

Zuzana Poláčková and Pieter C. van Duin

This monograph reconstructs the history of European colonialism by looking at the activities of Europeans in America, Africa and Asia. The Europeans established themselves as traders and settlers, and in the process developed all kinds of ideas about the inhabitants of the non-European world.

In the nineteenth century the power of the Europeans further increased, while racial notions became a typical feature of their attitude. Decolonisation was an inevitable consequence of colonialism itself, and as important as the centuries of colonial rule. It resulted in the migration of millions of people from the former colonial territories to Europe.

Perhaps this mass immigration helped to weaken the existing prejudices and racial notions among the population of West and Central European countries. But on the other hand it is possible that racial prejudices are still much alive in many parts of Europe. They are based on long-standing stereotypical images of Asians and Africans.

A colourful figure in the history of colonialism is Móric Beňovský, the man who tried to promote a humane form of European presence on Madagascar. Beňovský's idealism was punished by the French, who shot him dead in 1786.

European Colonialism: History and Consequences

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Preface

This publication is based on a series of lectures given at the Institute of European and International Relations in the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences of Komenský University in Bratislava. The language style used for the lectures has been modified to meet the requirements of a written text. The ten chapters of this publication are relatively short. The idea was to focus, not on an excessive number of details and historical facts but on some crucial features and consequences of colonialism, in particular European attitudes and ideas in the colonial context. We have confined ourselves to describing in rough outline the activities of the Portuguese, the Spanish, the French, the Dutch, and the British (those of the Swedes, the Danes, and the Brandenburgers were only of marginal importance). In the late nineteenth century the Germans, the Belgians, and the Italians began to engage in colonial activities as well, but we have left them largely aside, too, because it is important to look at colonialism over a longer period of time and to compare the earlier trade colonialism (1500-1800) with the later imperialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The process of decolonisation, an inevitable consequence of colonialism itself, was as important as the centuries of colonial rule. It resulted in the migration of millions of people from the former colonial territories to Europe. Perhaps this mass immigration helped to weaken the existing prejudices and racial notions among the European population in countries like Britain, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Portugal. However, this is a hypothesis rather than an objective observation and probably racial prejudices are still much alive in many parts of Europe. They are based on longstanding stereotypical images of Asians, Africans, and others.

Another consequence of the centuries of European colonialism is what we call globalisation. In the economic, technological, and scientific sphere this process of international co-operation and convergence is obvious enough, but in the political, cultural, and ideological sphere much less. There is a constant tension between globalisation and internationalisation on the one hand, and the sometimes antagonistic impact of the world's cultural and civilisational differences, on the other hand. Decolonisation has strengthened the tendency in non-European parts of the world to reaffirm

one's own cultural identity, even if the influence of Europe has remained a factor in these countries' further evolution. Europe itself was influenced by its colonialism as well. It is noteworthy that this was not only the case in Western Europe, but also in Central and Eastern Europe. In Chapter 5 we have analysed this phenomenon with regard to Slovakia, looking, among other things, at the influence of colonial motifs on seventeenth-century education and at the remarkable story of Móric Beňovský, an eighteenth-century nobleman from what is now west Slovakia who left his home for another part of Slovakia and then went to Poland, Siberia (as a prisoner of the Russians), East Asia, Madagascar, and France. At a later stage he went to America and from there back to Madagascar, where he hoped to play a part in peaceful colonisation but where he was shot dead by French soldiers. Beňovský was an example of the colonial adventurer who imagined a role for himself quasi-independent of the colonial powers, an idea that unfortunately did not meet with the approval of the colonial power concerned, in this case France.

The debate about colonial policies and mentalities; the creation of stereotypical images of the non-Europeans; orientalism but also occidentalism (the West Europeans became victims of stereotyping as well, due to the anti-Western ideology of some nineteenth-century Germans and Russians, who were followed by many non-Europeans); decolonisation, migration, and multiculturalism; and the never ending debate on globalisation. These are some of the controversial questions discussed, with many of them being direct or indirect ramifications of European colonialism. At the same time, it is impossible to understand the nature and impact of colonialism without having a look at these broader issues and contexts. We wanted to analyse European colonialism itself, but also its broader ramifications and consequences.

1. European colonial expansion 1450-1950: An overview

The first thing we have to look at when describing the process of European colonial expansion since the fifteenth century, is the European historical context. This is a question that has been hotly debated by historians for a century or more. Perhaps the first thing to note in this connection is the peculiar geography of Europe: while Europe itself is a peninsula of Asia, it is also subdivided in several smaller peninsulas, including Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, Denmark, and Scandinavia while Britain is an island with a natural defensive position. This means that Europe always had a potential for political fragmentation, despite the unifying factor of Christianity. Europe – that is, Western and Central Europe, the world of Catholicism and Protestantism – also developed a tradition of social divisions and local autonomy: especially important is the rise of self-governing cities with their self-conscious urban elites and autonomous economic activities. Europe never developed a strong tradition of empire or political centralisation, although for centuries there was an emperor who styled himself ‘Holy Roman Emperor’. Instead there emerged early national states and smaller monarchies (France, England, Spain, Portugal), independent city-states such as Venice and Genua, and in the sixteenth century a new revolutionary middle-class (‘bourgeois’) nation like Holland (the Northern Netherlands). This meant that, unlike centralised China where everything was decided by the imperial court, in Europe there were many spontaneous local initiatives in the field of politics, the economy, social and cultural development, etc. In other words: Europe seemed to have a good environment for developing creative energy, undertaking new experiments, and so on. Perhaps the combination of a loose common (Christian) civilisation and the existence of competing political and geographical units made Europe what it was through a process of creative rivalry in which many factors played a part.

The second important thing to note about Europe is the dynamic development of the economy in some European regions since the fifteenth century if not earlier: especially the north Italian city states and the region of Flanders with cities like Antwerp, Bruges, and Ghent. Northern Italy and the Southern Netherlands (later: Belgium) were the major centres of inter-

national trade and industry in Europe during this early period, and by far the most urbanised parts of Europe. Venice was the major European market for oriental goods imported from the Middle East, where they were brought by Arab and Indian traders and then shipped by the Venetians to Europe. In the sixteenth century Venice's central role was taken over by Lisbon and Antwerp, because now the Europeans were going to Asia themselves (by a new oceanic route around Africa) so that the Italian cities and the Mediterranean became less important for international trade. In other words: the economic activities of the Western Europeans became ever more ambitious, and some regions became centres of modern capitalist development.

The third thing to note is the 'Renaissance', that is, a new stage in the cultural, intellectual, and scientific development of Europe. Europe was breaking out of the confines of the Middle Ages, a period when it had been isolated from the rest of the world, although it is also true that the medieval period had laid the basis for what Europe eventually was to become. The phenomenon of autonomous towns, for example, was a product of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance made it possible for the Europeans to rediscover the intellectual and scientific heritage of classical times, in particular of the Greeks and Romans, and so to create a kind of synthesis of Christian tradition and classical tradition. At the same time a new direction was given to this synthesis by the Europeans themselves, who were conscious of the fact that they were developing something new: a more sophisticated European civilisation which increased its knowledge in many fields of human activity. This included new branches of science which were applied in a practical way to activities like the building of bigger and better ships, better knowledge of astronomy and geography, the development of navigation on the Atlantic Ocean, and so on. The Europeans were slowly leaving the Middle Ages behind them and laying the basis for what became a new early modern Europe with a great economic and scientific potential.

A fourth factor of great importance in the beginnings of European overseas expansion was the struggle against Islam. In Portugal and Spain this struggle had been going on for centuries, and at the end of the fifteenth century the last Islamic foothold in southern Spain was conquered by the Christians, whereafter many Muslims were expelled from Spain to North Africa. The mentality of the Portuguese and the Spaniards was quite fanatically anti-Islamic, and the long search for a direct maritime route to Asia and for

the precious spices and other products of South and South East Asia was accompanied by a continuation of the fight against Islam. The Portuguese raided the coasts of North and West Africa to damage Morocco and other Islamic states, and they also began to convert black Africans in West Africa to Christianity as they were sailing down the African coast to the south. By the time the Portuguese had reached India shortly before 1500, they continued to be hostile to all Muslims they found there. The effort to circumvent the world of Islam and to do damage to it was certainly one motive among many in carrying out the great maritime explorations.

A fifth important thing to mention was the discovery in the fifteenth century of the Atlantic Islands, that is, Madeira, the Canary Islands, and the Cape Verde Islands. This confirmed that the maritime explorations could be successful and, perhaps, that there were other lands at the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Also important were the first experiments on these islands with cash crops (products to be sold in the market) like sugar cane, and the mobilisation of slave labour to work these new plantations. Sugar had been an important product in the Mediterranean area before, not only in Egypt but also in parts of southern Europe. The new Atlantic plantations of the fifteenth century became a kind of laboratory for what later happened on a larger scale on the American continent, and black slave labour was beginning to become a customary feature of a new colonial economy.

A sixth aspect to note is the important role played by Italians in the early stages of colonial expansion. Although the first discoveries of the new sea route to Asia and of the American continent were made by the Portuguese and the Spanish, both nations made full use of the large number of Italian sailors that was available. After all, the Italian maritime cities of Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and others had been for centuries the major centres of seafaring and long-distance trade, and the large number of experienced and sometimes unemployed Italians – for example, the Genoese citizen Columbus! – could find employment on the ships of Spain and Portugal. This reservoir of Italian sailors was important in providing the two Iberian countries with the necessary know-how and experience as they became ever more ambitious in their expansionist aims. Apart from the scientific and navigational knowledge of the Italians, there was also Italian financial investment in many of the Iberian maritime explorations.

It has been suggested by some historians that the Chinese may have reached the Atlantic Ocean before the Portuguese reached the Indian Ocean, but most serious historians do not believe this. It is true that the Chinese explored the Indian Ocean and part of the Pacific Ocean in the first half of the fifteenth century; they probably reached the east coast of Africa, but never sailed around South Africa into the Atlantic. These Chinese activities were suddenly stopped by the middle of the century. The reason was probably that the Chinese emperor decided that it was after all not in the Chinese interest to continue with these costly operations, and that it was better for the Chinese to revert to their tradition of isolationism. There were trade activities in Chinese coastal cities involving merchants from South Asia, who came to China all the way around the Malacca peninsula. But this remained rather marginal, and the Chinese central bureaucracy discouraged further maritime activities.

Here we see the difference between Europe and China: while in China almost everything depended on central political decisions, in Europe there was a variety of political decision-making centres. There were the Italian maritime cities, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France, and England. Although they all looked at each other, they all made their own decisions. Europe was a world of rivalries, competition, and a new capitalist dynamics with increasingly independent and non-traditional private entrepreneurs. It is true that the Chinese had invented gun powder, the compass, and other things before the Europeans, but they got stuck in a certain social and political immobility. The Europeans were free from any centralistic control and could develop many different small-scale initiatives with a cumulative effect. The Chinese never appeared before the coast of Europe, but the Portuguese appeared before the coast of south China in the early sixteenth century.

The five European nations that carried out the process of colonial expansion were Portugal, Spain, France, the Netherlands, and England. They discovered and explored three non-European continents: America, Africa, and Asia. The role and function of these three continents for the Europeans were quite different, and the ways in which they were influenced and transformed by them were very diverse. The American continent was changed by Europeans the most profoundly and became a kind of 'second Europe'. The arrival of the Spanish and other Europeans had a devastating effect on

the indigenous population, called 'Indians' because Columbus and the first Europeans reaching this new continent believed they had found the east coast of 'India' (Asia). Diseases like smallpox, which were unknown on the American continent, decimated the Indian population. Many others were killed by the Europeans, who conquered their lands in a brutal way. Especially the Spanish had a reputation of being intolerant and brutal, but this was also the result of the anti-Spanish propaganda of the enemies of Spain, including France, England, and the Netherlands. This propaganda created the so-called Black Legend, the image of the cruel Spaniards and their extermination of the Indians and other people. There were also some very critical Spaniards, however, men like Bartolomé de las Casas, who wrote in 1552 a work titled 'Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indas', in which he condemned the brutal behaviour of the Spanish settlers and colonists and advocated to change colonial policy and protect the Indians. Another example was José de Acosta, who wrote in 1590 his 'Historia natural y moral de las Indias'. He wrote among other things: 'Contempt for the Indians is foolish; they have intelligence too; if we describe their deeds and culture we see that they do not deserve contempt'.

In other European countries people began to think about the fate of the Indians too. In 1580 the French writer Michel de Montaigne wrote his essay 'Des Cannibales' and said: 'We may call them barbarians according to our rules of reason, but not when we compare them with ourselves, we who surpass them in every kind of barbarism'. It is clear that, at least among some Europeans, even in America, a more critical attitude began to arise. But of course the question is how representative of Europe this critical voice was, and how influential it could be as long as European bigotry and material interest dictated the ideas and actions of most Europeans in the colonial territories. It has to be admitted that some people in the Catholic Church in South America, for example the Jesuit de las Casas quoted above, tried to protect the Indians. The Church played a more positive role than any other European groups and institutions, even if it tried to convert the Indians to Christianity, which often meant a social and cultural crisis for them. But protective action by Catholic priests or Spanish royal officials was not strong enough to prevent that the great majority of the Indian population perished and disappeared. Indians were also used to work as slaves in the silver mines of Peru, where many died. There arose a serious shortage of

labour in the American colonies, and the Spanish and other Europeans had to find other ways to mobilise labour for the mines, plantations, and colonial households. Thus there emerged another crucial aspect of European colonialism on the American continent: the importation and use of black slave labour from Africa. This meant a second demographic revolution on the continent: after the European invasion, there followed an African invasion, though this time one of unfree immigrants. America began to produce silver and gold, sugar and tobacco, and also new foodstuffs which slowly but surely became important additions to European cuisine and eating habits: especially maize and potatoes (potatoes only from the eighteenth century). The smoking of tobacco, an Indian invention, became important too and led to a complete revolution in life style in Europe, also accompanied by the consumption of tea and coffee from Asia.

After the foundation of the first Spanish and Portuguese settlements in Central and South America – the Portuguese colonised Brazil, the Spaniards the rest – other Europeans appeared on the scene as well. The Dutch, the French, and the English occupied a large number of islands in the Caribbean, but their activities were also focused on North America, where the French colonised what became Canada, the British New England and Virginia, and the Dutch New Netherland with the multi-ethnic colonial town New Amsterdam (later New York). North America became a rather different kind of colonial society than the colonies of Latin America. The latter remained half-feudal as were Spain and Portugal themselves, with huge landed estates and unfree labour, and the number of European immigrants, though not inconsiderable, never became as large as was later the case with the immigration to North America, where more modern societies arose which were more similar to north-western Europe, with its Protestant ethos and middle-class societies. But even in North America – in the southern states of the later USA – there was a system of black slave labour operating in the production of tobacco, sugar, and other products destined for the European market. Slavery itself was not unique; it also existed in the Muslim Middle East, in Asia, and indeed in Africa itself. But perhaps unique was the demographic size and the economic scale of the massive use of black slave labour in America, both North, Central, and South. The plantations were large and the use of slave labour systematic.

Africa itself was at first not deeply affected by the coming of the Portuguese and other Europeans – that is, apart from the developing slave trade. The Europeans saw the continent as another theatre of struggle against Islam, and in Ethiopia, in East Africa, the Portuguese were looking for the Christian African Kingdom rumours of which had long existed in Europe. There was trade going on in small quantities of gold and other valuable products along the coasts of West and Central Africa, but there was no attempt to settle large numbers of Europeans in Africa as happened in America. African diseases and African resistance prevented Europeans from penetrating the African interior before the nineteenth century. It also proved less easy to eliminate the indigenous population through the spreading of European diseases than was the case in America, where large numbers of Indians succumbed within a short period of time. Africa was a completely different story from America. In fact, Africa was mainly an obstacle for the Portuguese, who primarily wanted to sail around it in order to reach Asia with its attractive spices and many other commodities. They gradually succeeded to do so, step by step; in the 1480s they reached South Africa, and in the 1490s they sailed to India. The historical dates are: in 1487 Bartolomeus Diaz reached Mossel Bay in South Africa; in 1498 (six years after Columbus's discovery of America) Vasco da Gama reached Calicut on the west coast of India.

Before we look at developments in Asia, we will pay some attention to the Europeans' motives and means which caused and enabled them to carry out their great explorations, of which the European penetration of Asia was perhaps the most spectacular. As far as their 'motives' are concerned: these were a mix of religious, economic, political, and scientific factors. They wanted to show the superior ability of Christian civilisation to discover the world and spread the true Christian faith on a global scale. Today, for us, this is perhaps difficult to understand, but historians agree that this was certainly an important motive.

At the time they saw no contradiction between this religious motive and the economic motive of enriching themselves and bringing profitable goods to the European markets, such as pepper, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, silk, porcelain, silver, pearls, precious stones, drugs, tea, coffee, etc. To achieve this, they had to capture at least part of the trade of Asia, the trade in all these valuable products that was going on in South, South East, and East

Asia and for which there was a growing market in Europe, a market for Asian luxuries some of which gradually became ordinary consumption goods. Indeed, because the Europeans now went to get these Asian goods in Asia themselves, they eliminated all the Muslim, Asian, and Mediterranean middlemen that had profitted from a part of this indirect trade between Asia and Europe before. This meant that prices were falling and that the European market expanded all the time, bringing more goods within the reach of more Europeans. The Europeans also went to explore the world for political reasons, that is, for the glory and the power of their nation or their king and in order to strengthen their position in Europe itself. Colonial activities became part of the European power struggles. For the Dutch, for example, it was crucial to weaken the position of Spain in the colonies so that it would also be more difficult for Spain to attack the Dutch in Europe. Finally, the Europeans, or at least some of them, wanted to increase their knowledge of geography and of the world: the explorations were also a matter of curiosity and trying to advance scientific knowledge. There was glory in discovering new continents, and this search was driven by psychological and scientific motives.

How was it possible that Europeans found the means and techniques to do what they wanted to do? What were these means or conditions? The first condition, of course, was the building of better and bigger ships, which had to be armed with effective guns, so that they almost became floating castles with a terrible firing power. In this respect European ships soon became superior to the ships of other nations, which were simply blown away by them.

The Europeans also needed better navigational instruments: the compass, reliable maps, the ability to establish their position at sea (or at least establish latitude). The art of map making became ever more impressive and in this regard the Europeans were soon superior to others as well. They also had to improve their knowledge of the prevailing winds and seasonal wind-patterns, of oceanic currents, and things like that. They learned by trying, and failure was useful too, showing that another possibility had to be tried. It is difficult not to feel that all of this was part of an emerging new psychology of modernising European societies: Europeans became ever more self-assured and convinced of their qualities and abilities. Perhaps some of them really believed that they had God on their side. But they increasingly

believed that they had their rationality and scientific achievements on their side, the features of a 'superior' civilisation.

In the 1490s the Portuguese entered the Indian Ocean. They soon made themselves a dominant factor in the Asian trading system with its various regional patterns, the most important one in the world. The combination of this Asian system and the new European connection or even European dominance is what laid the basis for a global trade system and a global economy. There had existed for centuries a trade system involving the Arabs, other Muslims including the Persians, Indians of the west and east coasts, Malaccans and other South East Asians including Indonesians from Java and other islands, and the Chinese. The Portuguese captured (or liquidated) much of the trade between the Middle East and India, and between India and Malacca and South East Asia. They made Goa on the west coast of India their major basis and in 1510 they conquered the city of Malacca on the Malaysian Peninsula, from where they could begin to penetrate the Indonesian archipelago, in particular the rich islands of the Moluccas with their precious spices. They also began to look for trade contacts with China and Japan; they reached China in 1516 and the more isolated Japan in 1542. The world of Asia was huge and characterised by great political, cultural, and religious diversity, which made it possible for the Portuguese and, later, other Europeans to try to evolve policies of divide and rule. A balance of intimidation and violence, on the one hand, and clever diplomacy and divide-and-rule tactics, on the other hand, made it possible to strengthen the Europeans' position in several regions of Asia and profit from an expanding trade network that was increasingly controlled by them.

But the Portuguese themselves represented a semi-feudal part of Europe, and in Portugal the king had a monopoly of all trade conducted in Asia. This counter-productive royal monopoly caused that Lisbon could never become a freely developing and dynamic commercial centre, because all the other parties, including foreign merchants, were severely restricted in their trade privileges. So it could happen that most Portuguese colonial goods were shipped by the Portuguese and others to Antwerp, which became in the sixteenth century the most important commercial centre of Europe. Merchants who wanted to buy Portuguese colonial products went to Antwerp, which became the staple market for them. Lisbon itself continued to suffer from the monopolistic royal restrictions; the city only con-

sumed, but did not expand as a commercial centre which could attract all sorts of merchants from other nations. But in Asia the Portuguese did well. They managed to monopolise much of the Asian trade to their own benefit, established coastal enclaves where they ruled as a sovereign power, played off one Asian ruler against another, and gave expression to their cultural prejudices, for example when they supported Hindu rulers in India against Muslim rulers.

In the late sixteenth century the Dutch arrived on the Asian scene. They drove out the Portuguese from many of their positions and possessions, especially Malacca and the Indonesian islands. They had better ships and guns than the Portuguese, developed new shipping routes, and used the enemies of the Portuguese as their allies. Unlike the Portuguese, they did not try to convert the Asians to Christianity, because they were much more pragmatic and realistic in that respect. They soon became a major Asian trading factor and tried to use the Asian system to their own advantage, without destroying it. But if they could (such as on some of the Moluccan islands) they imposed a monopolistic position as buyers of Asian goods for acceptable prices and if necessary they used brutal violence to achieve this, just as the Portuguese had done. The Dutch East India Company was a coalition of private merchant interests, independent of (but supported by) the state, quite unlike the situation in Portugal. The Dutch were the only Europeans who managed to consolidate their position in Japan, for they succeeded in convincing the Japanese that they were not interested in spreading Christianity. While all the other Europeans were expelled from Japan in the first half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch could stay on their little island of Deshima, near Nagasaki, where they traded with the Japanese and were the latter's only channel of communication with the outside world (apart from China). This situation lasted until the second half of the nineteenth century.

