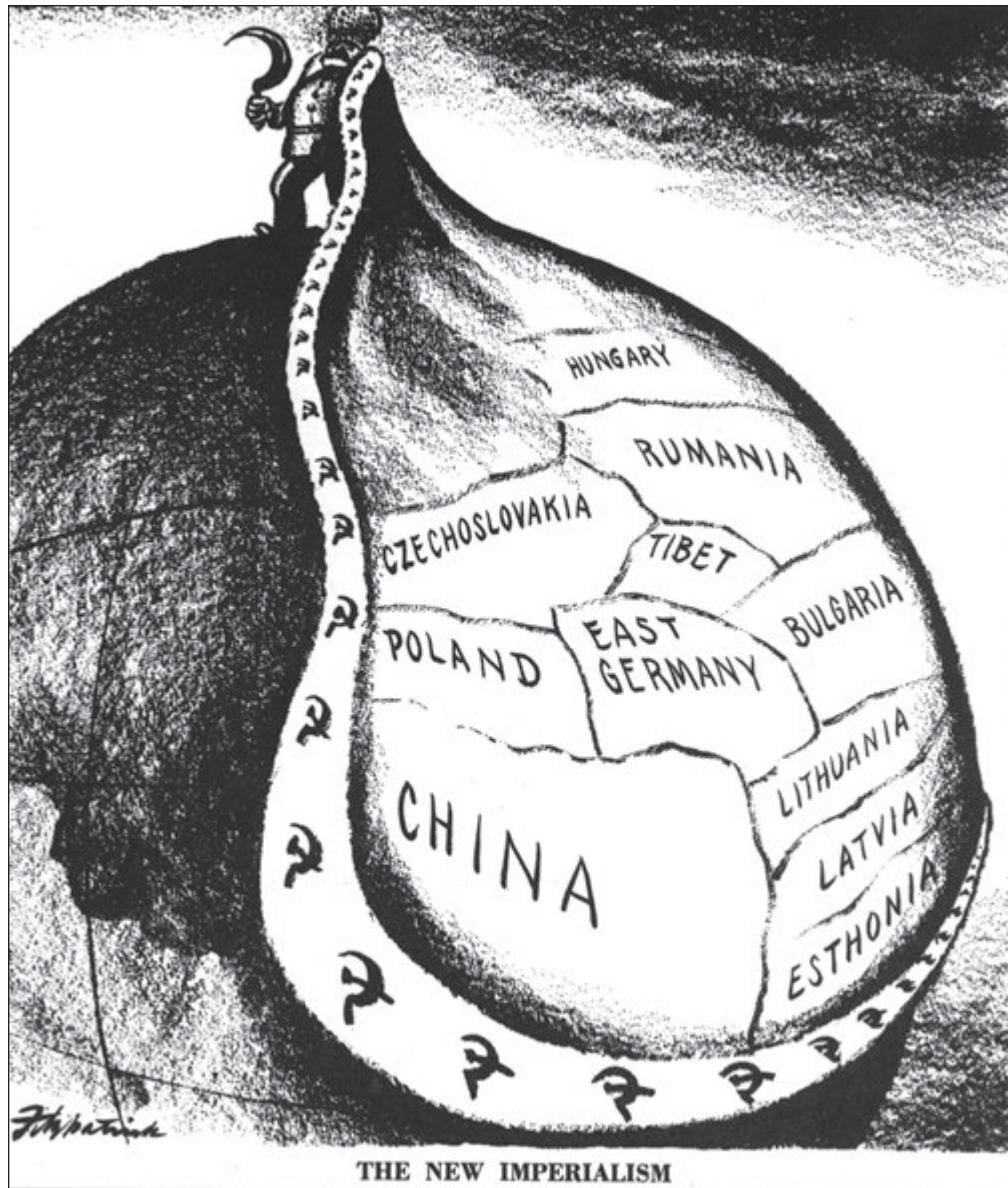
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The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire

Illustration 1



Fitzpatrick in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire

Illustration 3



Clyde Wells, courtesy of *The Augusta Chronicle*

World Reactions, Alternative Views

Illustration 1



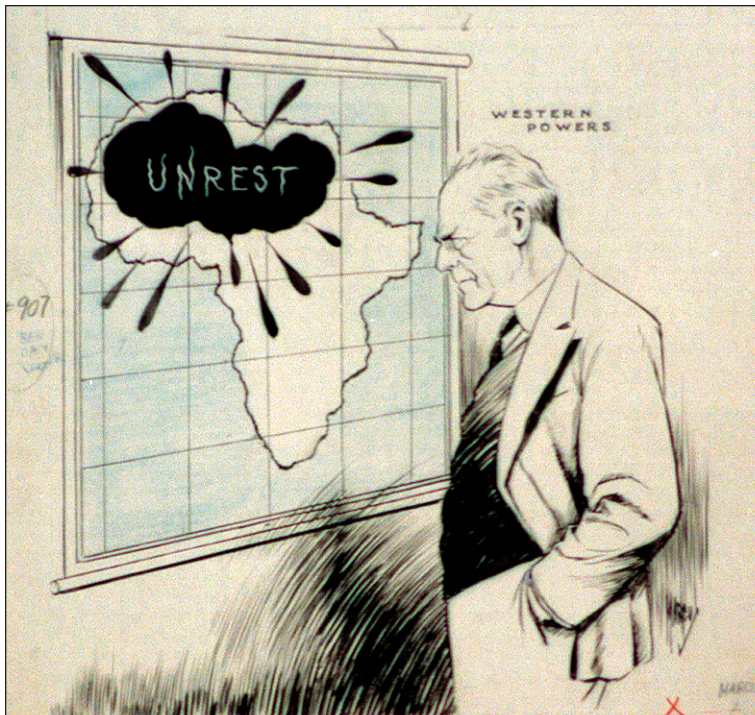
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World Reactions, Alternative Views

Illustration 2



Darkest Africa

Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

World Reactions, Alternative Views

Illustration 3



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