While the Dutch chose Indonesia (Java) as their headquarters within the world of Asian trade, the British chose India, especially from the eighteenth century when the position of other European powers in India – including the Dutch and the French – began to weaken. (The 'British' kingdom, incidentally, originated in 1707 with the union of England and Scotland.) So it happened that the British and the Dutch managed to avoid to some extent the problem of direct mutual competition. The French appeared in Asia as well, but never became a major power there before the nineteenth

century, when they conquered Indo-China. An attempt by the British in the second half of the eighteenth century to open up China to international trade, failed. A British representative (Lord Macartney) who was received by the Chinese emperor was told by the latter that he rejected the British request for a trade treaty. The emperor's statement reveals the isolationist and self-satisfied attitude of the Chinese at this time, and explains why they were basically disinterested in the rest of the world. The emperor said: 'I only want to maintain a perfect government ... my capital is the centre of the world ... we have everything ... we are not interested in strange objects, in your manufactures ... Ever since the beginning of history, wise rulers have maintained in China a moral system, which has been observed successfully ... We have no interest in heterodox doctrines.' It was only in the nineteenth century that the Europeans (and the Americans) succeeded in opening up China and Japan to Western trade and Western products. To make this happen a certain degree of force had to be used. Before the nineteenth century the Europeans were not powerful enough to force Japan or China to open its gates on a large scale, as had happened in other parts of Asia.

After 1800 the world changed. Europe experienced its industrial revolution. This changed the balance of power in the world in favour of Europe. The old, pre-industrial colonial situation (from the 15th through the 18th century) had been one of only marginal European domination in parts of Asia and Africa. It was in many ways an equilibrium between the European colonial powers and the Asian states. Only in some situations could the Europeans impose their will upon the Asian rulers or producers; in other situations they had to be more cautious and defend their position with diplomatic means in order to get trade concessions. All of this changed in the 19th century. The European industrial revolution meant a revolution in communication technology (the telegraph, iron steamships), modernisation of armament (new kinds of modern and effective weapons), and improvements in organisation (large-scale and disciplined armies and navies). Not surprisingly, this was accompanied by a new kind of European superiority feeling, which now became far more resolute and less hesitant: the Europeans represented civilisation (which became more important as a point of reference than Christianity) and the rest of the world were barbarians, backward races, etc. There also emerged a tendency which has been defined as Social Darwinism: the Europeans were standing higher in the

scale of human evolution than the black, brown, red, and yellow races, who were immature, child-like, etc. Racist prejudices were built in pseudo-scientific theories, ideas, and assumptions.

The Europeans managed to expand and more thoroughly control their colonial territories, with British India and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) becoming the largest colonies. China and Japan were opened up, and Japan became in fact the only Asian nation which managed to modernise at a quick pace and so to keep its independence; Japan became an imperialist power itself and annexed in the early twentieth century countries like Korea and Taiwan. Indeed, this was the age of imperialism, a far more systematic and influential form of European domination than the old trade colonialism had been. It was only now, from the second half of the 19th century, that Africa was annexed and partitioned between the major imperial powers, especially France, Britain, and the newly independent Belgium, which managed to get hold of the great Congo territory in central Africa. Germany became an imperialist power too, but lost all its possessions in Africa and elsewhere in the First World War. Even the USA – itself a colony until the late 18th century – became an imperial power following the Spanish-American War of 1898: the Americans occupied the Philippines in South East Asia, which had been the only Spanish colony in that part of the world. They also established their influence on Cuba, annexed the Spanish colony Puerto Rico, and became a dominant factor in the Caribbean and Central America. Most Latin American countries had become independent in the 19th century; but they were ruled by small elites, and their social and political systems often had an almost feudal and neo-colonial character. The First World War, and even more so the Second World War, finally weakened the West-European nations and also led to a serious loss of prestige. In the Second World War the Japanese conquered all the European colonies in South East Asia: the French, the Dutch, and the British lost face, and the Asian nations felt that the moment had come to shake off the colonial yoke in the new historical period after 1945. This is exactly what happened: in 1947 India became independent, in 1949 Indonesia. The French tried to keep Vietnam and the other countries of Indo-China, but failed miserably.

Since the late 19th century, there had arisen a new and more enlightened form of colonial ideology alongside, and partly in competition with, the scientific racism and Social Darwinism of the cruder type of ideologists.

The slogans of this reform-minded and ‘humanitarian’ colonial school were: ‘development’, modernisation, ‘ethical policy’, association of Europeans and natives in the colonies (instead of the impossible ‘assimilation’ of the natives to European culture). The confusion about these questions increased in the twentieth century: what were the Europeans actually doing in the non-European territories? Could they help the Asians or Africans to develop their countries? But were these Asians and Africans the same kind of people as the Europeans? Were they fundamentally different? If not racially different, then profoundly culturally different? These questions are topical today in the context of development aid strategies executed or supported by Western European countries after decolonisation. Especially in Africa, most countries of which became independent in the 1960s, the issue of development aid has become quite controversial. The Chinese – a new factor in Africa – don’t practise it but just conduct trade and pragmatic co-operation, which is perhaps quite realistic. Some people say that the Western development aid has remained without result and that the money involved is only disappearing in the pockets of corrupt African dictators. Other people say that it is mainly a psychological policy and a product of the European post-colonial guilt complex.

This European guilt complex, and the creation of a world economy, are perhaps the most important consequences of the long history of European colonial expansion. Another result is the existence of various European ideas about non-Europeans, a fascinating question that will be discussed in the next chapter.



A Portuguese ship of the middle of the sixteenth century. Source: Archive of the authors.

2. 'Europe and the rest': How Europeans saw themselves and the Non-Europeans

In the first chapter we have seen how the process of European colonial expansion took place, beginning in the fifteenth century. We saw that there were some strong economic motives – or, perhaps, economic causes in a more 'objective' sense – for the Portuguese and other Europeans to embark upon their voyages of exploration and discovery. This was done especially to capture part of the Asian trade and the valuable spices and other tropical commodities that were in great demand in Europe. These economic developments and changes in trade patterns led to a veritable 'consumption revolution' in Europe, including the smoking of tobacco, the drinking of coffee and tea, and the consumption of new foodstuffs. But we have also seen that there were other motives too: political, religious, scientific, cultural, and 'ideological' motives. The Europeans wanted to prove that they were capable of bringing the world more or less under their control; especially the Catholic Europeans wanted to spread Christianity; and they wanted to test and improve their scientific instruments and further develop their knowledge of the world as a whole, in terms of geography, map-making, navigation, and of course imposing their political and economic power wherever they could. This process of expansion into the non-European world had many consequences in terms of cultural change and the development of new ideas and attitudes (also among Europeans themselves) and in terms of patterns of relations between Europeans and other peoples in different parts of the world. The question of the relationship between Europeans and 'non-Europeans', or Christians and 'non-Christians', is the main subject of this chapter. We will look especially at how the Europeans perceived other people, that is, native Americans, Africans, and Asians.

Non-Europeans were seen first of all as people who were not Christians and initially the Portuguese and the Spanish were focused especially on the Muslims of North-Africa, the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire, i.e., the Islamic enemy against whom they had fought so long. But in the eyes of the Portuguese and the Spanish these enemies also had non-religious, ethnic or

racial, features: they were called 'Moors', a term which had both a religious (Islamic) and a racial connotation (referring to dark-skinned people). Generally speaking, the Europeans tended to define non-Europeans not only in terms of religious identity (although this was very important for them) but also in terms of physical features (skin-colour and other features) and cultural characteristics such as the fact that they were (seen as) 'barbaric', wild, uncivilised, etc. (especially the American Indians and Africans) or indeed 'primitive' and technically less developed than the Europeans. But it soon became clear to the Europeans that the non-European world was not homogeneous, not uniform in terms of the level of civilisation, cultural features, and so on. There were great differences between the three non-European continents they explored or had brought partly under their control: America was not the same as Africa, and Asia was not the same as America. Moreover, within Asia there were remarkable differences between different parts of this enormous continent, some states or regions being more developed and better organised than others. Especially China and Japan with their strong political and social organisation and their ancient cultural traditions were difficult for Europeans to penetrate.

As we have seen there were important differences between different periods in the history of European colonialism: the early colonialism of the period 1500-1800 was not the same as the later 'imperialism' of the 19th and 20th centuries. During the early, 'pre-industrial' period the Europeans were not strong enough to impose their will on all parts of the non-European world, especially not on Japan and China but not on Africa either. Only in the 19th century did the 'Western imperialists' become strong enough to open up China and Japan, so it seemed, but even then their influence remained limited and Japan could prevent the Europeans from imposing a colonial regime by becoming (already in the late 19th century) a modern great power itself, the only non-Western nation that ever succeeded in doing this so quickly. China only succeeded in modernising itself much later.

Another important differentiating and complicating factor was the differences between the various European colonial powers. Some were small (Portugal and the Netherlands), others were bigger (Spain, France, and Britain). Some were Catholic (Portugal, Spain, France) and others were Protestant (the Netherlands and Britain). This religious difference was important also in terms of the colonial experience and colonial policies: the Catholic

colonial powers were more strongly motivated to impose their religion on the non-European peoples in the colonial territories, because Catholicism had a universal aspiration, believing that the whole world should become Catholic. This led to religious intolerance and the use of force to spread the Catholic faith, but the positive aspect of this was that Catholic priests and missionaries in the non-European world were also more 'inclusive', more prepared and willing to accept other people within the common Church and perhaps more tolerant as far as racial, ethnic, and cultural differences were concerned – so long as the non-Europeans were willing to become Catholics, of course. The Protestants, on the other hand, were more 'particularist', more inclined to think in terms of national Churches: the Dutch had their Dutch Reformed Church, the English their Anglican Church, and so on. They had less 'universalist illusions' or world-wide aspirations in terms of spreading the Christian faith. The consequence of this could be positive, but also negative: the Protestants were willing to accept the reality of different religions and different cultures, the reality of religious and cultural 'pluralism'. But they were also rather ethnocentric and exclusive: they believed that they, with their 'superior Protestantism', were culturally and perhaps racially superior. It was hardly worth making the effort to explain the Protestant Christian message to barbarians and inferior people and the Protestant nations were mainly interested in strengthening their economic position and increasing their profits from trade activities. Yet there were sometimes situations where Protestant missionaries tried to convert non-Europeans to Christianity, even in Asia. But the effort that the Catholics made was much greater. The Philippines, an old Spanish colony, is almost 100% Catholic; the former British India and Dutch Indonesia only have Christian minorities.

Let us now have a look at the three continents that the Europeans 'discovered' and explored, and partly even colonised with European settlers: America, Africa, and Asia. What kind of ideas and attitudes did the Europeans develop with regard to these three continents and their inhabitants? There is first of all America, the 'New World', which in the end almost became a 'second Europe', because European culture and civilisation became widely dominant there. The attitudes of the Europeans to America and its 'Indian' population – the first Europeans arriving in the western hemisphere believed they had reached the eastern part of 'India' (Asia) –

were rather contradictory. European reactions, ideas, practices, and colonial policies were shaped by contradictory motives and considerations, by negative impressions but also by more positive ideas and expectations. There was often a negative reaction to many (though not all) of the Indians: they were seen as barbaric, wild, pagan, dangerous, and so on. The Spanish writer Sepúlveda commented that they were inferior by nature, that they were like children. But the Europeans were often received in a hospitable manner; it was the Europeans themselves who often began to act in an arrogant and brutal way, which then caused an inimical Indian reaction. Not all Spaniards behaved in the same bad way: European soldiers, settlers, and the lower classes were the worst groups in this respect, but Catholic priests often tried to act against this aggressive behaviour and to protect the Indians. As we have seen, there were some remarkable examples of representatives of the Spanish Catholic Church in Latin America who harshly criticised the behaviour of the Europeans and some of their exploitative policies.

Among the Spanish and other Europeans there also existed some positive ideas about the American continent and the Indian population. Although some Indian practices were condemned by the Europeans, especially human sacrifices and cannibalism (this existed in some cases), the Indians were also portrayed as innocent children of nature and children of God. The basic Catholic worldview that all people are equal was especially positive, even though in practice it did not always help very much. It was believed that the Indians were people too, that they, too, had immortal souls that could be saved, that they should be converted to Christianity with empathy, patience, and goodwill. The Europeans also projected some of their phantasies and Utopian visions on the American continent, which was after all new, unknown and thus ready to be interpreted and represented in new ways. One idea was that of 'El Dorado', a land of gold and silver somewhere hidden in the interior of the continent. The Spanish developed silver mines in Peru, but that is another story, one full of cruelty and Indian slavery. There was also a phantasy about the land of the Amazonas: these were special women, good fighters, who were living somewhere in the continent as well.

Otherwise America was seen as an 'empty land', which waited to be developed into a new world by Europeans. In a sense America became 'empty' indeed, because most Indians disappeared: the majority died because of

diseases like smallpox, others were killed by the Europeans. Some believed that in the American continent a new and better civilisation could arise, a new and better Europe without the old class distinctions and with opportunities for all.

In Latin America, both the Spanish part and the Portuguese part (Brazil), there seemed to be some prospects for this, but the idea was more successfully implemented in North America. The USA was more successful in attracting large numbers of immigrants from Europe than Latin America was, especially from the second half of the nineteenth century. The Protestant ethos of North America was more suitable for building a modern society based on individual freedom and economic progress, while the almost feudal structure of society in Latin America caused stagnation, corruption, and political instability. North America was explored and developed in the early stages by the French (in Canada), the English, and the Dutch (the founders of the multi-ethnic city that became New York). The British element became the most important factor in North America and the USA became an English-speaking country after it gained its independence in the late 18th century. But like Latin America, the USA had many ethnic and racial problems (notably with regard to the 'Indians' and the imported black slaves) which in some ways were even more difficult than similar problems in Latin America or on the islands of the Caribbean. The introduction of black slavery in many parts of the American continent had a long-lasting legacy. In the USA black people were not regarded as normal citizens, not even after the abolition of slavery in 1863. So it could happen that America, both Latin America and North America, was not only a place for beautiful dreams, but also of harsh realities and intractable social and racial inequality.

Let us look at Africa, which had a rather different position in the colonial world than America. Before the nineteenth century the presence and influence of the Europeans in Africa was only marginal, that is, apart from the slave trade. But the slave trade was not organised by Europeans but by Africans in the interior of the continent who were frequently fighting with each other and selling part of their war prisoners to the European slave ships at the coasts of West and Central Africa. However, because African peoples knew that they could sell their enemies to the Europeans, this may have been an incentive for African tribes to start new wars among each other,

capture as many fellow-Africans as possible, and turn them into slaves. The system of slavery had long existed in Africa itself, and also in the Muslim world. The Europeans had various images of the black Africans: they were better labourers than the American Indians, but like the latter they were barbarians, or in fact they were worse. Africans were ‘children [descendants] of Ham’, the son of Noah who in the biblical imagination was the least worthy of Noah’s sons and whose descendants were inferior – both in terms of physical appearance and character – to other people. Dark-skinned people were Ham’s descendants and this meant that they were damned. This could be and sometimes really became a justification for slavery. Some other Christians did not agree with this, and in the anti-slavery (abolitionist) movements of the late 18th century Christian abolitionists played a leading role, especially in Britain and the USA. Abolitionism and the 18th-century Enlightenment were important movements promoting a more humanitarian attitude of Europeans to the Africans and other non-European people. In the early 19th century the slave trade was abolished, and between the 1830s and the 1860s slavery itself was abolished in most colonial territories. The new Enlightenment culture and outlook also led to new forms of critique of European culture and European colonial activities in general, and the idea that the Europeans were superior to non-Europeans in almost every respect began to be doubted at least by some.

At the same time, however, there also emerged new forms of superiority thinking in Europe. Now the emphasis was laid not so much on Christianity versus the non-Christians, but on the ‘secular’ aspects of European superiority: the Europeans’ science, technology, exceptional intelligence, and so on. The secularisation of the age of Enlightenment could also lead to a modern ideology of European superiority in terms of historical development, or, later in the 19th century, in terms of human evolution whereby the Europeans were believed to represent a higher stage of social and mental evolution than other people. It was the birth of ‘scientific (or pseudo-scientific) racism’, which had its roots in the secularisation of European thought, the scientific revolution, Darwinism and evolutionary ideas, and the modernisation of European society and industrialisation in the 19th century. Modern ‘scientific’ ideas on human inequality already emerged in the 18th century (and even earlier) among a growing number of European thinkers, scientists, and writers, constituting an alternative type of thought

in comparison with the more humanitarian Enlightenment. They began to develop, for example, the idea of a hierarchy of human racial types: the Africans were the lowest type, the Europeans the highest, and the Asians were somewhere in between. Early examples of this kind of thinking, which was seen as modern and scientific at the time, were the book of the Frenchman Francois Bernier ('Nouvelle division de la Terre', published in 1684) and the work of the natural scientist Linnaeus ('Systema Naturae', 1735) where it was argued that the black Africans were the lowest type of human being, close to the apes. On the other hand there were also those who had a more egalitarian and humanitarian view of mankind and of the qualities of the non-European peoples or 'races'. An example was the Frenchman Raynal ('Histoire des deux Indes', 1780), a book which criticised racism and slavery. The movement against slavery from the late 18th century proved that European public opinion was changing, and that moral and political progress were a possibility.

As far as Africa was concerned: only in the later 19th century was the continent definitively partitioned between European colonial powers. The earliest examples of European colonial settlement had been the Portuguese in some coastal enclaves on the West and East African coasts, and the Dutch in South Africa who founded Cape Town and began to settle the interior of the Cape Colony. In the second half of the 19th century the rest of Africa was taken by other European colonial powers: the most important were the French, the British, and the Belgians, who brought West, Central, and East Africa under their control after 1880. The only African nation that remained proudly independent was Ethiopia (or Abessinia), an old Christian kingdom for which the Europeans had some respect. With regard to most other African peoples this respect seemed hardly to exist, in contrast to certain Asian cultures which proved able to withstand the Europeans.

Asia, indeed, was the most important part of the world as far as the Europeans were concerned, that is in terms of trade and economic opportunities, but it was also the most difficult part of the world in terms of establishing European power. Asia consisted of various different regions with different power constellations and different civilisations and cultural realities. In South Asia, primarily India, the Portuguese newcomers, and later the other Europeans, had to learn the cultural patterns and complications of the region. They tried to manipulate the situation as best as they could,

and they developed all sorts of ideas about the different peoples and religions in the region. In India, of course, there were the Hindus, who at first were seen by the Portuguese as a kind of Catholics that should be supported against the Muslims; but later they began to see the Hindus as pagans and some of their temples were destroyed. It was clear that too deep an involvement in local politics and native conflicts should be avoided, because this was dangerous for the European position, which was not always very strong. Trying to manipulate the situation through a kind of divide-and-rule policy was the maximum the Europeans could do before the 19th century. They consolidated their trading posts and fortifications, including the first Portuguese settlements in Goa, Malacca, and Macau (China). Later there emerged small-scale colonial societies in some of these places, mixed societies of Europeans, natives, and people with a status in between, including Asians who had become Christians and people of mixed race. Examples of such colonial societies were Portuguese Goa in India and Batavia (Jakarta) in Indonesia, the centre of the Dutch East Indies from the 17th century. The spread of Christianity was not spectacular apart from these relatively small enclaves where the Europeans ruled. Only in the 19th century did the Europeans succeed in getting larger territories in Asia under their direct or indirect control.

The attitude of the Europeans to the Asian principalities and the general population was ambivalent: on the one hand there was a certain admiration and respect for Asian cultures, but on the other hand there was also disdain and contempt for their behaviour and their cultural patterns, much of which was not understood. Very important is the fact that, in contrast to America and (to some extent) Africa, the Europeans could not easily impose their will and their power on the Asian nations, which were much stronger, better organised, and more developed than native societies elsewhere. Of course this was especially the case with regard to Japan and China. For about one century, between c. 1540 and c. 1640, the Europeans tried to get a foothold in Japan and to develop trade relations with that country. During much of this period there was a situation of civil war in Japan, which led to complex power struggles and a feudal type of political fragmentation that gave the Europeans an opportunity to strengthen their position. It even happened that Christianity (especially Portuguese Catholicism) became popular with a part of the Japanese population because it was seen as a religion of

compassion and regard for individual human beings, who were suffering in the situation of political chaos and bloodshed in the country. But in 1637 a new period began: the consolidation of a new more centralised regime, the so-called Tokugawa Shogunate, which expelled all Europeans from the country while tens of thousands of Japanese Christians were killed because they were seen as unreliable. The only Europeans who were allowed to stay were the Dutch on the small island of Deshima, near Nagasaki, because they had shown to have no interest in converting the Japanese to Christianity. They were there to trade and until the mid-19th century they were the Japanese 'window' on Europe and European knowledge and technology.

Meanwhile other parts of Asia, especially South East Asia, were brought under global European trade control, which is not the same as complete administrative and political control. The Dutch built their trade empire in Indonesia and the Spanish their position in the Philippines, which they reached across the Pacific Ocean from Mexico. China remained largely closed to the Europeans, though not as completely as Japan, because in the southern Chinese city of Canton the Europeans were allowed to engage in trade activities. But until the 19th century this remained a marginal position, hardly better than the position in Japan. The most interesting aspect of the situation in China was perhaps the presence of Portuguese and Italian Jesuits at the imperial court in Beijing. The Jesuits sent a lot of information about China to Europe, and they were certainly not uncritical about the actions of the Europeans. In the late 16th century, indeed, there emerged a growing literature (by Jesuits and others) on conditions in Asia, both South, South East, and East Asia. Some of this European literature was quite critical of the brutal actions of the Portuguese and other Europeans and could be regarded as an Asian counterpart to the critical reports of Bartolomé de las Casas about the condition of the Indians in Spanish America and the Spanish conquests. The Portuguese Fernandes Mendes Pinto wrote a work called *Peregrinacao*, which described atrocities committed in southern China by pirates some of who were Portuguese. Mendes Pinto was taken prisoner in China and brought to the north, where he saw the Chinese Wall. He also reported on Japan and noted that the Japanese were good at reproducing European weapons, a quality which obviously already existed long before the great Japanese modernisation movement in the late 19th century. The

moral message of Pinto's book was that the Portuguese had brought a lot of misery and destruction to Asia, but the Asian cultures deserved respect.

The Jesuit reports on China were remarkable. It had been difficult to get access to China and the first Portuguese reports were rather negative, speaking of the 'Mandarin tyranny' and so on. But the Jesuit report on China by Galeote Pereira (published in Europe in 1565) showed how much impressed early modern Europeans actually were by what they saw, that is, those who got the chance to travel into the Chinese interior and perhaps reach the capital Beijing. Pereira described the large-scale character of Chinese society; its huge population and the cities that were much bigger than European cities; the fact that the people were very active and hard-working; that the administration and bureaucracy were very efficient and that civil servants were supposed to be working seriously; that the system of justice and law-enforcement was of a high level, and so on. There was also a darker side in China: the people were afraid of the Mandarin class, a kind of bureaucratic aristocracy, and there was not much freedom for individual people. Another Jesuit report on China was written by Gaspar da Cruz, who had entered China in 1556 as a missionary. He wrote that the Chinese were courteous and industrious; he denied that they were not good fighters, as other Europeans said; there was slavery in China, but domestic slaves could not be sold. Interestingly, he was not optimistic about the prospect of evangelisation given the great cultural differences between China and Europe and the influence of Buddhism, which he tried to understand. The only way to implement conversion was probably from above, by the emperor himself, and by arguing that the Christian faith was no threat to the Chinese political system but would help to maintain it. This was good Machiavellian reasoning.

Francis Xavier, a founder of the Jesuit Society, had come to Goa in 1540 and criticised the conduct of the Portuguese and their neglect of Asian converts, who were apparently not taken very seriously. The people of the Moluccas, islands in eastern Indonesia, he called barbarians, but he believed that Japan and China were civilised. In Japan he noted that the people were courteous, but in reality they despised foreigners. The Japanese could not understand the Christian doctrine of salvation and immortality of the soul. Later Xavier went to China, a country with 'wise laws'. He wrote that the intellect of the Chinese was 'superior' to that of the Japanese. Another

interesting observation made by him is that European dress and manners were a subject of ridicule in Chinese theatre plays. Other Jesuits, like Matteo Ricci and Diego de Pantoia, made serious analyses of Chinese civilisation as well and also tried to prove to Mandarin bureaucrats that Europeans were civilised like the Chinese, using European clocks, paintings, geography, and mathematics to impress them. Therefore they were tolerated in Beijing as scientists, but not as Christians. The Jesuits began to study the moral philosophy of Confucius, which stressed the importance of family life (Chinese society was very anti-individualistic), of the commonwealth (promoting the common interest) and charity, of showing respect to one's ancestors, the importance of good behaviour, and so on. The work of these Jesuits was truly remarkable from a scientific point of view, and clearly showed the respect that educated Europeans felt for Chinese culture and civilisation. Only a few influential Chinese became Christians, and the Jesuits had to make many concessions to Chinese customs to advance their religious cause just a little. Ricci even declared that he accepted Confucius as being not in contradiction with Christianity. The result was that the Beijing Jesuits were criticised in Rome and charged with heresy! They always praised the Chinese system of government, its high standards of efficiency, and the fact that common men could rise in the lower ranks of the Mandarin class. However, they criticised things like the power of the court eunuchs and the beating of subordinates.

The reports and publications of the Beijing Jesuits eventually formed the basis for works on China in the enlightened 18th century: for example French works from the 1730s like Du Halde's 'Description of China' (1735) in which China was idealised. The Jesuit writings influenced the development of 18th-century political thought in Europe and some of the French Enlightenment philosophers used the positive accounts of Chinese political and social institutions as a yardstick to judge and criticise their own society. An alternative way of using China was to call it 'despotic' and so on, as Montesquieu did, but what he aimed at was actually France itself, which he criticised indirectly or in disguise. In the 18th century a debate started about the question if China was superior to Europe or not. Even if China was not seen as superior, then at least Europeans began to call into question their automatic assumptions about European superiority. But this critical tendency had already begun in the 16th and 17th centuries, not only on the

part of some Spanish and Portuguese individuals but also people from the other colonial powers. The great work by the Dutchman Jan Huygen van Linschoten, 'Itinerario' (late 16th century), described how the Europeans had intruded into Asia, how Hindu ceremonies in India were forbidden by the Portuguese, the activities of the Inquisition, and the fact that the Portuguese in Goa were lazy people (his own observation). A French account of an expedition to Asia from 1601, written by Francois Pyrard de Laval, likewise described how the ordinary Portuguese but also other lower-class Europeans would refuse to do lowly work once they had entered Asia, where they all felt like gentlemen and tried to make the Indians believe that they were really gentlemen with titles. It is clear that the Europeans felt superior to other people and practised social snobbery when living among non-European people.

The 19th century brought a new phase in this European colonial and imperialist behaviour, which was now reinforced by even more superior technology, better weapons, better ships, and so on. It was the age of territorial and political colonialism and imperialism (systematic empire-building and administration), which went much further than the earlier trade-based colonialism. The Europeans were displaying an unprecedentedly aggressive self-confidence. Now the great Asian civilisations were seen as 'decadent', backward, static, etc., in contrast to the dynamism and vitalism of European civilisation. James Mill wrote in his 'History of British India' (1817) that the Indians were like children, who had to be educated by a more highly developed people. This was a doctrine of cultural superiority, perhaps not yet a racial doctrine. But by 1850 the Scottish biologist Robert Knox declared that 'race is everything' and he also explained the course of history. He supported the idea of the polygenetic origins of the human species: the theory that there was not one kind of man, but several different kinds. In 1861 John Crawford, the president of the Ethnological Society, declared at a meeting in London: 'mankind consists of many different species; there is no unity of race'. In a book published in 1867 he presented a mix of cultural and biological factors as the determinants of identity and difference: Asians were child-like, Europeans more intelligent. Here there was a strong racial undertone, but it was not yet a complete scientific racism, which began to be defended by some people and which argued that mental and cultural differences were caused by physical and biological differences and that social

and cultural change was an illusion: non-Europeans would always be inferior. The milder version of cultural differences being caused by historical and social evolution, with non-Europeans having the potential to develop to a higher level in the course of time (the version of Crawford), remained more influential than the purely racist version. It was argued, for example, that Indian and Chinese civilisation were stagnating after having reached a higher level at an earlier stage in history. This stagnation was caused by the 'despotism' in their political and social systems. Indians and Chinese did not know individuality and were dominated by apathy, conservatism, and isolation, in contrast to how the Europeans engaged in exchanging new ideas, promoting constant progress in many fields of knowledge, etc.

There was an overlapping of, but also a contradiction between, the idea of a European civilising mission and the ideas of scientific racism, especially with regard to Asia where the scientific racism trend was not completely convincing because the condition of Asia, so it was believed by some, could be improved again. With regard to Africa and the black population in America scientific racism was more influential, because blacks and Africans were seen as innately inferior. Nevertheless, the civilising mission became in the end the only argument to justify European imperialism. At some point in the future the peoples of Asia and (perhaps) Africa might become independent, but they needed time to reach this point and meanwhile the Europeans were doing their beneficial work of leading them to civilisation and responsibility. This became the colonial ideology of the Dutch in Indonesia, of the French in Asia and Africa, and of the British in India and other British colonies. But of course even this 'realistic and ethical' ideology could not stop the coming of independence in the non-European world. The Europeans themselves got lost in two world wars which severely weakened their position and their standing in the colonial world. The end of colonialism came after the Second World War. It is an open question if this also ended the European superiority complex.



A famous nautical manual by Lucas Waghenar showing the seaman's universe.
Source: Archive of the authors.

3. How English became the ‘global language’

In the first chapter we have seen that the process of European colonial expansion since the fifteenth century was amazingly successful. Thanks to their superior technology, their remarkable adventurous spirit, and the dynamics of European society the West European nations could discover, explore, and colonise America, some parts of Africa, and a major portion of Asia. Most non-European parts of the world were brought under European colonial influence, either – especially in America – in the form of direct settlement and exploitation or – especially in Asia – in the form of ‘indirect exploitation’, that is, by imposing favourable trade conditions (sometimes with violent means) and thus obtaining large quantities of precious commodities that could be sold in Europe with a good profit. Even in China the Europeans began to develop a certain level of trade relations, especially through the port city of Canton in southern China. However, far more influenced by the Europeans’ activities than China or Japan were Asian territories like India and Indonesia.

In the second chapter we have seen how Europeans, first the Spanish and the Portuguese, then the Dutch, the French, and the British began to develop certain ideas about, and attitudes towards, the non-European peoples and civilisations. Sometimes European ideas about non-Europeans were relatively fair and positive, coloured by a sense of respect for the achievements of these other cultures. But in the course of time there also emerged a set of negative opinions and cultural and racial prejudices, some of which were of a religious or cultural kind while others were of a more explicit ‘racial’ kind. In the nineteenth century evolutionary theories became popular and influential in Europe itself and in the colonial territories. According to some people, the Africans, American Indians, and even most Asians simply had a lower intelligence than Europeans; they were inferior to the Europeans in terms of their biological, racial make-up. According to other, less extreme thinkers and contemporary scientists, the non-Europeans were inferior to the Europeans in terms of the lower level of their cultural structures, their civilisations. It was possible in principle that, after a certain period of time, non-Europeans, especially Asian peoples with a long history of indigenous

civilisation, would reach a higher civilisational level and perhaps approach the level of European civilisation. But they could only attain this higher European level if the Europeans in the non-European colonies would play an active role in helping them to achieve it. The indispensable means to successfully accomplish this were modern Western education (at least for a minority of non-Europeans) and learning the European language of the coloniser (in particular by the native elite and a new intelligentsia); some non-Europeans would be sent to Europe to study at European universities. Europeans did not agree how long this process of ‘development’, of modernisation, of colonial evolution would last until the point was reached when the non-European elite had attained the level needed for playing a really responsible role in the future administration of their country. Some were relatively optimistic; others thought in terms of several centuries. At the end of the road there might be something like ‘independence’ for the colonial territories, but most Europeans believed this would take a long time. This paternalistic European ideology of helping the colonies, especially the indigenous elites, to develop a higher level of civilisation by means of education and other means of social and cultural improvement became typical of European colonial thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It served as a legitimisation of colonialism itself, but it is also true that many European colonial officials really believed in it and that some of them made a great effort to foster the building of an educated native elite. However, the policy of supporting Westernisation and the creation of a modern indigenous elite was never truly consistent, because at the same time the European colonial regimes – for example in India and Indonesia – also continued to support the traditional indigenous elites of the colonial countries. This had been the traditional policy of the earlier colonial era, when the European regimes had tried to maintain themselves through policies of divide and rule and through pragmatic co-operation with elements from the traditional Asian elites, who in this way could benefit from this co-operation themselves.

The idea of ‘colonial modernisation’ was something new, as was the idea of educating non-Europeans with a view to turning them into a kind of Europeans and preparing them for independence in the distant future. It was precisely in this new colonial context that the question of language became more important and that various debates took place in and after the

nineteenth century on how far to go in teaching European languages and European 'cultural mentalities' to non-Europeans. The question was how much emphasis should be placed on cultivating good relations with the traditional native elites, or, alternatively, how much attention should be given to encouraging the rise of a new Westernised native elite.

The basic questions were in fact: were the non-Europeans gradually to become like Europeans? Could they actually become like Europeans at all? Or were they – or the great majority of them – essentially different from the Europeans, in terms of fundamental cultural traditions and perhaps even in terms of 'race'?

But even if the programme of modernisation and Westernisation was to remain rather modest, without great expectations in terms of cultural transformation in the colonies, it was necessary to instruct at least a part of the colonial population in the language of the colonising power. At least a minority would have to understand the European language of the colonial regime. And even in this regard there were some interesting differences between the different colonial powers themselves. Some of them had been active from the beginning to impose their own language on the population of the colonies. Others were following a different policy or strategy and were more inclined to adjust themselves to one or other language spoken in the colonial environment itself, especially in Asia with its influential trade languages – for example Malay – which were used by representatives of different Asian countries to communicate with each other. The colonial context thus contained different factors and motives which determined what kind of 'language policy' would or could be followed. Some of these factors were shaped by the European background of the colonisers, others by the environment of the colonial world itself, especially in Asia.

Before we look in detail at the linguistic question it is useful to make some introductory observations on its context. Historians and social and political scientists always try to analyse in a 'rational' way what happened in history or in different societies and different cultural and political systems. But sometimes, when trying to understand a difficult question, we feel that there almost seems to be a 'mystery' involved, the mystery of the evolution of humankind, of world history, of what we call 'Western civilisation'; indeed of the spectacular success of European colonial expansion and the bizarre fact that the English language eventually became our global

language, the language of world communication. It is difficult to believe that it was inevitable, or necessary, that Western civilisation became dominant for a period of several centuries, or indeed that Chinese civilisation might become dominant in the near future (but perhaps this will not happen). We must understand that there was a set of purely accidental circumstances which made it possible that Western civilisation, or the power of the Europeans, became dominant after the fifteenth century. There is no 'inherent reason' for this, no explanation in terms of inevitable success or predictable superiority. There is only a number of concrete historical factors that could possibly explain it, even if it remains somewhat 'mysterious' because it seems so unlikely that people from a tiny little part of the world could become dominant over much of the rest of the world. And in this context it could also happen that the language of a little island off the coast of western Europe would, after the nineteenth century, become the language of world communication. Not Hindi, not Chinese, not Arabic, not French. But let's try to explain this historical outcome in real historical and comparative terms.

The first question we could ask as seen from the European context itself may be: why did French finally not become the global language of world communication in our days, although it had been relatively dominant for a long time? French was the old 'lingua franca' in Europe during the Middle Ages and the early modern period, that is, alongside Latin, but Latin could never have become a living language again in the modern age. The very term 'lingua franca' shows the dominant position of French, and in the Middle East, during the period of the Crusades and after, Europeans were called 'Franks' by the Muslims and the local Eastern Christians. Indeed, the term Franks was also used by Asian people to refer to the Portuguese when they arrived in Asia around 1500. The term had been taken over from the Arabs, with whom Asian countries had trade relations already a long time before the arrival of the Europeans. The French language remained important in Europe through the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, but then it was definitively ousted from its dominant position by English. Later we will look at the position of the French language again in the context of colonial developments. Indeed, in order to understand what happened with the position of different European languages between the fifteenth and the twentieth century, we have to look at colonial history again, at the

historical, geographic, and demographic conditions which decisively influenced the position of the five important colonial powers.

The question is: why did Portuguese, Spanish, French, or Dutch not become the most important language in the colonial world, or in the world as a whole, while English did?

We will first look at Portugal again, the great pioneer of European colonial expansion in Asia. The Portuguese tried to use their own language in Asia to the extent that this was possible in practical terms, but they hardly succeeded, that is, outside the small territorial enclaves they directly controlled, such as Goa in India and Macau in southern China. In the rest of Asia they had to use Asian languages (and/or non-Portuguese interpreters to help them communicate), in particular the Asian trade language Malay. It is remarkable, however, that this Malay language, used especially in South East Asia, began to be infused with Portuguese words and European influences. The result was a new trade language known as 'Portuguese-Malay', a mix of both, which remained important and influential for several centuries, certainly until the nineteenth century. Portuguese-Malay thus became a highly functional intercultural trade language, a useful pragmatic business-language, the likes of which are known as 'Pidgin-languages'. Other examples of this phenomenon developed in East Africa (Swahili, in the context of Arab-African trade) and in the Caribbean region (for example 'Pidgin-English' and other forms of mixed languages used by former slaves and other inhabitants of the culturally and racially mixed Caribbean region). The result was that the Portuguese language itself never became very important in Asia, but the influence of the language was widespread. The only important overseas territory where Portuguese became the dominant language was Brazil, the largest country of South America. A few African countries, especially the former Portuguese colonies Angola and Mozambique, were influenced by the Portuguese language as well.

What about Spain and the Spanish language? We know that an enormous part of the former colonial world became Spanish-speaking, namely Central and South America. In Asia one important country became Spanish-speaking: the Philippines; but in 1898 it was occupied by the Americans and the Spanish language slowly but surely lost its position to English. As far as Central and South America is concerned, with important countries like Mexico, Argentina, and others: the point is that this part of the world, Latin America,

has always remained somewhat isolated from the rest of the world, so that Spanish did not become an intercontinental or international language. Another aspect of the question is that Spanish-American society remained rather conservative, semi-feudal, and stagnant until the twentieth century. As a result there was no dynamic influence she could exert on the rest of the world in terms of economic power or cultural relations. Spanish was a very important language on the American continent, but not in other parts of the world. There is of course a great contrast with the development of society in North America, where the English-speaking USA became a major world power, playing a role that was completely different from the isolated position of the Latin American countries and their less dynamic societies. The number of European immigrants in Latin American countries was small compared with the enormous number of Europeans who moved to North America, even if most of the latter only went there from the second half of the nineteenth century. But already in the eighteenth century the USA and Canada were societies on a different level of development compared with Latin America and this was also expressed in political developments. The USA declared themselves independent in 1776, only 150 years after the beginnings of European settlement. The Latin American countries became independent in the first half of the nineteenth century, but their beginnings as colonial territories had been much earlier: already in the early sixteenth century. The long period of Spanish colonial rule of more than three centuries did not lead to the emergence of progressive societies or an international status for the Spanish language.

The third colonial power, the Netherlands, was a small country with strong overseas trade traditions and a solid economic basis. Its inhabitants, not surprisingly, were used to speaking other languages besides the Dutch language, including French, German, English, and Portuguese. This tradition and this necessity to learn other languages in order to promote their economic interests was continued in the context of the Netherlands' colonial expansion, especially in Asia. When the Dutch began to drive out the Portuguese from most of their positions in South and South East Asia they adopted the existing Portuguese-Malay trade language to communicate with their Asian trading partners, without trying to impose their own language in one way or another. They even used Malay in their colonial administration (the language that later became Bahasa Indonesia, the national language of

Indonesia), except in the higher branches of economic and political administration and in higher education. It is clear that this highly pragmatic attitude to the question of language on the part of the Dutch, who were known as the 'middlemen of Europe' and whose capital Amsterdam became the economic centre of Europe in the seventeenth century, was bound to lead to a lack of interest in carrying out a 'civilising mission' the way the French, the Spanish, or the Portuguese did. The interest of the Catholic Europeans in converting the non-Europeans to Christianity was absent among the Dutch, who believed it was hardly worth making the effort. It is true that in some colonial territories, at some times, the Protestant Dutch tried to influence the local people with their religion and their language, but this remained the exception rather than the rule. This only changed in the later nineteenth century, when missionary activity in Indonesia and the concept of modernisation of colonial society became more influential. In this period there also emerged a larger number of critical voices about colonial policy, articulated by Dutchmen in Indonesia (for example the author Multatuli) and in the Netherlands itself. Another factor reducing the influence of the Dutch language was the fact that the standard of living in the Netherlands was always relatively high, so that it was difficult to find people who wanted to go to the colonies. Only the poorest went, and about half of all employees of the Dutch East India Company in the lower and middle ranks were foreigners. The number of Dutch-speaking people in Indonesia was only several hundred thousand by the first half of the twentieth century, mostly Europeans and people of mixed European/Javanese descent. Nobody ever imagined that Dutch might become a world language, even though those who spoke it founded a place like New York, later the 'capital of the world'.

At this point we return to France, whose language had looked so strong and influential, promising to become the world's means of communication, especially before the nineteenth century. In the pre-industrial period France was by far the largest country of the five colonial powers in terms of population, with some 20 million people by 1700. This represented a superior demographic potential that could in principle be used both in the colonial world and in Europe itself. However, there were several problematical circumstances in terms of national economy, European strategic position, and religious policy which actually made France weaker than she seemed to be. There was, first, the traditional social structure of the French coun-

tryside with its late-feudal features, conservative peasant society, and agricultural backwardness. In France most peasants stayed on the land, did not move to the cities, even though Paris was a big (but exceptional) city. Social structure in the countryside remained more feudal than in countries like the Netherlands and England, which had a more bourgeois and early capitalist type of society and a higher level of nation-wide urbanisation. This meant that the French peasants stayed where they were and could not be used for other purposes, for example modernisation of the urban sector or of the agrarian sector itself. This made the social and economic basis of French society weaker and more backward than in England and the Netherlands. The demographic potential of France could also hardly be used for overseas activities. It is remarkable that a country with such a large population sent only a small number of people overseas: the number of settlers in French Canada, for example, was much smaller than the number of British settlers on the east coast of what became the USA. France needed a large army, because she played the role of a major – indeed by far the most important – military power of continental Europe. France was always involved in European wars and neglected its efforts overseas. France tried to conquer the rest of Europe in the age of Napoleon, but outside of Europe she had already been defeated by Britain, notably in North America. The people from the cities and from the countryside that France managed to mobilise (never enough against the background of its real demographic potential) were used in her European armies rather than in the French fleets and colonial activities. France spoiled its chance to become colonial and world power number one; she wanted above all else to be continental European power number one. She spent much more money on European wars than on colonial expansion. This also meant that the French language could in the long run not maintain its position as a (potential) world language.

Another important aspect of the situation was French religious policy. France wanted to be a Catholic country although it also had an important Protestant minority, the Huguenots. After a period of relative toleration the French king Louis XIV decided in 1685 to expel his Protestant subjects if they refused to convert to Catholicism. In this way France simply threw an important part of its human capital overboard, since many Protestants were educated people, merchants, or entrepreneurs. They went to the Netherlands, England, and Germany. These countries were enriched by the arrival

of the French Protestant refugees, while France impoverished herself by chasing them out of the country. This religious historical factor weakened France in terms of social, economic, and cultural development, and also had an impact on the French potential in terms of overseas expansion and the spreading of French culture and the French language. Indeed, some of the Huguenots who fled to the Netherlands were settled in the Dutch colony in South Africa, where they introduced the art of vine-culture. What France lost, other countries gained. A country like England also had its religious 'dissenters' or 'non-conformists', in this case the more fundamentalist Protestants ('Puritans'), a minority compared with the mainstream Protestants of the official Anglican Church. But England brought its religious and other 'troublemakers' to its colonies in North America and later Australia, where they helped to strengthen the position of the British Empire. While France expelled its religious minorities and forbade non-Catholics to go to Canada, Britain settled its minorities in the colonies to serve its own interest: a remarkable difference in policy. While in French Canada only Catholics were allowed to settle, in the British and Dutch colonies in North America and elsewhere almost everyone could settle. The French appeared to have a mentality that was more like the Spanish one. The Dutch and the British had a more 'modern' and pragmatic, a tolerant and 'capitalist' mentality.

Britain, finally, became the most successful European colonial power (she existed as a united kingdom since the unification of England and Scotland in 1707). There were several reasons for this and, therefore, for the fact that English became the 'global language'. As an island nation Britain had no need to maintain a large and expensive standing army to defend itself, but she could focus on and invest in its navy and overseas activities. Britain also had, compared with France, a more dynamic and spontaneously modernising social and economic structure. Her nobility was less conservative, less controlled by royal absolutism, and more interested in new economic opportunities. Her bourgeoisie was perhaps not as all-powerful as the bourgeoisie of the Netherlands was, but she was rapidly developing and more powerful than the bourgeoisie of France. Furthermore, in Britain there was a migratory population of peasants who were moving in large numbers to the cities. Agriculture and stock-farming (in particular sheep to produce wool for the expanding textile industry) were modernising and needed less rural workers. There was also a relatively large number of people emigrat-

ing to the colonies, especially those in North America, already before the industrial revolution. There were, as a result of the economic and social change, large numbers of ‘criminals’ and vagabonds, who were deported to the colonies (first to North America, later to Australia). Because there were Protestant minority churches that were hardly tolerated, some of them found it attractive to start a new community life in the American colonies with their greater religious freedom. The result of all these factors was that Britain – although it had a considerably smaller population than France – was economically more dynamic than France and that in North America there were far more British settlers than French-Canadian settlers. Moreover, in 1664 and, after a Dutch reconquest, again in 1673 the British took over the Dutch colony of New Netherland with the city of New Amsterdam that became New York. In the eighteenth century they won the war against France in North America, a part of the Seven Year War of 1756-1763. Now the whole of colonial North America, except for a few thinly populated territories kept by France and Spain, was British and English-speaking, although French survived in Quebec and Dutch in New York State until the 19th century.

In the 19th century North America became the most important destination for the mass emigration from Europe. Because the language of the new USA was English, it was clear that in the long run English must become an important language. Moreover, in the 19th century at least 7 million people from Britain and Ireland moved to the overseas settler colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Those who went to the USA are not included in this number, but the USA, more than any other overseas nation, now began to attract large numbers of European immigrants from all over Europe. The number of Europeans who went to Latin America was much smaller than the number who went to North America, especially to the USA. There were no French or Dutch colonies that could receive such large numbers of immigrants. French-speaking Quebec survived, and so did Dutch-speaking South Africa, although both territories were incorporated in the British Empire. British attempts to eliminate the French and Dutch languages from these countries failed, but the number of people living there was much smaller than the number of English-speakers in the other colonies and in the USA. The number going to the USA grew enormously and

was constantly enlarged by the arrival of new immigrants from different European countries, whose children became English-speakers.

The USA became the largest demographic experiment in world history, the largest migration movement in the modern world, and the result was the domination of the English language. The political and military role that the USA began to play in the First World War ensured that the importance of the English language would grow even more, and at a very fast pace. Before the First World War, French and even German had been important languages of diplomacy in Europe. But after the American military intervention in 1917-18, this began to change, and English became more important in international political and diplomatic communication, even though French kept its status for the time being. The Second World War and the Cold War were of course even more important in this respect. Now American English definitively became the major international diplomatic language, even for the Russians and the Chinese. Also in the sphere of popular culture, the mass media, international science, and in the whole 'communication revolution' and computer revolution English was the language that mattered most. Other languages could only try to keep their position within the context of their national communities, which, in general, succeeded rather well.

What happened in the Asian and African colonial territories in terms of language and language policy? The example of British India is instructive. Especially from the 19th century, ever larger numbers of Indians were integrated in the English-speaking administration of those parts of India that were 'ruled directly' (other parts were 'ruled indirectly' through their traditional local maharadja's, sultans, and the like who were loosely supervised by the British). There emerged an Indian elite that was (partly) English-speaking and increasingly orientated towards Western culture and Western ideas, including ideas about democracy and equality. The British in India carried on a debate about language policy in Indian education. This was linked to cultural and racial theories about 'association' versus 'assimilation', a debate that was taking place in the Dutch and the French colonies as well.

Those who believed in the cultural assimilation of at least a part of the native colonial population were the most enthusiastic about providing Western education to the Indians and other Asians. Those who did not want to go further than a loose association, that is, a form of co-operation and

co-existence without complete assimilation of Asians to Western culture, believed that non-European cultures would always remain non-European cultures and that only a limited number of native people should be educated in the Western way. However, quite regardless of these debates, the fact of the matter was that a growing number of people in India, the colonial territory with the largest number of inhabitants of all European colonies, were learning the English language and seemed to be motivated to do so. This meant that in the long run an enormous number of people would be added to the total number of people in the world for whom English was at least a second language. These were 'non-native speakers of English', and their number around the world was growing every day. At the same time, various forms of 'Pidgin-English' survived as well, especially in port cities, in certain regions like the Caribbean, and in contexts of international trade and pragmatic mixture of languages.

As far as the French and Dutch languages are concerned, the following observations can be made. In Indonesia, the second largest European colonial territory, the Dutch did not really make an effort to spread their language, not to the same extent as the British were doing in India. We have already seen that in Indonesia the Dutch followed the policy of using Malay (or Portuguese-Malay) in colonial administration, and in the nineteenth century they continued this policy. The Dutch idea of language policy was influenced more by the pragmatic idea of 'association' than by the more ambitious idea of assimilation and 'civilising mission'. Only limited numbers of Indonesians could enjoy European education or were sent to the Netherlands to study at universities there. Many of them became nationalists as they were influenced by political ideas in Europe about democracy, freedom, and socialism. The French were more enthusiastic about their 'civilising mission' in Asia and Africa than any other colonial power, and they made a great effort to introduce and teach the French language of which they were so proud. They culturally influenced their new colonies in Indo-China (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos) which they obtained in the second half of the 19th century. But the Vietnamese were anxious to become independent after the Second World War and the French did not have enough time to impose their language on the broader colonial population. The same held true in Africa, where the French were trying to fulfil a civilising mission as well. The period of French colonial rule in West and Central Africa lasted

hardly one century. The African colonies became independent in the 1960s, but it is a remarkable fact that the French language is still alive in parts of Africa. The French are doing everything they can to keep it that way and to keep out from their former colonies the growing influence of English.

We can conclude that English became the most important international, 'global' language because of a number of concrete historical circumstances, the accumulative effect of which became unstoppable by 1900. By that time the USA was on its way to becoming the greatest world power and all the European immigrants moving there became English-speakers. The USA today has more than 330 million inhabitants. A second factor was the success of the British Empire with colonies like Canada and Australia becoming other destinations for European immigration, which similarly helped to enlarge the demographic size of the English-speaking world. Perhaps even more important at the present moment is another factor: the growth of the language called 'Globish', a basic international English language of about 1,500 words which is spoken by hundreds of millions of people outside the English-speaking world, which serves as the language of international communication in many fields of human activity, and which can be expanded if necessary by the inclusion of new words and expressions. Let's look at one instructive example of this. In 2006 a Chinese-African conference was held: its language was 'Globish'.

globish[®]



Is this really the new global language?

4. 'The World in One Country': History of South Africa

In this chapter special attention will be paid to the history of one of the most interesting colonial and multi-ethnic societies in the world: South Africa. South Africa is a country that could be described as 'typical' of what happened in the history of European colonial expansion. The country was colonised by European settlers who managed to bring a large part of the interior of Southern Africa under their control and who imposed their political and economic power on the native population. In this respect the development of the colonial situation in South Africa can be compared with what happened on the American continent, where in many places the original indigenous societies were replaced by a new 'European-type' of colonial society and where the Indian population was subjugated or died in large numbers as a result of European diseases and violence. But in contrast to the American situation, the European settlers in South Africa never became a majority of the population in their new territory. They represented about 50% of the population of the old Cape Colony in the 18th and 19th centuries and, by the early twentieth century, not more than 20% of the total population of the four South African colonies combined (Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State, and Transvaal). These four territories formed the Union of South Africa in 1910.

At the same time South Africa was also different from the rest of Africa and from Asia, where Europeans were never more than a tiny proportion of the total population and where there was a form of trade colonialism or a loose political administration instead of massive European settlement. The only other exception in Africa – though only for a relatively short period of time – was Algeria in North Africa, which was colonised by the French after the 1830s and which lost almost all of her white settlers after Algerian independence in the early 1960s. Apart from small enclaves on the African coast, which were used for slave trading and other trade activities, and European enclaves in Asia which functioned as administrative and economic centres for the different European colonial powers, the Europeans were never more than a marginal population element in Africa and in Asia.

South Africa was the great exception to this rule and the only colony of settlement outside the American continent and Australia and New Zealand. In other words: there was something that made South Africa unique in demographic and multi-ethnic terms. The country did not belong to the American colonial category of total European demographic domination; nor did it belong to the Asian and African colonial category of there being only a marginal European presence in terms of sheer numbers. It was this unique demographic, multiracial, and socio-political reality which formed the basis of the South African historical colonial experiment, which at the end of the story, in the twentieth century, would lead to the policy of racial segregation known as 'Apartheid' and finally to the peaceful abolition of this policy. By this policy of segregation the white minority in South Africa tried to maintain its privilege of wielding exclusive political power as long as possible.

The white minority was strong enough to continue this policy and to maintain its privileged position until the end of the twentieth century. But of course it was not strong enough to do so indefinitely, and it was inevitable that the end of white exclusivism would come one day. The country was indeed 'returned' to the black majority, but the white minority still plays an important role in the economy of the country and most of the agricultural land is still in the possession of white farmers.

Before we are going to look in more detail at South Africa, a few words about Africa in general should be said. In the history of European colonial expansion, Africa occupies a rather strange place. The continent is very close to Europe, but at the same time very different and psychologically distant from it. This is the way Europeans always looked at it. Black people were seen as primitive and inferior by both the Arabs in North Africa and the Europeans. This was not entirely justified, because there had been several developed cultures and societies in various places of the African continent, both in West Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa (for example the old kingdom of Zimbabwe, after which is named the present state of that name, which unfortunately has a bad reputation). But it is true that most African states and societies were unable to resist the superior organisation and technology of Arab-Muslim and West-European powers when they began to penetrate parts of the African continent. The Arabs were looking for slaves, gold, ivory and other valuables,

and so did the Portuguese, the first Europeans who began to develop systematic contacts with African societies in West and Central Africa from their new bases on the African coast. The Portuguese and later the Dutch, the British and others tried to get large numbers of African slaves by developing contacts with African rulers and slave traders, who found large numbers of slaves in the African interior. Slavery, indeed, was also a functioning institution in Africa itself, and it was always possible to buy slaves in regions where there were wars going on between different African tribes and polities. This was done by specialised African slave traders, who brought the slaves to the coast and sold them to the Europeans, who were waiting in their fortifications for new groups of slaves to arrive. Then the slaves were transported overseas, mostly to the American continent, but also, for example, to South Africa, where slave labour was used as well, though not in the same huge numbers as in the American continent.

This old colonial pattern meant that, before 1800, very few Europeans actually explored the interior of the African continent itself. They were mostly afraid to do so, and they knew there were many diseases that could kill them. Also, there was no great desire to do so before the 19th century because it was believed that Africa did not have much to offer apart from slaves. Only in the second half of the 19th century were most parts of Africa more systematically explored and then partitioned between the European colonial powers. Since modern African independence came not long after the Second World War, the period of political-territorial European colonialism (imperialism) was actually very short: not even one century. Here, South Africa was again the great exception. The exception to this rule of late and short modern imperialism was indeed South Africa and also in other ways South Africa was different from other parts of Africa. The climate was milder than in other parts of the continent, so that Europeans could settle in large numbers if they wished. Moreover, in the western part of South Africa (the Cape Colony) the native population was relatively sparse. South Africa also had a unique strategic position before the digging of the Suez Canal in the 1860s. Cape Town was the place where the Atlantic and the Indian oceans met, where 'Africa ended' and the journey to Asia could begin by turning east after rounding the Cape of Good Hope. The Cape was half-way Europe and Asia and could

be used as a place of rest and a hospital looking after sick sailors, taking fresh food and water, and so on. All European ship captains were more or less aware of the Cape's advantages, but the Portuguese never made the decision to found a naval base there. Instead, the Dutch did.

The first Portuguese ships reached the southern tip of Africa in the 1480s. They landed at a place called Mossel Bay, 100 kilometers east of Cape Town. They met groups of people whom the Europeans called 'Hottentots' but whose name in modern ethnological language is 'Khoikhoi'. There were also 'Bushmen', today known as 'San'. The Khoikhoi were primitive stockfarmers who led a semi-nomadic life with their cows; the San were hunters and gatherers. The Khoikhoi had a bad reputation because of their unfriendly attitude to European sailors. The Portuguese had had earlier encounters with them north of Cape Town and were actually rather afraid of them. Also in Mossel Bay they were attacked by Khoikhoi and several Portuguese were killed. The 'Hottentots' were also seen as extremely primitive because of their strange language with click sounds and their peculiar customs, notably the habit to smear a layer of cow-dung on their bodies so that they smelled terribly, in fact an effective way of protecting themselves to the sun. Another habit of the Khoikhoi was the frequent smoking of marihuana, which they called 'dagga' and which is still very popular in South Africa today. All in all, the Portuguese preferred to avoid the coasts of South Africa and to concentrate, as far as their presence in Southern Africa was concerned, on their south-west African base of Luanda in Angola and Mozambique in south-east Africa. The consequence was that other European powers had the opportunity to occupy the territory of the 'Cape of Good Hope', as the Cape Peninsula and the area around the present city of Cape Town had come to be known.

In the year 1652 the Dutch East India Company decided that the land and the bay just north of Table Mountain – the famous flat mountain of Cape Town – should become a Dutch naval and strategic base. This is the place where the city of Cape Town emerged, one of the most important places in the history of European colonial expansion. The Dutch East India Company built a fort, a hospital to treat sick sailors, gardens to produce fresh vegetables, and after a few years contracted a number of independent Dutch farmers ('freeburghers') to grow grain and vegetables for the Company. Some of the freeburghers began to develop their own cattle

trade with the Hottentots – this was initially a Company monopoly – part of whose herds were bought every year to provide fresh meat for the passing ships and the Company establishment in Cape Town. The settlement began to expand and had various functions for the Company. At the same time, there developed a complex relationship between the Europeans and the local natives. The latter were largely various tribes of Hottentots with their herds of cows which the Dutch tried to get hold of in one way or another. In the beginning it was a matter of relatively fair and decent trade relations, but soon the first conflicts took place and a number of wars was fought between the Hottentots and the Company. The number of freeburghers, independent European farmers who were no Company servants, increased rapidly and it was difficult for the Company to keep these men under control. There were frequently violent confrontations between the freeburghers – who began to be called ‘Boers’ (farmers) – and the Hottentots and Bushmen. Like on the American continent many of the natives perished as a result of their exposure to European diseases; others were killed by the advancing Boers, a growing number of who were trekking into the interior of the Colony. By the end of the 18th century, 150 years after the beginning of Dutch colonisation in South Africa, the Boer population was growing fast and a new type of people was emerging that was different from their European ancestors, who had come from the Netherlands, France (the Huguenots), and Germany. The Boer Nation was arising, a unique phenomenon because it was the only example of a successful European demographic settlement on the African continent. The Boers have been called ‘The White Tribe of Africa’, and this is certainly one way to describe them. They were a European settler nation in Africa who developed a special kind of culture and mentality. They were Europeans, white people, Christians; they were also Africans and became a part of the African landscape and way of life.

For the Boers, or Afrikaners as they began to call themselves in the 19th century, it was crystal-clear that they, the white settlers who were now Africans (‘Afrikaners’) themselves but ‘Christian and civilised’ Africans, must rule in their ‘own country’. Indeed, they now regarded South Africa as their own country; they did not regard themselves as strangers, newcomers, or colonists anymore. In this sense they were just like the settlers in North America, who called themselves ‘Americans’. Until the

late eighteenth century the Afrikaners were only confronted with the relatively weak tribes of the Hottentots and Bushmen. Thereafter, further to the east, they began to encounter the Bantu-speaking black Africans, including the Xhosa, the Sotho, the Tswana, and the Zulu. These Bantu tribes were much stronger than the Hottentots; they had systems of agriculture, metal-working, organised armies, and so forth. The Boers had to wage fierce battles against them as they moved further eastwards and north-eastwards. In contrast to the American epic story of the great migration 'to the West' of the European settlers, South Africa had its epic story of the great migration from Cape Town to the East, but in many ways these stories and realities were similar. The Boer migration into the interior of South Africa is known as the 'Great Trek', and many books have been written about it. The most important difference between America and South Africa, however, is that the Boers never became a majority of the population in the new eastern territories of South Africa, the 19th-century Boer Republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal and British Natal. The black Africans were almost always more numerous than the European settlers, and the only way for the white Afrikaners to establish control over the situation and over the black African majority was by means of a system of racial domination and white supremacy. Perhaps it is fair to say that it was not because they were evil, but because they tried to create a situation of security for themselves that the Afrikaners developed a system of racial supremacy over the black Africans. It was a mentality and an ideology that white people should always rule over black people because the blacks were like children, unreliable and irresponsible. They were seen as inferior in terms of culture, religion, social organisation, and racial identity. This was the mentality that later underpinned the Apartheid policy. But there was yet another important factor which contributed to the rise of racial segregation and racial supremacy: the coming of the British.

When the Netherlands was occupied by revolutionary France in 1795, the British saw their chance to occupy the Dutch colonies, including South Africa. The Afrikaner people, and of course the black South Africans as well, were now ruled by Britain. In the first half of the 19th century the British tried to eliminate the language of the Afrikaners and to assimilate them, but this policy failed. In French-speaking Quebec the British

failed in this regard as well, and so it happened that non-English-speaking white settler populations were incorporated in the expanding British Empire. The number of British immigrants in South Africa increased, but never enough to become a majority of the white population. The percentage of English-speakers in the total white population of South Africa never reached even 50%, but stagnated at about 45%, so that the Boer majority of 55% could be mobilised at a later stage in white democratic elections in the 20th century to ensure the election of an Afrikaner-dominated government. Demography was crucial again. The coming of a British colonial government in South Africa was resented by the Boers for several reasons. In the early 19th century the British began to introduce liberal reform measures to help improve the position of different groups of black people. Slavery was abolished in 1834. In the old Cape Colony – until 1795 and during 1803-6 Dutch, thereafter British – slaves had been imported to do the work on the wine and wheat farms, work that the Hottentots and many whites refused to do. The slave population was especially important in Cape Town and its immediate hinterland, where the more labour-intensive agricultural activities like wheat- and wine-farming were concentrated. Deeper in the interior, where most of the Boers lived, there were almost no slaves, but there were many descendants of the Hottentots and people of mixed race who did much of the work on the stock farms (sheep and cows). Their status was almost like that of slaves and similar to serfs in Eastern Europe; they had almost no freedom to move about but were bound to the farms with their families. The British introduced a measure giving the ‘Hottentots’ (Khoikhoi) more freedom and certain rights as labourers, which was deeply resented by the conservative and patriarchal Boers.

In the 1830s the Boers started a new movement of mass migration out of the old Cape Colony, the actual ‘Great Trek’, moving into the territories that two decades later became the new Boer Republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Here they established forms of uncertain co-existence with the local Bantu-speaking African peoples, which soon deteriorated into new forms of racial domination over the black Africans. What emerged was a mix of segregation and racial domination. The Africans had their own territories, separate from those of the whites, but at the same time growing numbers of them were coerced to work for the

white farmers. The British decided more or less that they would leave the Boers alone in their new Republics and not interfere with them or with their new black subjects. But this began to change when diamonds and gold were discovered in the northern Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal. There followed a huge immigration of newcomers from Britain and British colonies who tried to claim a stake in the new mining industries. As a result English-speaking enclaves developed in the Boer Republics, and a whole new trend of economic development started. The Boers tried to keep these developments in check, but the tensions between the Boer governments and the new immigrants in Johannesburg and other mining cities increased more and more. Britain now tried to get the situation under control and demanded that the Boer governments should introduce political reforms and let the newcomers participate in government. The Afrikaners refused.

This process eventually led to the famous Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, which was very important not only for South Africa but also for the rest of the world. It was difficult for the British to win this war against the Boers. They had to mobilise half a million soldiers to eventually defeat the Boers. They also had to concentrate the Afrikaner women and children in so-called 'concentration camps', in order to isolate them from the Boer guerilla fighters who refused to give up. Several tens of thousands of women and children died in these camps, mostly of disease. Of course these camps were not like the later Nazi concentration camps, but the policy to systematically isolate and separate the civil population was something new, perhaps a sign of a new stage of barbarisation in Europe. Another result of the war was that Britain lost respect and popularity around the world, because almost everybody across the world, including the Americans, sympathised with the Boers. Even in Britain itself there were many people who defended the Boers and protested against British policies, especially the concentration camps. This loss of British prestige and the great costs of the South African war weakened British imperialism. It also led to a new phase in the history of South Africa itself.

After the war the Afrikaners began to unite in modern political parties and to prepare for a new future in which they would try to capture political power by peaceful means. Black South Africans became more politically conscious as well; in 1912 the South African Native National

Congress was founded, later called the African National Congress, ANC. Black South Africans wanted to get more political rights and especially tried to prevent that more and more agricultural land would end up in white hands while the black people became a kind of mass proletariat in their overcrowded 'native reserves' (the land reserved for Africans, which was only a fraction of the total land surface of South Africa). They also began to form black trade unions to fight for better wages and working conditions of the black workers in the mines and other industries. South Africa became in fact an industrial country, the only country in Africa which experienced an industrial revolution. This meant that South Africa was developing into a type of society – a more modern society – that was quite different from the rest of Africa. But this emerging modern society was deeply divided by various cleavages of a national, racial, cultural, and social kind. This could be seen as the great paradox of South Africa: while the country became more and more a modern national unity because of its dynamic economic and political development, it also became a country with enormous contradictions between different ethnic groups because of a special set of historical, cultural, economic, and 'racial' factors. A striking contradiction in particular was that the whites wanted to segregate black South Africans, keep them away from white society; but at the same time they wanted their cheap labour. Racial policy was developed around finding a balance between these two contradictory objectives.

But there was more at stake than new racial policies with regard to the black South Africans. There were the longstanding differences between different white groups, especially between Afrikaners and English-speakers, Boers and British. (Later other white immigrants appeared in South Africa too, including Jews from Lithuania, Portuguese, and other groups.) The British had won the war, but the Afrikaners were still a majority of the white population, and British efforts to increase the British population through new immigration after the Anglo-Boer War largely failed. The Afrikaners remained the dominant white element, dominating in particular the agrarian sector of the country and owning most of the land. They were determined to win back political power with other, peaceful means so as to ensure their survival as a nation. This meant among other things that black South Africans should not get equal political rights,

because many of them might vote for pro-British or black political parties. In other words: non-white South Africans should be excluded from the political process, which should remain a white affair. And in this white political arena the Afrikaners should try to win political power and then introduce their policies of Afrikaner survival strategy including a more systematic form of black segregation. This is how the Apartheid philosophy originated, an idea that eventually triumphed after the Second World War. In 1948 the National Party, the party of the Afrikaners, won the all-white general election and it stayed in power until 1990, when Nelson Mandela and other black leaders were released from prison and the Apartheid system was dismantled.

But the origins of racial segregation involved more than just the policies of Afrikaner politicians. It was actually in the South African mining industry, an enormous industry which employed hundreds of thousands of black and white workers, that the modern concept of racial segregation was born. The black mine workers were isolated in closed living compounds and working terms of 6, 9, or 12 months in the mines. After their working period ended they were supposed to go back to their native territories, such as Zululand, the Transkei, Sotholand, etc., where they were supposed to find means of existence in the traditional African economy, so that their mining wages could stay on a low level. Apart from legitimising the low level of black wages, this system of migrant labour and black labour control was designed to keep the masses of black migrant workers and Africans in general under control. Indeed, the migrant labour system was designed to ensure that there would not arise a permanent black proletariat but that the blacks would only be temporary workers in the white areas. Their homes were still in the traditional African reservations in the countryside, but the belief that these could sustain millions of Africans was an illusion. All white South Africans, British and Boer, were afraid that the black people would lose their roots in the traditional African societies. If this happened, it would be very difficult to keep society under control and it would also be difficult to refuse to give political and other civic rights to the black population. Therefore the idea of the blacks having their own culture, their own society, their own traditional agriculture, etc. had to be retained even if it was increasingly an illusion. The reality was that millions of black Africans, as well as Coloured people (people

of mixed race) and Indians (people brought to South Africa from British India), became part of the new, modern, multi-racial South African economy and society.

In 1910 the four South African colonies – the Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal – became the Union of South Africa. In 1961, when the Afrikaners and the National Party ruled the country, it became the Republic of South Africa. This modern state, with its modern economy absorbing growing numbers of black people, could maintain the illusion of being a ‘country for white people’ until 1990. But already much earlier it had become clear that this was an illusion, and that the day must come that South Africa would be a modern democratic nation for all its people. Today we have a post-Apartheid South Africa, whose future is uncertain because its problems are manifold. It is hoped that all South Africans can maintain a sense of unity and that the country will continue to be a non-racial democracy. The fact that the population of South Africa is so diverse remains a crucial fact.

Among the African people there are about ten different tribes with different languages, ethnic traditions, etc. Within the ruling government party ANC the political leaders try to maintain an equilibrium whereby one tribal group cannot be accused of dominating the others. In addition there are the other ethnic groups as well, who might feel dominated by the African majority (about 70% of the total population of South Africa) and its ANC government.

Beside the Africans, indeed, there are the so-called Coloured people, the Indians, and of course the whites. The Coloured people live predominantly in Cape Town and the Western Cape Province, where they constitute a considerable proportion of the population and the voters. The mixed-race Coloured people are the descendants of the slaves of Cape Town, the Hottentot labourers of the Cape farms, and various mixed-race groups which originated in the early colonial period of the Cape Colony. Most of them speak Afrikaans (a South African form of Dutch), like the white Afrikaners. Most of the Indians live in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal in the south-east, where they are important in the city of Durban and other urban centres. The Afrikaners are living all over the country and still control most of the agrarian sector and a major part of the agricultural land. But many of them live in the cities as well. The English-speak-

ing whites live predominantly in the big cities, including Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. On the political level ethnic identities are often confirmed rather than blurred. The truth is that the ruling ANC is mostly a party of black Africans and that most whites, Coloureds, and Indians vote for the major opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), which accuses the ANC government of corruption, abuse of power, bad governance, and so on. The Western Cape Province is the only part of the country where the ANC does not control the provincial government. Here the DA rules on the provincial level and also on the municipal level in Cape Town and other places. The result is, according to many observers, a different type of political atmosphere, better governance, and less corruption.

South Africa is like an experiment in multi-ethnic society. It is difficult to find a country elsewhere in the world with such a complex social and ethnic structure. In the final analysis this is the result of the unique type of colonial society that emerged from South Africa's colonial history which began in the seventeenth century. In South Africa most of the indigenous population groups survived the coming of the Europeans. Even the Hottentots survived in a sense, because the Coloured people of the Cape Province are partly their descendants. The black Bantu-speaking tribes, the Zulu, Xhosa, etc., survived even better. They were never exterminated as were many Indian tribes on the American continent. Today they constitute the great majority of the South African population (40-50 million). They now have an 'independent' African country like the other black peoples on the African continent. But the 'independence' of the black South Africans is not just independence. For what they inherited from the white colonists is not a country which remained largely traditional and African, but a country which is an industrial power and still contains more than 4 million white people, more than the number of whites in New Zealand. Before 1990 there were more than 5 million whites; the great majority is still there, and especially the Afrikaners know no other country but South Africa. The same is true for the Indians, the Coloureds, and of course the black Africans.

Now the question is whether the great experiment can continue and produce a successful multi-racial nation and society. There are optimists and pessimists with regard to this fundamental question. Perhaps South

Africa is indeed ‘The world in one country’ and perhaps this slogan is not just touristic propaganda but a reality, with South Africa reflecting the multi-ethnic condition of the world as a whole. The world must prove that it can live together – black, white, Indian, and others – and South Africa is, more than any other place, the country where this must be proven right now.



The Great Trek (1830s) meant many violent confrontations between Boers and Black Africans. Source: Archive of the authors.

5. The Influence of Colonial Expansion on Central Europe and Slovakia

In this chapter we will look at how Central Europe and Slovakia were influenced by the process of colonial expansion carried out by the West European maritime nations. There can be no doubt that many of the consequences of this process had an impact on Western Europe's 'backyard' as well. There are various ways in which this can be illustrated. There was, first of all, what we can call a 'consumption revolution' which affected large parts of Central and Eastern Europe in addition to Western Europe. After the sixteenth century Europeans began to smoke tobacco, drink tea and coffee, buy and consume other 'colonial goods', and – from the eighteenth century – began to eat potatoes. These new habits and customs caused a veritable transformation, not only in the eating habits and consumption patterns of West and Central Europeans, but also in social life and in the 'image' that different kinds of people tried to project of themselves. A man was no longer a 'real man' if he did not smoke tobacco, often a pipe in the age before the invention of the modern cigarette. In the twentieth century even some women began to smoke cigarettes and this became a sign of their independence and emancipation. Coffee and tea became consumption goods that many people were dependent on; to live without drinking coffee became unthinkable and impossible for many people. Perhaps most spectacular was the 'potato revolution', which made it possible for larger numbers of people to be fed so that the population in many parts of Europe could grow substantially. Slovakia is a good example of this. An even better example was Ireland, and the Irish case clearly shows what the risks were of being almost totally dependent on the potato. Indeed, if the potato harvest was affected by disease (potato-blight) many people would starve, and the only way out of this misery was to emigrate to America. This happened several times in Ireland in the nineteenth century and as a result many Irish people (in fact, several million of them) left Ireland simply in order to survive. Here we see how one aspect of the influence of colonial expansion (the potato) reinforced the impact of another aspect (emigration and settlement in the New World).

Another important consequence of colonial expansion was indeed demographic: the growth of various kinds of migration. There were different types of migration resulting from the new dynamics of colonial expansion in non-European parts of the world. Many millions of people emigrated to the American continent, a movement which reached its highest level in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. The size of European emigration to America – also to Latin America, but especially to North America and in particular the USA – was not millions, but tens of millions. This incredible mass migration was in fact a safety valve for Europe: it prevented further mass starvation in times of disease, war, chaos, and revolution and offered a new perspective to millions of people whose lives in Europe were tough and insecure. Beside the permanent mass emigration from Europe there was also the phenomenon of temporary migration and travel by seamen, sailors, adventurers, colonial officials etc. From the sixteenth century many people from Central Europe went to port cities in Western Europe to find employment on the ships of the East India Companies of the Netherlands, England, and France. There are historical sources on some of these migrants from the east. One example is the 18th-century diary of a man from East Prussia, Georg Naporra, who came from a bilingual (German-Polish) part of East Prussia where living conditions were rather bad. Some men in this region decided to move to other places to look for a better life. The diary of Georg Naporra was discovered in the town archive of Rotterdam some twenty years ago, and has been published some years ago. It describes how Georg Naporra joined a ship of the Dutch East India Company that went to Indonesia, and what he experienced on board ship and in different parts of Asia. The diary is an interesting source, not only for our knowledge of social and colonial conditions, but also for the lives, motives, experiences, and feelings of men from eastern parts of Europe who became part of the new world of colonial expansion, a world that was even stranger for them than it was for West Europeans.

Although most of these sailors and migrants were men, there were actually also some women who travelled to Asia and America as sailors, but in their case this was mostly illegal. Women were generally not allowed to join East India ships but some of them dressed up like men and managed to become part of the crew. They were often found out after some time and then were punished, sent back to Europe, or allowed to stay in the East if

they married a European (there was a great shortage of white women in Asia). Many cases of adventurous Dutch women have been documented by historians and there are also examples of women from England and other countries. But as far as Central Europeans are concerned, it was probably only men who became sailors. The whole business, of course, was mainly a men's affair.

Yet another aspect of the influence of colonial expansion on Central Europe and Slovakia was the field of ideas and culture. For Slovakia we have the example of school-theatre plays from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. An interesting example is a school-theatre play written by the Slovak pedagogue and teacher Izák Caban in the second half of the seventeenth century in Presov. The play, which was performed by students at the Presov Gymnasium, was about the Portuguese discoverer Ferdinand Magalhaes and was called 'King Ferdinand Magalhaes and the Peruvians'. It is evidence that stories about the discoveries and activities of the Portuguese and other Europeans in non-European parts of the world had become part of the consciousness and world-view of educated Central Europeans. However, Caban's theatre play also shows that people were mixing up things and that their information was not very accurate. Stories from the colonial world were often used to make the point that there was taking place a successful conversion of non-Europeans to Christianity, and in a symbolical and allegorical way elements of gymnasium school culture were mixed with the colonial story. In Caban's theatre play the 'Peruvians' – that is, the Indian population of Peru in South America, an important part of the Spanish colonial empire with strategic silver mines that were worked by Indian slaves – were converted to Christianity by 'king' Magalhaes and his collaborators. The truth is that Magalhaes had never been king in Peru and not even part of the Spanish colonial regime in Peru; he was just a Portuguese sailor in the service of Spain. Caban describes how the work of conversion was indeed successful despite the resistance to it by 'the Jews, the Saracens, the Turks, and the Persians', an absurd claim which can only be understood in a symbolical way and which served to define who were the enemies of Christianity. Caban also describes the political and cultural development of his imaginary Christian Peruvian State led by 'king' Magalhaes, who organises a state-political order there after considering different forms of state. He establishes a form of public life, family life, schools, a judiciary, etc. All this

serves to give Caban the opportunity to project a vision of a Christian Utopia in the New World. In the theatrical scene in which this is shown there also enters at one point a number of classical teachers and philosophers who examine the Peruvian students in various scientific disciplines. This reminds us of the school inspectors who would be present at some examinations at the gymnasiums of the 17th century. Thus Caban tries to combine different topics in one theatre-play: Christianisation of Peruvian natives by the colonial hero Magalhaes; the latter's careful design of a new and prudent social, political, and cultural order; and the influence of the classical cultural and political examples which had become an important factor in the intellectual life of Europe since the Renaissance.

But let us turn to an even more fascinating example from Slovakia of how the colonial experience of Europe had begun to influence the consciousness and experience of Central Europeans and the lives of at least some individuals from Slovakia: the case of Móric Beňovský (1746-1786), who became only forty years old but whose life experience was spectacular indeed. Beňovský was born in Vrbové in west Slovakia, and his life truly reflected the age of colonialism and gradual globalisation of the world, as well as the age of Enlightenment in which Europeans became more critical about colonialism and about many other things too. Beňovský's father was an army officer: a colonel with the Hungarian husars who fought in the War of the Austrian Succession in the 1740s and in other wars of the Habsburg Monarchy. He therefore had an adventurous life and this may show to us that an army career could be a way to develop a taste for learning about the world. The stories such a man told his sons was a way for them to develop such an adventurous spirit as well. But there were other important factors which played a role in the making of the life of Móric Beňovský. One of these was the family background on his mother's side. His mother Rozália was a baroness from the Révay family, a family which had played an important role in the history of Slovak Protestantism, though part of them had later reconverted to Catholicism. Confessional tensions and uncertainty played a significant role in the Révay family and led to a turbulent cultural and religious atmosphere, which also influenced the young Beňovský, who seems to have developed an aversion to the Catholic Church whose influence was difficult to escape in the mid-18th century. Rozália Révay herself and her brother Alex Révay, for example, were confessionally ambivalent. Alex Révay had

first joined the Franciscans, then became a Protestant, finally to reconvert to the Catholic faith again. This was an interesting example of the religious and psychological turbulence and ambivalence that characterised the age.

The young Móric Beňovský went to attend the Piarist Gymnasium in Svätý Jur, and was not sent to a Jesuit school. This shows that the more liberal and tolerant type of Catholicism of the Piarists (whose schools also taught more modern subjects, including natural science) was preferred by the family. For ‘crypto-Protestants’ (which some of the Révays undoubtedly were) the Piarists were no doubt more acceptable than the Jesuits. Indeed it soon became clear that Beňovský had Protestant sympathies, which he began to openly declare as he grew older. At one point in his life he was even accused by the Catholic Church of being an ‘apostate’. For Beňovský an affinity with Protestantism may have been the expression of a certain individualist idealism, related to Protestant autonomy and to the new ideas of the Enlightenment which rejected the tyranny of the Catholic Church and of any kind of spiritual oppression by Church and State institutions. Then there was another family affair which contributed to the making of the personality of Móric Beňovský. This had to do with material issues that were typical of the life of noble families, where conflicts about property and inheritance rights were taking place all the time. A major cause of this problem must have been that in Hungary there were far too many nobles: about 5% of the total population of the country. Many people with a noble title were almost without property, and those who had some property were often threatened by the claims of other family members, especially at moments when inheritance issues came to the fore and people were fighting tooth and nail against each other. It is no wonder that Hungary was known as ‘the country of lawyers’, because a whole army of them was constantly occupied with property conflicts between the members of noble families. After the death of his parents, Beňovský had to conduct a fight over the family inheritance with his three half-sisters, who were supported by their husbands so that Beňovský was pushed into a very difficult defensive position. It is possible that the confessional issue was used by his family opponents to create a negative image of him: being a Protestant, an apostate, and the like.

At one point in the 1760s Beňovský had to flee from his home, because they wanted to arrest him and bring him before a local court of justice. He fled to one of the small towns in the Spiš region in East Slovakia, thirteen of

which had been pawned to Poland and were administered by Polish officials, so that here he could avoid the Hungarian judicial officials. In Spišská Sobota he married the daughter of a German burgher, Anna Zuzana Hoensch. One could argue that this proved that Móric Beňovský was not seriously attached to his noble status, which for him may have had an instrumental function (it could bring certain social advantages in certain situations) rather than the meaning of a special privileged status which, for example, would have prevented him from marrying a non-noble woman. On the contrary, he married in fact a non-noble woman from a German milieu and he always remained true to her. For Beňovský other things in life (freedom?; love?) seem to have been more important than matters of status or, for example, ethnicity. He came from a partly Slovak-speaking milieu, but identified with Hungary and was open-minded to Germans, an important group among the Protestants of Hungary. The local Germans may have been able to protect him given their autonomous administrative status. Not long after his marriage in Spiš, however, Beňovský went to Poland, because he believed that he could play a role in the fighting that was going on there between different political factions of the Polish nobility. One faction was supported by the Russians, while others were fighting against them because they saw that the Russians became more and more influential in Poland, which was seen as a threat to the independence of Poland. Beňovský must have joined an anti-Russian group because he was arrested twice by the Russian army in Poland, and the second time he was deported to Siberia. This was how the great adventure in the life of Beňovský began.

Beňovský was brought to Kamchatka, a peninsula on the east coast of Siberia, where he was interned in a camp for political prisoners from different places in Poland and Russia. He managed to escape with a group of Poles and Russians, fellow-detainees who had prepared their flight by planning to capture a ship and sail away to the south. They managed to reach Canton in the south of China, where Beňovský presented himself as an important nobleman from Poland, an example of how he used the image of noble status to make an impression and promote his personal interests. He made contact with a group of Frenchmen in Canton and gained their confidence. He suggested that he could help the French in their activities in the colonial world, for example in the Indian Ocean, where the French had some control over the small islands of Mauritius and Réunion and where they also tried to

establish a foothold in parts of the huge island of Madagascar. In the Seven-Year-War (1756-1763) the French had lost most of their colonial possessions on the American continent and in India, because they had been defeated by the British. Now they tried to rebuild their overseas position by taking hold of other territories, and the western Indian Ocean region was one of the most important of these. They could use the services of anyone who wanted to give assistance in this project, including non-Frenchmen. Beňovský may have been aware of this and may have felt that he could play a role in the French colonial activities which were becoming more important again.

When Beňovský (and some of the men from Kamchatka who decided to stay with him and to support him in his plans and initiatives) sailed away from Canton back to France they visited the French islands in the Indian Ocean and Madagascar. This must have been the first time that Beňovský saw Madagascar, which for some reason evoked his fascination, perhaps because the French were fascinated by it, perhaps because he knew that the French had plans with it in which he could play a role, or perhaps because he saw it as a project that might fulfil some of his utopian and romantic dreams. He was determined to visit the island again, at a later stage when circumstances were favourable. But first he sailed back to France, where apparently he wanted to try to win some influence by making his own suggestions with regard to the future of Madagascar.

However, it was not only Madagascar that Beňovský was interested in, but also another island: Formosa. It is possible that he and his fellow-escapees from Russia had visited Formosa on their way to Canton, and it seems that this island had begun to fascinate him too.

In the 17th century Formosa had been occupied by the Dutch East India Company, but later the Chinese had expelled the Dutch, which started the colonisation of the island by the Chinese (the original population was not Chinese). The situation on Formosa was in a state of flux, and might offer opportunities for new colonial adventures. In France Beňovský presented his plans with regard to a French role on Formosa, which he proposed should be colonised. But this was rejected by officials at the French royal court, and Beňovský then began to make proposals with regard to Madagascar, his second choice. This time he succeeded in being accepted by the French, who indeed had plans with Madagascar, and Beňovský – who again used his noble title of ‘count’ to make himself more relevant and acceptable

to the French – was appointed ‘brigadier’, commander of a French military brigade. He was to be sent to Madagascar, which eventually happened in the mid-1770s. He arrived with his brigade in north-east Madagascar, an area that had been selected for a French colonial outpost. It soon became clear that Beňovský did not intend to blindly follow French instructions, but that he followed his own course of action, which was understandable given the fluid and unpredictable situation in the area. He developed the idea of Madagascar acquiring an autonomous position within the French colonial empire. He established relations with some of the local tribes in northern Madagascar and actually succeeded in winning the confidence of some of them. He was even elected a higher chief of some of the tribes, a so-called ‘Ampansacabé’. This happened after an old woman, who was regarded by the local population as a prophet, had predicted that this would and should happen because it would help the people to protect themselves against an outside danger. This woman was possibly used by some local chiefs who felt that Beňovský could play a useful role in helping to avoid a brutal French invasion. The small group of men around Beňovský had been behaving in a tactful way towards the population and was probably seen by the local Malagasy chiefs as a lesser evil than a harsher French colonial regime, which might follow at a later stage but might also be prevented by Beňovský, so they hoped. This was an example of how local native people in an early colonial situation tried to influence the dynamics of this situation, which had not yet been stabilised by a strong European presence. They could try to use or collaborate with one group of Europeans in order to weaken or forestall the actions of another group that might be more dangerous. This kind of thing had happened also in other colonial situations and showed that non-European peoples were not just victims of European colonialism, but could play an active role in shaping the situation. Not only the Europeans but also non-Europeans could play the game of divide and rule.

Beňovský was increasingly criticised by French officials, who felt that he was not obeying the orders of the administrative officials on Réunion, the nearby island with a French colonial administration. He was called back to France to answer the criticism of his behaviour and policies on Madagascar. In France it was not easy to win back the confidence of colonial officials, and Beňovský now began to consider that he might get the support of another European colonial power for his plans on Madagascar, perhaps Britain, the

USA, or even Austria. But first he went home to Hungary for some time, where he was pardoned by the authorities (even by Maria Theresia herself) for his contraventions of the law, including having illegally left the country. He now officially asked for being granted the noble title of Count, which indeed was given to him, and he acquired an estate in west Slovakia again.

Beňovský offered his services to Austria and tried to interest the Habsburg government for his colonial plans, but the Austrians did not show much practical initiative in this direction. Then Beňovský decided to return to France and even visited the USA where he became a friend of Benjamin Franklin. Later he also visited Great Britain and then, again, the USA. All this travelling was meant to find support for his plans on Madagascar, where he wanted to renew the initiative of planting a colonial settlement that would leave much of the autonomy of the local people intact and would only engage in trade that was profitable for both the native people and the Europeans. It seems that Beňovský now wanted to act independently of the French, a risky venture in that part of the world. It was in the USA that Beňovský finally prepared a new voyage to Madagascar, which took place in 1784-5. He bought a ship and agreed with a professional captain to bring him and his group of men to Madagascar.

In 1785 they arrived at the island and went ashore in the same region in north Madagascar where Beňovský had been active in the 1770s. From later sources it appears that Beňovský had brought a large quantity of weapons with him to arm the Malagasy people against the French, who were trying to establish control of the island. He really seems to have become an enemy of the French. But the captain of his ship was bribed by the French and sailed away to Réunion, leaving Beňovský and his men to their fate. The French sent elite troupes from Pondicherry, the last French enclave in India, where they had a much stronger military presence than on Réunion or Mauritius. In 1786 the French troupes arrived in Madagascar and engaged into a military confrontation with Beňovský and his men. Beňovský was shot dead by them, and the whole Beňovský group was overrun. Thus ended the life and the 'colonial activities' of Móric Beňovský. There are two final questions regarding Beňovský that we have to pay some attention to. The first is the meaning of Beňovský's 'Memoirs and Travels', a book that was written on the basis of his notes and recollections, probably by one of his friends in Europe. The book appeared in several languages, including English, French,

and, later, other languages as well. The book is a mixture of reality and fantasy, of fact and fiction. This was quite usual at the time, and for present-day historians it is difficult to decide what is true in it and what is not. Nevertheless, the book remains an important historical source to reconstruct the life, the mind, and the aims of Beňovský and the last word has not yet been said about it. Related to this is, of course, a second and even more fundamental question: what did Beňovský actually want?; what is the Beňovský story all about?; what do his life and experiences really mean?

It is this interpretation that really is the most important aspect of the whole question. Beňovský was an example of a man whose initial life context was in many ways typical of the background of the Hungarian nobility. He was an adventurous character, like so many other men in Europe of the eighteenth century (though not necessarily many Hungarians). In his case this was probably enhanced by the fact that his father had been a professional soldier who had seen other places in Europe and who no doubt influenced his son with his stories. His independent character and his affinity with Protestantism in a country dominated by the Catholic Church played a part as well. This brought him into trouble with the ruling powers in Hungarian society and caused him to consider leaving his country. The troubles and conflicts within his family did the rest: they forced him into a difficult position and eventually made him decide to try his luck elsewhere. Beňovský was not a man who left his country because of his poverty (even if his heritage was taken away from him) and his case shows that there could be many other motives for people to leave their homeland and try their luck through a life of adventure. Beňovský belonged to the social elite of Central Europe and was accustomed to acting in a forceful manner, to playing the role of a leader who could assemble men around him. This was demonstrated when he ended up in Siberia, where he managed to gather a group of men around him with which his great adventure could begin. But Beňovský was undoubtedly also a man with idealistic motives, who seems to have believed that certain things could be changed for the better. The adventurous spirit and the idealistic spirit could be well combined, and the eighteenth century was precisely an age in which this happened in many cases. In fact, the colonial world was an ideal context for this because here a forceful man could do a lot of good (if he was not immediately suppressed) and experiment with his utopian inclinations. The colonial world was a historical context where

most Europeans were pursuing their own material interests, but where some Europeans had other interests as well, for example social, cultural, or scientific ones. Some Europeans had a strong scientific interest and wrote the first books about the people and the natural environment of the colonial territories. Other Europeans resisted the arrogance and abuse of power of their fellow-Europeans and protested against the behaviour and colonial policies of the Europeans in Asia or America.

Beňovský was one of these men, for he seems to have believed that it was possible and necessary to develop a form of European presence, for example on Madagascar, that would respect the native population and stimulate a form of trade that would be beneficial to the indigenous people and the Europeans alike. Perhaps the core motive in Beňovský's mind was his wish to prove that this was possible, his desire to prove himself and the legitimacy and significance of his own actions by engaging in a kind of 'alternative colonialism' which was more humane. That the Europeans should go to the non-European world and that their culture was superior to other cultures was believed by almost all Europeans. But that the Europeans also had the duty to enter into a mutually acceptable form of relationship with the peoples of the non-European world was understood by only a minority of Europeans, of whom Beňovský was a remarkable example.



Móríc Beňovský 1746-1786

6. Slaves, Jews, and the French Revolution

The idea to insert a chapter on the question of how the French revolutionaries dealt with the problem of slavery in the French colonies at the end of the eighteenth century, and at the same time with the problem of the status of the Jewish population in France itself, is to some extent a follow-up to the topic discussed in the previous chapter. There we saw how the 18th-century Slovak Móric Beňovský tried to encourage a more 'humane' form of European colonialism in Madagascar, and how he was frustrated in his efforts by the French, who became a dominant power in the western Indian Ocean region in the second half of the eighteenth century. It was in France that, shortly after the death of Móric Beňovský, the great Revolution (1789) broke out which represented a new stage in the history of Europe. This was the period when the French and other European nations began to seriously reflect on the question of freedom and equality for all people. Now for us the question is: did 'all people' mean only the Europeans, or also the people in the colonial territories? Did the French revolutionaries want to abolish slavery in the colonies in the West Indies, where several important islands – Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe – with French plantation regimes belonged to the most productive colonial societies in the world? Did they want to introduce freedom and equality in the French colonies too? This, of course, is a crucial question as far as the meaning of the French Revolution is concerned, and modern European ideas about freedom and democracy.

Another crucial question relating to the meaning, the impact, and the limits of the French Revolution is how the revolutionaries and the new 'democrats' dealt with an old European problem which for centuries had complicated the social and political life of European societies: the position of the Jewish minority. When we compare the changes in the position of the Jewish minority in France following the French Revolution with the changes (or the absence of change) in the position of the slaves and black people in the French colonies in the Caribbean, we are perhaps able to see what was the difference between the impact of the Revolution in Europe and in the colonial world. We might be able to see how deep were the prejudices of the Europeans about non-Europeans, even during and after the French Revolution. Did the French revolutionaries regard the black slaves in the colonies

as fellow human beings who should be liberated as well? Or did they regard the Jews as people who should have equal rights to the Christian Europeans while the blacks in the colonies were a totally different story? We shall look at these complicated questions.

It should be said at the outset that for eighteenth-century Europeans the problem of minority issues, which was seen as a group phenomenon, and the problem of human rights, which was seen as a question of individual rights, were two different things. Only later, in the twentieth century, did these two questions merge and became, in a sense, one and the same problematic. Until the late eighteenth century minority issues and the question of minority rights related primarily to religious groups, including the Jews. Minority rights had primarily to do with the status of Protestant minorities in majority-Catholic countries and the status of Catholic minorities in majority-Protestant countries. From time to time some attention was also given to the status of the Jewish minority, which in some European countries was better than in others. The question of the slaves and black people in the American and West Indian colonies was a different matter: this was not really seen as a problem of minority status, unless black people came to Europe, which sometimes happened in small numbers. In Europe it was generally forbidden to treat other people as slaves, and in theory black people in Europe were free. In practice, however, they tended to be seen as different and somehow inferior, but the problem was hardly acute because before the twentieth century there were very few black people from Africa or the colonial territories in Europe.

In so far as there was any systematic thought about minority problems in Europe, this related to the social and economic status of certain minority groups, to cultural and religious problems, to the question of social stability in society, and perhaps to social policy and the practical alleviation of poverty. Minority issues were not really part of political philosophy, or of the new ideas about political equality, modern citizenship, etc. These new enlightened and democratic ideas were about the (rather abstract) individual citizens of a theoretically homogeneous nation-state, a state and society in which 'the people' or 'the nation' was sovereign. In practice this meant that primarily white Christian men were the subjects of this democratic society. Whether women, Jews, non-Christians, non-whites (for example Roma or blacks) were, or could be, part of the new democratic nation too,

was an open and uncertain question in the late 18th century. This was the great question that the French Revolution had to solve, or perhaps could not solve. The American Revolution of the years 1776-83 and the French Revolution of the years following 1789 advocated and proclaimed political equality, equal citizenship, equality before the law, and a democratic political system with equal voting rights for men. The truth was that women, black people (in the USA an important group of the population), Jews (especially in France), and the poor were generally excluded from these new political rights. This does not change the fact that these two Revolutions in the western world were very important steps forward, despite their limitations. The American Declaration of Independence of 1776 proclaimed that 'all men are equal'. It was the first time that the modern idea of equality was taken as the foundation for a state and society. In 1787 the independent USA adopted a modern Constitution, another novelty in human history. At that moment the new nation had three million inhabitants, of whom 600,000 were slaves. The slaves were not regarded as part of the new democratic dispensation.

In 1789, shortly after the Revolution in France, the new revolutionary French National Assembly proclaimed the famous 'Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen'. This was even more radical than the proclamations of the Americans, and also more remarkable was the fact that in the French National Assembly a debate erupted about the status of 'people of colour' (black people who were not slaves) and even the slaves in the French colonies. The most important part of the world as far as the French colonial presence was concerned, was at that time the Caribbean region, the 'West Indies', where the French had some colonies with large sugar and coffee plantations worked by black slaves. The most important of these slave colonies was Saint-Domingue, the later Haiti. In 1792, three years after the outbreak of the Revolution, the French National Assembly decided that also in the colonies 'equal civil rights' should be given to 'all men regardless of colour'. What this meant was that black men who were not slaves, but who belonged to the minority of free blacks (often mixed-race people) in colonies like Saint-Domingue, should have in theory the same rights as Europeans.

Among these mulatto free black people (often former slaves who had been freed, or whose parents had been freed) there had emerged a small elite of more educated men, some of who became the leaders of the whole

black and slave population of Saint-Domingue at a later stage of developments. The equal rights were at first only meant for this mulatto elite, while the institution of slavery should remain intact. But the debate about the question of slavery became ever more intense, not only in France, but also in Saint-Domingue itself. In 1794, when the French Revolution had reached its most radical stage, the French National Assembly made the crucial decision: slavery was abolished in the colonies. But to implement this in practice was another matter and the slaves had to fight against the French colonial elite and the plantation owners in Saint-Domingue to achieve their freedom. This struggle became a struggle for the independence of Saint-Domingue, which was proclaimed in 1801. But when Napoleon came to power in France he re-introduced the system of slavery in the colonies in 1802. However, in 1804 the independent Haiti abolished slavery again. Perhaps the events in Haiti had an influence on what happened in the rest of the world.

In 1808 Britain and the United States prohibited the slave trade (not the system of slavery and slave labour itself); in 1833 Britain prohibited slavery in its own colonies; in 1848 France abolished slavery; in 1863 the United States and the Netherlands abolished slavery; in 1878 Portugal abolished slavery, in 1886 Spain, and the last country to do so was independent Brazil (1888). The struggle for the abolition of slavery was one of the most important humanitarian and political movements in the history of the Western world. The 'abolitionist' movement was inspired by a combination of Christian and enlightened humanism, by the new liberal and capitalist free-labour ideology, and by the resistance of the slaves themselves.

These different elements helped to create a new human rights ideology, which was partly Christian and partly secular. The human rights ideology, the French Revolution, and the abolitionist movement also inspired other new social and political movements of the early democratic age: for example the movement for women's rights and the movements for Jewish emancipation and for the equality of other minority groups. The movement for democratic equality and the movements for the equality of minority groups were at first separate movements. The first was inspired by the new political thought on the equality of individual citizens; the second was concerned with the separate position of minority groups in society, which was in principle a different problem. Later these different elements came together in a broader vision on the relationship between equality and pluralism in

modern European and Western societies. The question of ‘multiculturalism’ has since that moment become a controversial issue. But slavery was a world-wide problem and continued to exist, and it was only in the 1960s, for example, that black slavery was abolished in a Muslim country like Saudi-Arabia. Indeed, slavery continues to exist in some parts of the world even today.

We have seen how during the French Revolution the French National Assembly tried to deal with the problem of slavery and the rights of black people in colonies like Saint-Domingue, triggering some of the spectacular events on that island of slaves. The famous French ‘Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen’ from 1789 contained several articles. The first article declared among other things: ‘Men are born free, and remain free and equal in rights; social distinctions can only be [legitimately] based on common utility’. The French Declaration sounded more universal than the American Declaration of Independence; the French slogan of ‘liberty, equality and brotherhood’ sounded more universal too, and was perhaps meant for the whole world, not just for France. But the phrase that social distinctions could only be acceptable and legitimate if they were based on ‘common utility’ introduced a more pragmatic and perhaps potentially ambivalent and opportunistic element. If it was in the interest of society, or of those who were dominant in society, to observe or maintain certain social distinctions or differences, these might continue to be maintained in the interest of mainstream society. Arguably this might relate to the relations between the sexes, between common citizens and social outcasts like Gypsies or Jews, or between black and white in the colonies.

As we noted, nowhere had the new ideas on democracy and equality more dramatic consequences than in the colony of Saint-Domingue, which was in fact the richest European colonial territory in the American hemisphere with extensive sugar and coffee plantations. In 1789, the year of the French Revolution, the population of Saint-Domingue included more than half a million slaves (almost as many as in the USA), 40,000 white colonists, large numbers of escaped slaves (the ‘marrons’) who were living in the mountains, and some 30,000 free coloured men many of who owned slaves as well, in fact about 30% of all slaves in the colony. The problem of local society was partly a problem of racial inequality, and partly a problem of social and economic inequality. Let’s have a closer look at what happened

in Saint-Domingue after 1789. In 1790, one year after the French Revolution, a local Colonial Parliament was established in the colony. It discussed the demand for the right of political participation in it, made by representatives of the free coloured community. It also began to discuss the demand for reforms in the system of slavery made in behalf of the slaves, who at first did not yet demand the immediate abolition of the whole system of slavery itself. The white representatives in the Colonial Parliament were divided: some were prepared to make concessions, others were not. In 1791 there followed a massive uprising of the slaves of Saint-Domingue, who were led by voodoo-priests, the natural leaders of the black people, who had retained many of their cultural traditions from West Africa. The rebellion started after reports had reached the island about the debates in the French National Assembly in Paris, where some representatives had demanded that the 'colour line' (the system of racial inequality separating black and white in the West Indian colonies) should be abolished. The debates in the French National Assembly and in the Assembly's Colonial Commission were partly meant to frankly discuss the whole colonial question, but also tried to evade some of the most difficult issues (especially slavery) as long as possible. They were basically concerned with three fundamental questions: whether the new equality, citizenship, voting rights, etc. should also apply in the colonies; whether these rights should apply to all free men, including free men of colour; and, somewhat later, whether slavery should be abolished (this eventually happened in 1794). The free blacks and slaves in Saint-Domingue, who now demanded equality of black and white themselves (with the gap between the two groups narrowing down), used a social and political language which combined elements of the Bible with notions from the Enlightenment and voodoo-ideas on revenge and primitive justice. They were influenced by the new ideas in France, but also by traditional ideas in the colony.

In 1792 the French National Assembly granted full civil rights to all free men, regardless of colour. Later that year the slave leaders also demanded the abolition of slavery, with the slaves controlling most of the country as a result of the rebellion. But slavery was not abolished yet. Only in 1794 was slavery finally and officially abolished by the Jacobins, the radical revolutionary party in France. After this decision many white colonists fled Saint-Domingue, which de facto became a black republic. This meant that in the

colonial world a black revolution took place, which was somewhat different from the 'white revolution' in the United States. In 1801 the leader of the Saint-Domingue revolution, Toussaint Louverture, officially proclaimed the independence of the country, which was now called Haiti (an old Indian name used by the original inhabitants of the region). It was the second independent republic in the American hemisphere and the first where citizenship and race were not linked. Napoleon, who had become dictator of revolutionary France, refused to accept this humiliation of the French 'grandeur'. In 1802 he re-introduced slavery in the French colonies and sent an army across the ocean to take possession of Haiti again. Toussaint Louverture was arrested and brought to France, where he died in prison in 1803. This was a shameful action, but Napoleon wanted the world to forget that Toussaint Louverture had ever existed. However, in 1804 the French army was defeated by the Haitians after a long and cruel struggle. Haiti preserved its independence and the new leader Dessalines even proclaimed himself emperor of the country. Unfortunately Haiti did not have a bright future, but descended into poverty, corruption, and abuse of power.

We may conclude that even under revolutionary and democratic conditions, the French, but also other Europeans, were not really prepared to regard black people and the former slaves of the colonies as equals. Gradually they proved to be prepared to consider abolishing slavery, to introduce reforms, and so on. But it would take several more decades for slavery to be abolished everywhere in the colonial world, while the idea of equality of black and white began to become a reality only in the second half of the twentieth century.

And what did the French Revolution do about the old problem of the separate and lower status of the Jews? This was a very difficult question as well, and it is instructive to compare it with the colonial controversy. In December 1789 a debate was held in the French National Assembly on whether the Protestants (a small minority in France) and the Jews should be given active civil rights. In the eyes of the Assembly the Protestants were hardly a problem, but the Jews were. The Assembly decided that all men were to be free and equal, but to be an 'active citizen' with voting rights one had to be male, 25 years of age, a tax-payer above a certain level, and to have a permanent place of residence. By 1791, when the French Constitution was adopted, this meant that some 60% of adult males had the right to vote. Those who

advocated voting rights for women were a small minority without much influence: the equality of men and women was clearly to be postponed to the future. Those who argued for the civil rights of Jews and free coloured people were more numerous, but they had influential opponents.

During the debate in December 1789 the opponents of Jewish civil rights and equal citizenship (for example the Abbé Maury) argued that the Jews were more than just a religious community: they were a separate people or even a 'nation' with its own laws, customs, and language (Hebrew and Yiddish). The Jews sought 'their own social separation', he said, rather than being separated by others. They were not farmers like other Frenchmen, but 'preferred trade', and there were other arguments. In this anti-Jewish view connection with the land was seen as the foundation of the nation: Jews could not be real Frenchmen. The 'financial power' of the Jews was seen as a threat as well. The Jews themselves 'did not want to become French citizens' but wanted to keep their own laws as in a separate society. According to the Abbé Maury, their dream of a return to the Holy Land meant that they could never be French citizens and good patriots. However, in the parliamentary debate of 1789 there were also defenders of Jewish emancipation, for example Clermont Tonnerre. He argued that the bad characteristics and parochialism of the Jews were in fact the product of their oppression by the Catholic majority. Jewish financial activities were the result of their exclusion from other occupations. The Jews were very interested in becoming equal French citizens, he said; in some cities, like Bordeaux and Bayonne in the south-west, they were already local citizens with equal municipal rights. Their attachment to their own customs and rituals was a normal thing; every religious group was doing this. Clermont Tonnerre pointed out that Article no. 10 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen guaranteed religious freedom for all, as long as the public peace was not endangered. He said: 'since God has not given men a consensus about religious dogma, the Legislative Power must accept the reality of religious diversity'. The Jews on their part had to respect the national laws; they could not have their own laws or their own judges. Clermont Tonnerre summarised his, what may be called 'integrationist' or 'assimilationist' view as follows: 'we must refuse everything to the Jews as a separate nation, and give them everything as individuals; they cannot form a separate social or political body, nation, or estate; if they don't want to be individual citizens like others, they must

be banned'. To grant minority rights to the Jews was out of the question. Minority rights and individual rights were opposed to each other.

This was the republican view of what democratic France should be: a national unity in which forms of group pluralism could hardly be tolerated and in which the citizens were simply individual and equal members of the nation. It sounded quite similar to what the Hungarian nationalists of the 19th century would say about the necessity of assimilating the non-Magyar minorities. The price to be paid for being accepted in the national democratic community of equal citizens was giving up the separate group identity of old cultural minorities. Democracy meant uniformity, not pluralism; or she might at best tolerate a degree of pluralism on a secondary, private level. The conclusion of the debate in December 1789 was that the question of civil rights for Jews would be decided at a later stage. There were many disagreements about the Jewish question, and there were also differences between different situations in different parts of the country. The Jews from Alsace wrote a long memorandum: they wanted to become full citizens of revolutionary France. Around the same time, in January 1790, the Sephardic (originally Iberian) Jews from the south-west of France, mainly from Bordeaux, were granted full emancipation and equal citizenship by the National Assembly, but the Jews from Alsace were not yet given the same status. This was apparently because they were seen as a more alien and less assimilated group of the French population compared with the Jews of the south-west. Then a third group of French Jews, those living in Paris, forced a decision on the question of equal citizenship on a national level: in 1791, shortly after the adoption of the French Constitution, the reservation regarding the status of the Jews, originally included in the Constitution, was removed. As a delegate to the National Assembly (Adrien du Port) declared: 'even pagans, Turks, Muslims, Chinese can become citizens, so why not Jews?'

This was a revealing statement: on the one hand there was a universalist approach of the question of modern citizenship on the part of many French revolutionaries; on the other hand the Jews were really seen as an alien group just like the Chinese or others. Indeed, there continued to be a certain ambivalence to the Jews on the part of many Frenchmen. As we have seen, a similar ambivalence existed with regard to the status of black people in the colonies. Anti-Jewish delegates in the National Assembly

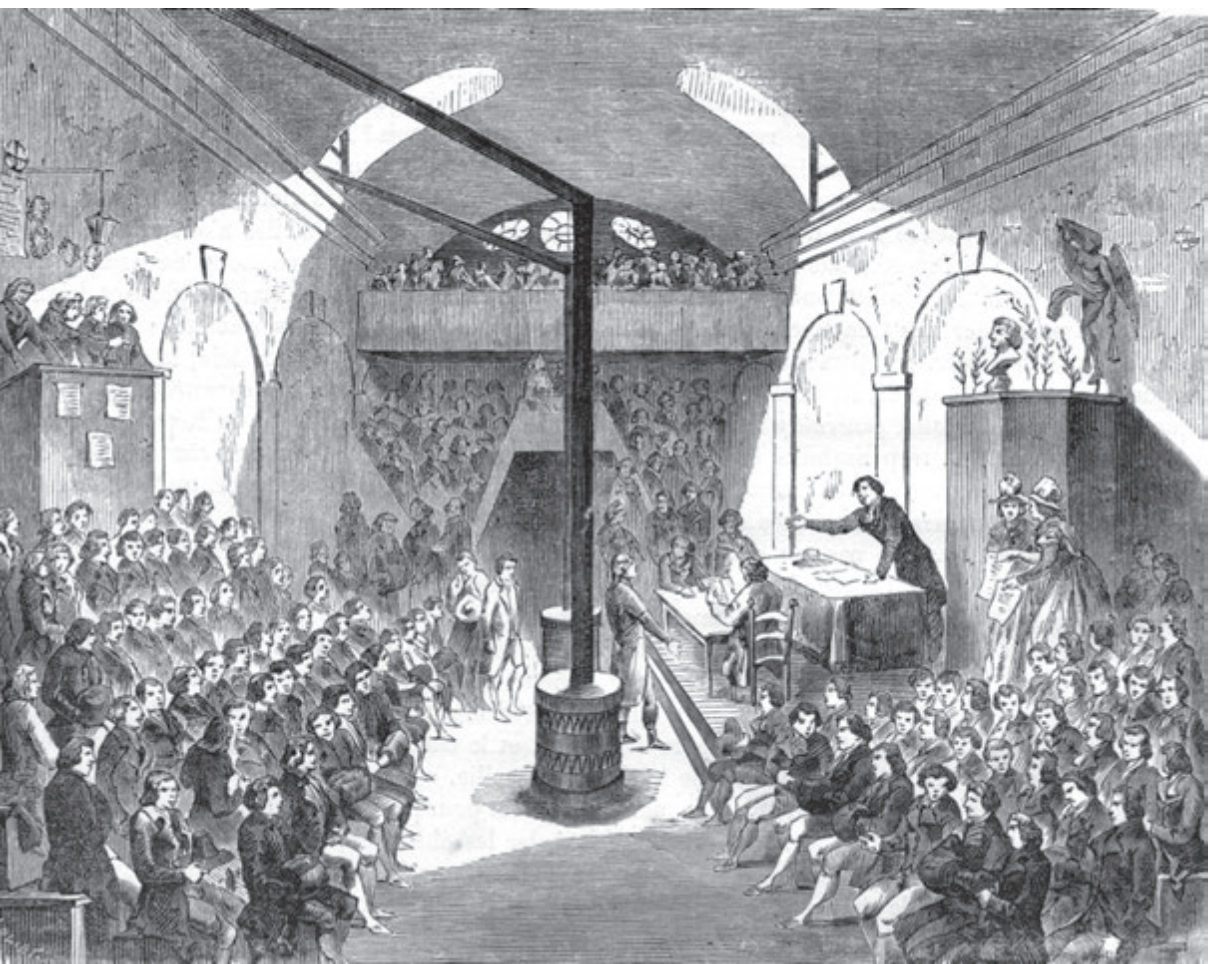
argued that the Jews must abandon ‘all their special laws’, while others said that this was a question of religious freedom. There continued to be a body of opponents of Jewish equality, who argued that the Jews would always remain an alien element. This attitude foreshadowed the racial anti-Semitism of the later nineteenth century, a period when non-Europeans in the colonies were described by some as culturally or racially different and Jews were increasingly seen as racially different as well. Post-religious racialism was an attitude and mode of thinking that would emerge as a reaction to the universalism and rationalism of the Enlightenment and the Revolutionary Age. But even during the Revolutionary Age itself there were those who had their doubts about the political philosophy of universal equality. As far as the Jews were concerned, even the advocates of emancipation during the French Revolution had a rather negative picture of Jewish identity: the point was that they hoped that Jewish culture, the Jewish religion, the separate Jewish identity would disappear in the process of assimilation, acculturation, and indeed democratisation in France.

One of these pragmatic supporters of Jewish emancipation, Henri Grégoire, had written (in 1788) an ‘Essay on the physical, moral and political regeneration of the Jews’. It described the Talmud as ‘a sewer in which are accumulated the insanities of the human mind’. However, he also argued that, in terms of nature, the Jews were equal to other people; the problem was that they had ‘degenerated’ in the diaspora as a result of oppression by the Christians. The solution was their assimilation to a liberal Catholicism. Clermont Tonnerre, whom we mentioned before, was even more insistent than Henri Grégoire that the Jews must be assimilated. But at the same time, as in the case of Grégoire, his real motive was a negative view of the Jews and Jewish culture. Thus ‘enlightened friends of the Jews’ wanted their ‘improvement’ and ‘regeneration’. Already in 1785, four years before the French Revolution, the Academy of Metz in the north-east of France had offered a prize for an essay on the topic of ‘how to make the Jews of France more useful and happy’, typically the language of the somewhat paternalistic Enlightenment. One participant in the competition wrote that Jewish children should be sent to French public schools and others made suggestions in the same direction, all focusing on the cultural assimilation of the Jews. There followed some hot debates on the Jewish social question, which is perhaps surprising given that France had only a very small Jewish popu-

lation: there were some 40,000 Jews in the country, 0.2% of the total French population of 20 million. The crucial aspect of the question was that the Jews were not accepted as they were, but that according to their 'friends' and 'advocates' they had, so to speak, to be 'assimilated out of existence'.

Nobody liked the Jews; the only difference of opinion was what to do about it. The 'optimists', 'positivists', or 'assimilationists' believed that it was possible to acculturate them through education, a new social, political, and cultural discipline, and the like. The Jews had to be forcibly emancipated and assimilated. The 'pessimists', 'negativists', or 'segregationists' believed that Jewish assimilation in French society and French culture was not possible. Perhaps it was not even desirable, because the Jews were dangerous and a completely alien element in the population. For those who could not overcome the tendency to think in terms of separate groups of people, different ethnic groups, completely different cultures etc., the ideals of the French Revolution were, in the final analysis, not really an option. More important than the idea of universal man, or the ideal of the equality and brotherhood of all men, was the reality of cultural and racial differences between different groups of people. If even in French and other European societies certain groups – for example the Jews – could not really be integrated, then the idea that black or coloured people in the colonial territories could become equal to the Europeans sounded even more absurd.

For Napoleon the abolition of slavery or proclaiming the equality of black people in Haiti were absurd ideas. He already represented a reaction to the most radical ideas of the French Revolution, believing that Europeans were by definition superior to non-Europeans. He was responsible for the cruel death of Toussaint Louverture in a French prison. The Europeans were capable of constructing the idea of freedom, equality, and brotherhood. They were also capable of betraying their own revolutionary ideas. After all, there were 'people like us' and 'others', as history, nature, or God had made it.



Meeting of the Jacobin Club, 1789. Source: Archive of the authors.

7. 'Orientalism' and 'Occidentalism': Images of the 'other'

In this chapter we will look at some important aspects of cultural and political ideology in the context of European colonialism and the non-European reactions to it, but also in the context of Europe itself, because first the Germans and then the Russians developed a tradition of critique of Western civilisation. 'Orientalism' is a term used to refer to the tendency of Europeans – at home and in the colonies – to depict Asian and Muslim peoples as essentially different from Europeans in terms of culture, civilisation, mentality, and so on. This could lead to the construction of a stereotyping or racial ideology. 'Occidentalism' is a term used to refer to the tendency of 'non-Western' or anti-Western ideologists – perhaps in reaction to the dominance and arrogance of West-European colonialists – to portray the civilisation of the West in a negative way and to create negative images of Western and American culture. Some sources of occidentalism were actually to be found in the West itself, because it was in Western European countries that the first critique of colonial practices and of certain aspects of European culture was articulated, for example by some representatives of the French Enlightenment. Later some Germans and Russians developed a similar critique and in the twentieth century the tradition of anti-Western critique was continued by the Japanese, Asian nationalists, Muslim fundamentalists, and others.

Let us first try to analyse the phenomenon of orientalism. Orientalism can be defined as the totality, in a more or less systematic form, of the various tendencies among Europeans in the East and in Europe – for example colonial officials or European scientists – to describe the culture and the peoples of the East in a stereotypical, essentialistic way. This stereotyping and essentialism – the suggestion that there was an 'essential', unchanging core in the culture and mentality of Eastern and Asian peoples which made them different from the West – could take on the form of racism, even if it was a relatively mild form of racism (a set of racial stereotypes rather than a complete biological theory or ideology). But more often than being racial or racist, orientalism had a 'culturalist' character: it argued in terms of one culture against another, a superior Western or European culture ver-

sus an inferior Asian, Eastern, or 'oriental' culture. What was emphasised was matters like Western modernity versus Eastern backwardness, Eastern stagnation, immaturity, and infantilism, Eastern inability to take responsibility for oneself and for the progress of society, and Eastern despotism (the inability to move away from the tradition of despotic rule and to develop a more open, democratic, and dynamic society). This list of attributed features of Asian and oriental societies shows that the Europeans had become convinced that their society and civilisation had reached a higher level than the traditional societies of the East. This was something new, because before the nineteenth century the Europeans had shown a certain respect for the civilisational achievements and the cultural level of Asian societies. But from the nineteenth century the gap between Europe and Asia had widened, and the Europeans were aware of it. Now Europeans began to believe that there was some kind of inherent stagnation and passivity in the societies and mentality of the East. And the ideology of orientalism was the expression of this belief in Asian inferiority and European superiority. Thanks to the industrial revolution, the spectacular progress of European technology, and the military successes of European imperialism, the Europeans had really become 'superior' in comparison with the East. The moment had come that this new imperialist superiority feeling was more explicitly expressed through the actions and attitudes of the Europeans in the colonial territories. It was also expressed in Europe itself, where anthropologists and other scientists and different authors and political commentators were writing about the successes of European colonialism and the necessity of colonial rule in the rest of the world.

It was the Palestinian-American author Edward Said who started a new round in the debates about colonial ideology and Western stereotyping of the East when, in 1978, he published his book 'Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient'. Said was born in a Palestinian elite family who had left Palestine because of the Israeli-Palestinian wars and who had settled in Egypt, where Edward Said went to European schools and later to British and American universities. He made a career in America and decided to focus on the question of how people in the West and Western culture were looking at the East, at what they called the 'Orient', which was itself a term that suggested the existence of certain typical, stereotypical, unchanging features and cultural characteristics. The book of Edward Said has been criticised by

other cultural analysts, historians, and other commentators, some of who argued that the stereotypical way of thinking of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europeans and colonial officials was exaggerated by Said and that in fact there were also positive features of oriental civilisations that were mentioned by Europeans in the age of imperialism; the comments on and descriptions of 'the East' were often a mixture of positive and negative aspects. Although some of this criticism of Said may be correct, this does not mean that his analysis has no value, even if it exaggerated some of the orientalist tendencies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Said himself has also admitted that some of the European stereotypes of the East were in a certain way 'positive' or quasi-positive, and that the orientalist ideological construction was indeed complex and contained many different and sometimes contradictory elements. An example of these 'positive traits', interestingly enough, was the suggestion of Western scientists, Islamologists, and writers who had visited the East that the world of the Orient had certain 'sensual' qualities. This may have been a projection of the state of mind of the Europeans themselves, especially those who suffered from the Victorian morality of nineteenth-century Britain and Western Europe. In the 'Orient' these Europeans found a different, intriguing, 'sensual' world full of colourful attractions, including, perhaps, sexual opportunities. But of course this 'positive' aspect of the East was a stereotype as well, and the existence of harems in the Moslem world, for example, could also be portrayed as proof of oriental perversion, primitivism, despotism, gross inequality, and abuse of women.

If 'exoticism', 'sensuality', 'colourfulness' and the like were quasi-positive features of 'the Orient', colonial officials in the East and politicians in Europe cultivated their own more functional and instrumental forms of orientalist imagery. Their images of the East had to justify colonial rule and prove the need for it. Their ideology maintained that economic, social, and political development in Asian countries like India, or in Moslem countries like Egypt, was only possible under European leadership. Indeed the Europeans had the moral duty to help oriental societies move away from despotism and primitive social practices and, perhaps, begin the slow and difficult process of modernisation, which might be possible in the long run if Europeans took the leadership and awoke the lethargic Asians and Muslims from their traditional passivity. It is interesting that a man like Karl

Marx believed these things as well, because he believed that only Western capitalism and imperialism could introduce a new stage of economic and social development in the non-European world. In this respect there was not much difference between progressive Europeans and conservatives. A man like Eduard Douwes Dekker ('Multatuli'), who wrote a critical novel about Dutch colonialism in Indonesia, was especially critical about the fact that the Dutch administration co-operated with the traditional 'feudal' rulers of Java in exploiting and controlling the country. What he wanted was a more modern form of colonial rule which would destroy the old structures and introduce a more open labour market and fair wages for the Javanese. In other words: he was not against colonialism as such, but wanted a modern colonialism that would really modernise Indonesian society, so that the Indonesians themselves would benefit from it too, without the intervention of the 'obscurantist' traditional, feudal, indigenous rulers of Java and other Indonesian islands. Colonialism was really seen as a vehicle of progress, but it should be the right kind of colonialism.

The orientalist ideology of West Europeans was also applied in Europe itself: the Ottoman Turkish Empire was seen as another Eastern society, this time nearby. The Balkans region, perhaps including some of the European peoples living there (Serbs, Bulgarians, Macedonians), was described and analysed in orientalist terms. This Balkan orientalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be analysed by looking at how the Balkan peoples were described by European travellers, writers, and political commentators. This will help to deepen our knowledge of 'orientalist' images and stereotypes.

Yet another interesting example is that of Zionism. In 1902 Theodor Herzl wrote his book 'Altneuland' ('The old new country'), a kind of blueprint of the perfect Jewish state that should be established in Palestine, an idealistic colonial Utopia, and a mix of socialism and capitalism. Herzl believed that the Zionist Jews who settled in Palestine would create a new and civilised society for the Jews of Europe, but also for the Arabs, who now lived in squalidness and poverty. The Jews would bring European civilisation to Palestine; the Palestinian landowners would sell their land to the Jewish settlers; and the Palestinian peasants would benefit from the economic and social progress brought by the Zionist colonists. Herzl did not believe that the oriental Arabs could create this progress themselves; it was

only possible if European Jews took the lead. The Palestinian landlords were unproductive feudal despots, from whom the Palestinian peasants would be freed by the coming of the Jews with their modern practices and modern ideas. This was just another version of the orientalist ideology of European modernity versus non-European backwardness. But while orientalism was an important ideological ingredient of European colonialism and European thought in general, there also emerged a competing anti-Western ideological tendency which has recently been defined as ‘occidentalism’.

In 2004 the Dutch-British writer Ian Buruma and the Israeli political scientist Avishai Margalit published a book titled, ‘Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies’. The authors do not only pay attention to the current anti-Western ideology of Islamist radicalism, but also to earlier versions of anti-Western thinking. Indeed, anti-Western critique has a long history and started in Europe itself. At a later stage anti-colonialists and non-Western ideologists (re)discovered this European tradition of self-criticism and used it for their own ends and in their own way. In addition to West European self-criticism of various kinds – critique of certain colonial practices, of slavery and the slave trade, and of the hypocrisy and arrogance of European elite society – it was actually in Germany and in Russia that a kind of proto-occidental critique and anti-Western ideology emerged for the first time. In the nineteenth century Germany became a great power in Europe and part of the German political elite and German thinkers and philosophers felt the need for an alternative national ideology – one that would be different from Western Europe – of what Germany was all about. What became a kind of occidentalist ideology, a Central European argument against the domination and the society of Western Europe, had earlier roots in the eighteenth century however. In eighteenth-century Germany the idea of cultural uniqueness and cultural autonomy was created, and especially important in this connection was the philosopher and cultural thinker Johann Gottfried Herder, who created the idea of the cultural nation with its linguistic and spiritual soul, that is, its national soul based on cultural and linguistic tradition. Herder disliked the ‘materialism’ and ‘empty rationalism’ of the West and believed that all peoples, all nations, had their own unique identity and should preserve it. It was not desirable that other nations, for example the Germans, should become like the English, the Dutch, or the French, who had different traditions than the Ger-

mans. Part of the reason for this 'anti-Western' thinking was the German desire to oppose the dominance of France, both politically, culturally, and linguistically. The Germans wanted to emancipate their own language and to develop their own cultural identity independent of the French, and in this way part of the German national identity in the modern age was based on anti-French feeling.

The great cultural, literary, and psychological movement of Romanticism, which was so powerful in Germany and Central Europe, enormously strengthened this alternative sense of German identity. It inspired the idea that the Germans were not 'materialists' like the West Europeans but that they were a great *Kulturvolk*, a great cultural nation with a great civilisation which in a sense represented an alternative Europe and an alternative European identity. So it happened that a Romantic German thinker like Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and many other German Romantic writers and philosophers, developed the notion that the Germans were not 'rationalistic', 'mechanistic', 'materialistic', 'utilitarian', and so on. These were characteristics of the West Europeans and their culture, of the English and the French, people who cultivated a materialistic culture and a materialistic way of life, people who had lost their sense of higher cultural values, whatever that might be. Compared with them the Germans were deeper-thinking and deeper-feeling people: they were poets, philosophers, and they contemplated the organic unity of the people (the German people) and its *Kultur*. This idea of organic unity, of a higher non-materialistic culture, etc., became the core notion of this anti-Western ideology.

Interestingly enough, it was the Russians who further developed these ideas in their own way and in their own national and cultural context. Nineteenth-century Russian intellectuals were deeply influenced by German philosophy and its way of criticising the West. Just like the Germans, the Russians needed a national ideology to define themselves, especially vis-à-vis the West European imperialist countries. German Romanticism and Philosophical Idealism (Hegel, Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling, etc.) were important sources of inspiration for what became the Russian phenomenon of 'Slavophilism'. This movement had started as a reaction against the reform policies of Peter the Great, against his 'European' model of modernisation of Russia. Among the early Slavophiles the idea was cultivated that the Russian Orthodox Church embodied the 'soul' or 'spirit' of Russia and

the Russian people. Other cultural and historical characteristics of the Russian people were similarly said to be expressions of this inner and unique national spirit, which was fundamentally different from the spirit and the culture of Europe and most of all from Western Europe with its materialism. It was maintained by the Slavophiles that the religious soul of the Russian people was essentially 'mystic'. While the Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians of Europe were frequently involved in rational theological debates trying to understand what religion was, the Russians understood that religion was a question of mysticism and that it was possible to become aware of a higher truth by accepting mystical experience. Just like the German Romantics, the Russian Slavophiles spoke of the organic unity ('sobornost') of society and the Church.

Examples of Russian Slavophile thinkers were Ivan Kerejevski and Konstantin Leontiev (1831-1891). Leontiev was called the 'Russian Nietzsche' and wrote a book on 'Russia and Europe', in which he argued that the West was 'degenerating' because of its 'decadent liberal egalitarianism', while the young Russia was rising. He argued that there were two fundamentally different characters: Western mechanistic rationalism and Russian organic unity and growth. Also Russian writers like Dostojevski and Tolstoi tried to show that Russia was different and 'deeper' than the superficial Western world. The book written by the Slovak nationalist Ľudovít Štúr in the 1850s, 'Slovanstvo a svet budúcnosti' (Slavdom and the world of the future), was another example of the trend of Slavic Slavophilism, which became a tradition with a certain continuity. Štúr wrote this work under the influence of his disappointment and disillusion with the Austrian government, because he had hoped that it would give the Slovaks their own autonomous region within the Habsburg Monarchy and independent of the Hungarians. But even so it is remarkable that Slavophilism could become a factor of some influence in Central Europe, and perhaps this 'anti-Western' tradition is not even dead today.

In the early twentieth century another instance of anti-Western ideology emerged: the Japanese version. Since the late nineteenth century Japan had experienced a successful and rapid process of modernisation, a unique phenomenon in Asia and the non-Western world. But there also followed a 'nativist' reaction against cultural 'modernism', that is, against Western culture and Western values. By the 1920s and 1930s attempts were made

in Japan to synthesise native Japanese cultural identity and the new Western-style technological economy: Japan wanted economic and technological modernity and material progress, but not Western modern culture. Like in Germany and Russia in the nineteenth century, intellectuals and cultural critics in early twentieth-century Japan were speaking of the 'spirit' of the nation and the people, of the need for an 'organic society', and of the need to fight against individualism, which was seen as a Western cultural disease. Japanese national ideologists were influenced by German thinkers. One of the most important Japanese nationalist thinkers and anti-Western cultural critics was Nishitani Keiji. He and others tried to shape a kind of national-cultural creed for the modern Japanese nation, but their ideas and activities contributed to the rise of militarism, imperialism, and a form of racist fascism which during the Second World War brought a lot of misery to other Asian nations.

The most remarkable variant of occidentalism today is Islamist extremism and neo-fundamentalism. Its roots are partly located in European thought and cultural critique, and its foundations were laid during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Radical Islamism was partly a reaction against what was seen as 'idolatry', that is, 'the Western worship of materialism'. This sounds a lot like the earlier German critique of the West, and it is true that some of the Islamic ideologists were influenced by German thinkers. Another important ingredient of neo-Islamist ideology is anti-Americanism, and a third one is anti-Semitism, whose European ideologists (French, German, Russian) were closely studied by some of the radical Islamist leaders. The ideological cocktail of the neo-Islamists (that is, those of today, who are a bit different from the earlier ones) thus includes the old anti-materialistic idea, well-known and very vicious anti-Jewish ideas, and the idea of anti-Americanism. The USA is seen as the great 'Satan' of materialism, Christianity, and Judaism and has to be fought on a world scale. The Islamists' anti-materialism and anti-modernism is partly religious, partly socio-cultural, and partly political. Islamic religious anti-materialism fights against the secularism and philosophical materialism of Western civilisation. Islamic socio-cultural anti-modernism fights against the idea of liberalism and individualism and against the equality of women. Islamic political anti-materialism implies struggle against the secular project of modernisation in the Muslim world, for example against the earlier

secular nationalism of Atatürk in Turkey, the modernisation project in Iran of the former Shah of Persia, and the secular and socialist Arab nationalists of the last fifty years or so, including Nasser in Egypt and Saddam Hussein in Iraq. These secular nationalists have failed, so the Islamists believe, and now the moment has come for an alternative form of social, cultural, and political transformation: the neo-Islamic state and society of the Khalifate, that is, a new united Islamic super-state.

In Iran the figure of Taleqani (1910-1979) had pioneered the idea of the Islamic revolution against the Shah and against the Western cultural influence. He was very influential in the Islamic Revolution in Iran which triumphed in 1979, also the year of Taleqani's death. In Egypt it was especially the figure of Sayyid Qutb, the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, who influenced the formation of a new radical political Islamist movement. He called for a war against the Jews, who he believed were the worst materialists and the organisers of a world-wide conspiracy. He quoted from the so-called 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion', a fake document created by French and Russian anti-Semites at the end of the nineteenth century. This is just one example of how the radical Islamists were influenced by European anti-Semitism and anti-liberal ideas which originated in Europe itself, particularly in France and Germany. Their anti-Semitism went much further than the idea of struggle against the State of Israel. It was a paranoid ideological and quasi-racial anti-Semitism. Sayyid Qutb also wrote that in the West people lived like animals: they were only interested in eating, drinking, and sex. It was this combination of socio-cultural, political, and religious elements which made the Islamist ideology so powerful. It looked like a real alternative for the decadent Western civilisation and it was a great source of inspiration for the struggle against Zionism and American imperialism. Crucial in all of this was also the question of the position of women in society. For men like Sayyid Qutb the freedom and independence, and especially the behaviour, of women was the ultimate proof of Western decadence and degeneration, of nihilism, materialism, and loss of social control. We mentioned earlier that one of the attractions of orientalism – the whole set of stereotypes and exotic images of the East – for European travellers and other Europeans was the idea of the 'sensuality' of the Orient, including harems, sensual women, etc. This was perhaps a projection of the sexual repression in nineteenth-century Europe. But another aspect of this orien-

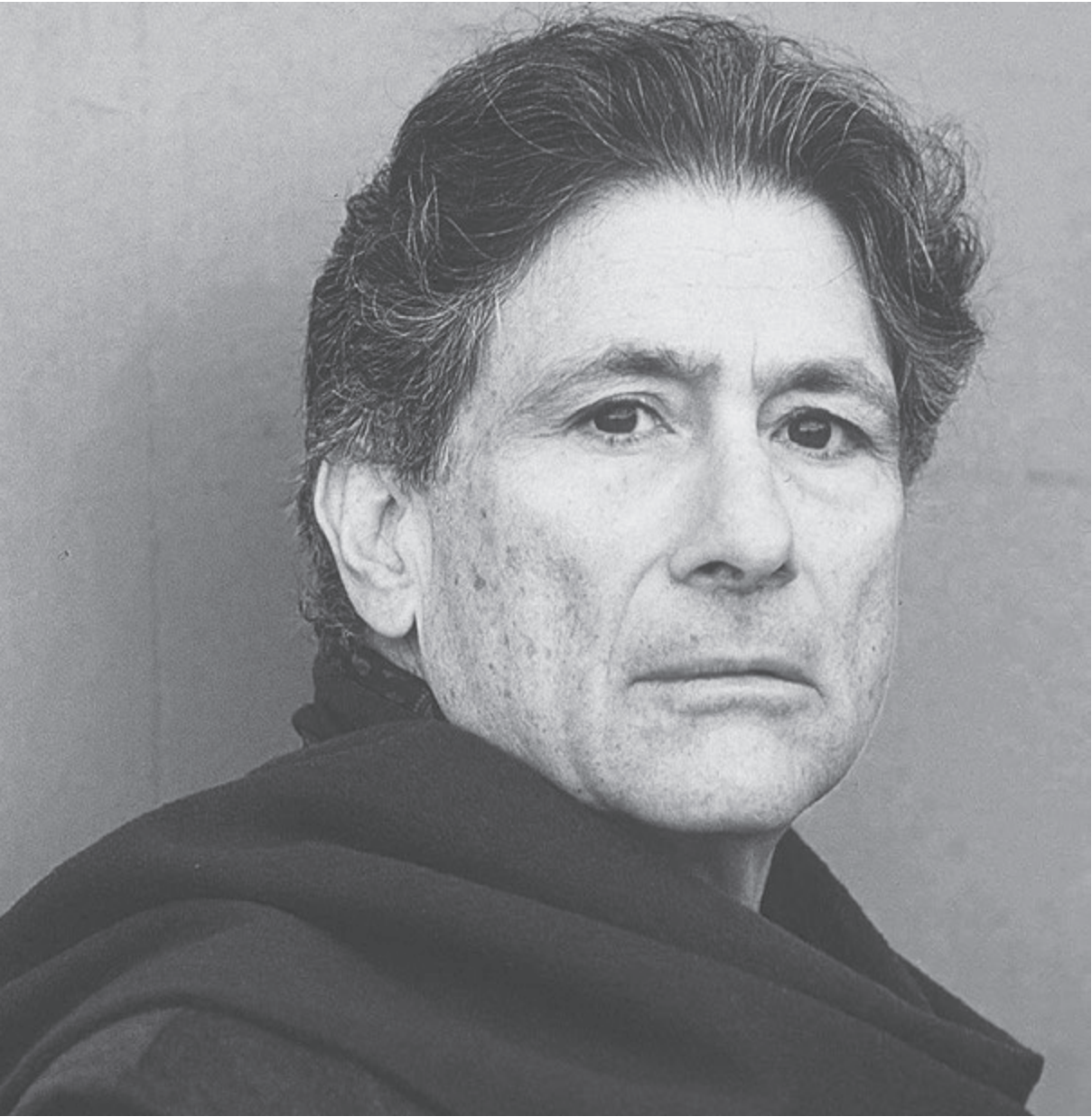
talism was the ‘progressive’, modern, and ‘liberating’ idea that women in the East were actually oppressed, and that they should be liberated from the despotic traditional and patriarchic regimes by an enlightened European colonial administration, which should intervene when necessary in the traditional social relations of the colonial territories.

Against this view of the pre-modern and oppressive social reality of the Orient, men like Sayyid Qutb introduced a different, ‘occidental’ view that was its total opposite. Sayyid Qutb and others argued that women in the West were nothing but prostitutes. The way they were allowed to behave in an independent way was not an expression of their ‘liberation’, but of the fact that they had become a kind of public prostitutes in the public domain, which demoralised the whole of society and also the human soul. Therefore the struggle of the Islamist movement was also one to defend the culture of the Islamic world against the nihilistic and diabolical culture of the West. Perhaps this struggle could only be won by the destruction of the West.

When we try to sum up the whole story of orientalism and occidentalism we see that the process of European colonial expansion in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century (the age of modern Western imperialism and economic and technological dominance) has caused some serious problems. Perhaps the phenomenon of Western arrogance is serious enough, and it is quite possible that this attitude of superiority feeling is still much alive among people in Western countries. But at least as serious is one of the consequences of this: that an oppositional ideology of anti-Western stereotypes and obsessions (‘occidentalism’) came into existence, some of whose expressions were perhaps relatively innocent but others were dangerous. Indeed, some occidental elements, especially within radical Islam, developed into a vicious and destructive political and religious ideology. Perhaps it is not fair to say that European colonialism, or the attitude of ‘superiority’ of the West, was the main cause of Islamist occidentalism. Perhaps it was above all an internal crisis in the Islamic world itself which led to ‘revanchist’ and extreme attitudes. After a long period of political growth and cultural flourishing between ca. 600 and 1600, the Islamic and Arab world began to stagnate and decline (in this sense the orientalist picture of ‘stagnation’ of oriental societies is not entirely incorrect). The fact that this stagnation of the Islamic world coincided with the rise of Western Europe after 1500 was very painful for the Islamic world, but it would be

too simple to say that the rise of the West was the cause of the decline of the Islamic world. Nevertheless, the fact that after 1918 a major part of the Arab world was divided by the British and the French and that the Arabs now became subjects of European administrators of 'mandated' territories (under the League of Nations) was obviously an insult to them. Since at the same time the Zionist colonisation of Palestine took place and in 1948 the proclamation of the State of Israel, everything became even more painful for the Palestinians and the other Arabs.

The Arab and other Muslim regimes that came to power after gaining independence in the 1950s were largely a failure because of corruption, inefficiency, etc. This gave the radical Islamists a chance to present their alternative agenda: the establishment of a fundamentalist Islamic state in the entire Muslim world. This would solve all political, economic, religious, and psychological problems of the Muslim peoples. The way to achieve this was by relentless war, not only against their own deficient regimes, but also against the West and against Israel, which 'tried to keep the Arab and the Muslim peoples in subjugation and humiliation'.



Edward Said

8. Decolonisation, migration, multiculturalism, and European identity

The process of decolonisation in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean region between 1947 and 1975 was the final and decisive stage in a long history of conflict and collaboration in the colonial world. We shall pay attention to this spectacular process of historical change after the Second World War and also to its consequences for Europe. As a result of decolonisation and the rise of new independent states in the non-European world large numbers of people came to Europe: a kind of demographic movement back to Europe which now comprised different kinds of people, not only Europeans. The question is how this process of mass migration took place, what kind of new immigrant communities came into being, and if Europe could integrate or assimilate the newcomers. The final question is what were the possible consequences for West European societies in terms of self-image, multicultural ideas, and, perhaps, national identity problems.

The first observation we have to make is that independence or the striving for independence was not a new thing. Already in the eighteenth century anti-colonial movements emerged on the American continent. The best known example, of course, is the movement and the war for the independence of the USA, which started already before the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. The second spectacular movement was the revolutionary struggle of the slaves and black inhabitants of Haiti, which erupted shortly after the French Revolution of 1789 and which we discussed in Chapter 6. These movements were followed by the struggles for independence of the various Latin American countries in the early nineteenth century, when most of them became independent from Spain: Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, etc. Brazil became independent from Portugal but kept close relations with her. It is clear that these independence and decolonisation movements did not emerge just all of a sudden. There were problematical political and social conditions which had existed for a long time: inequality in terms of political rights between the mother country and the colonies; taxation without representation, that is, the duty to pay taxes without the right to co-decide what taxes, what level of taxation, etc.; different feelings of identity, whereby the local colonists developed a new national and cultural identity

which was different from the old identity they had brought with them from Europe several generations ago; and no doubt other factors as well. This did not mean that the colonists were always more enlightened, more liberal, democratic, and fair-minded, than the European colonial power was. The colonists (most of them descendants of European settlers) wanted to keep the indigenous Indian population (if it still existed) strictly under control and, of course, also the slaves on the plantations and the free black minority (mostly ex-slaves). The colonial power was often more willing to take the interests of these non-white people into consideration than were the white colonists. Therefore the Indians and the slaves were not always as enthusiastic about independence as were the local Europeans, who now became Americans, Mexicans, etc. For the non-Europeans the paternalistic colonial regime was often less bad than the harsher racist policies of the settlers and their newly independent governments, except of course on Haiti, where the slaves themselves made the anti-colonial revolution.

The different struggles for autonomy or independence in this earlier colonial period show that the whole colonial situation, the multi-ethnic colonial society, and the power structure of the colonial regime were very complicated. The power of the colonial regime and the European colonists was never complete. There was always dissatisfaction, resistance by Indians, slaves running away, and other problems. The Europeans were often disagreeing among themselves on what to do, what were efficient or acceptable policies, how should the native population be kept under control, and so on.

Not only on the American continent with its relatively large number of European settlers, but also in Asia and Africa there was always resistance against European colonial regimes or the policies of European trading companies. The Europeans were forced, especially in countries like India and Indonesia, to look for local allies, to play the game of divide and rule, trying to get one Asian ruler on their side in order to fight another one. The different Asian rulers were often divided anyway, with the Europeans not even having to play a significant military role so that they could simply exploit the situation. But it is important to understand that the real power of the European colonial powers was always limited, that the foundations of the European colonial presence were always uncertain, and that the Europeans were almost always dependent on the collaboration of some indigenous rul-

ers to keep or expand their power. What this means is that the risk of having to allow independence to certain colonial territories was always there, and that the re-emergence of anti-colonial resistance was always a danger. There are many examples of how the Europeans were expelled from Asian countries so that the colonial experiment simply became a failure. Japan is the most spectacular example: in the early seventeenth century the Europeans (except the Dutch in one small place near Nagasaki) were expelled. In the late nineteenth century the Japanese were forced to open their country, but they managed to avoid that any European power would reduce Japan to a colonial status. Thus independence, or the failure of European colonialism, was always in the air as a possibility and a danger, and in this sense the final independence of most non-European countries after World War Two was the inevitable result of the relatively weak power of the Europeans during the entire colonial period. European colonialism was always dependent on local collaborators, was always confronted with forms of resistance, and was always a balancing act between Europeans and Asians or Africans, in other words, a fragile, unstable, and uncertain political reality.

From the second half of the nineteenth century the European colonial powers began to introduce a new, more enlightened ideological element in their colonial language. They said that after a certain period of time the colonial territories might become independent; the colonial government was there to help the colony reach a higher level of economic, political, and educational development, the precondition to independence. Examples of this are British India and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), where a new elite emerged with a European education who were the future political leaders of these nations and who were prepared to fight for independence. Independence thus became an imagineable idea and, at least in theory, a reality which could be reached after a long (or not so long) process of evolution of the colonial society. In British India the first nationalist political figures appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century. One of them, many years before the famous Gandhi, was Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1900). Naoroji was one of the first Indians who visited Britain to get a higher education and who lived there for many years. In 1892 he was even elected to the British Parliament, which at the time was a spectacular event and, perhaps, proof of the liberal qualities of British politics and society despite all the existing inequalities and hypocrisy. Naoroji attacked the theories of

people like John Crawford, the president of the Ethnological Society (see Chapter 2), who had declared that Indians and other Asians were mentally inferior by nature. Naoroji argued that the influence of society and social conditions was more important than such vague and racialistic notions as innate mental capacity. He pointed to the many terrible social problems in British society: poverty, crime, and so on. Some of these problems were just as bad as similar social evils in India. He also described the British conquest of India as a gigantic culture-shock which was perhaps unique in history. This shock caused a state of mind among Indians that was close to an inferiority complex (and among Europeans a form of superiority complex). Thus, it was historical, political, and social conditions that were the cause of the cultural differences between Europeans and Asians, not some kind of innate, unchangeable racial inequality between Europeans and Asians.

In the early twentieth century Gandhi became the great leader of the Indian independence movement, and he always pointed to the hypocrisy and double standards of the British. When a journalist asked him what he thought of Western civilisation, he said: 'That would be a good idea'. In other words: put those Western ideas into practice in the colonial world as well, and then we will see how things develop and whether the Indians and other colonised peoples will be able to run their own country. These examples show that since the nineteenth century a new way of thinking had emerged in the colonial world and that people began to think of independence for the nations of Asia, and perhaps for those of Africa as well. After the First World War the nationalist independence movements became stronger and more self-confident everywhere, especially in India, Indonesia, and other Asian colonial territories. During the War countries like France and Britain had mobilised non-European soldiers as well, and their European experiences became part of the outlook and political perspective of nationalist movements in Asia and Africa. In addition, an ever larger number of students from India, Indonesia, and other countries went to Europe to study and many of them became politically active and were involved in the organisation of new student and political movements. The new ideas they picked up in Europe about democracy and socialism became an important factor in the growth and the modern ideology of the nationalist movements in the colonies.

The Second World War had an incredible impact on the colonial countries. In Asia many European colonial territories – French Indo-China, Dutch Indonesia, British Malaya and Singapore, the American Philippines – were occupied by the Japanese, who tried to act as if they were the liberators of the Asian nations. In fact, the Japanese were another and even worse ruling power with their dictatorial measures and policies and their oppression of the Chinese and other Asian peoples, but perhaps more important than that was the fact that they proved that Asian nations could successfully fight against the Europeans, and that Asians could rule their own countries without the European colonialists. After the War the European colonial powers tried to restore their regimes in Asia, but in most cases this turned out to be impossible. The Asian nations would no longer accept European overlordship and simply demanded immediate independence. India, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and other Asian countries declared their independence whether the Europeans liked it or not. The question was how the Europeans, who managed to get back and re-establish their colonial position, were going to respond. In some cases independence happened in a non-violent way, because the colonial power accepted the inevitable. The two best examples of this were the Philippines, whose independence was accepted by the Americans, and India, whose independence was accepted by Britain in 1947. In other cases the Europeans tried to avoid independence by offering a form of autonomy within a common post-imperial framework, like a commonwealth or association, but the Asians did not accept this. The Dutch tried to implement this policy in Indonesia and they were supported by a minority of representatives of some of the Indonesian peoples, especially the Moluccans, but the dominant nationalist movement led by Sukarno wanted immediate independence without any such neo-colonial constructions. There followed a few years of intermittent fighting between the Dutch military forces and the nationalists, and in 1949 Indonesia became independent.

The situation in French Indo-China was even worse, because here the war between the colonial power and the nationalist movement was even longer and much more heavy and bloody. Only in 1954 did Vietnam become independent and two years later there followed the war for the independence of Algeria in North Africa, which lasted until 1962 and was even more bloody than the war in Indo-China. The British, meanwhile, tried to sup-

press the independence of Malaysia and that of Kenya, which showed that their flexible policy in India was not necessarily repeated elsewhere. Moreover, the situation in India became a great tragedy, because the former British colony fell apart into two states, mainly Hindu India and mainly Muslim Pakistan, which were soon at war with each other and whose mutual relationship was never normalised. This war and the spontaneous violence taking place between Hindus and Muslims was an incredible tragedy with hundreds of thousands of people being killed. By withdrawing from India quickly, the British avoided becoming embroiled in the violence and civil war and could pretend that what was happening was not their responsibility. In Indonesia the Moluccans tried to establish an independent state outside Indonesia, which was partly the result of the divide and rule policies of the Dutch and of the fact that the Moluccans had for a long time been loyal to them, being strongly represented in the colonial army. The cause of Moluccan independence failed, and many Moluccan people fled to the Netherlands following the independence of Indonesia.

After the independence of the Asian colonies many people moved to Europe to escape the uncertainty, the revolutionary conditions, and the ongoing violence and policies of revenge and discrimination of the new post-colonial regimes. A good example is Indonesia. After 1949 not only the white and a major part of the mixed-race population were 'repatriated' to the Netherlands (several hundred thousand people), but also many Moluccans and other Indonesians who had served in the colonial army or who belonged to ethnic groups that were associated by the new rulers with the old colonial regime. The Netherlands was flooded by them in the 1950s and it was not easy to find jobs and houses for them, but the economic boom of the later 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s changed the situation and even led to a scarcity of labour. The returnees were used to the Dutch language and Dutch culture, even if the life-style and social relations in colonial Indonesia had been rather different from conditions in the Netherlands. There were hardly unfriendly reactions to the people who repatriated from Indonesia to the Netherlands, because everybody understood that they were part of a common history. In later years, especially in the 1970s, new waves of post-colonial immigrants came to the Netherlands, now especially from the West-Indies, that is, Surinam and the Dutch Antilles. Many of them were essentially job-seekers and economic immigrants, and many people

from Surinam (some 250,000) came to the Netherlands after the independence of Surinam in 1975. They were afraid that independent Surinam would not be a flourishing economy and moved to the Netherlands because they believed that there they would have a better life. They had a certain time to make up their minds and decide if they wanted to become full Dutch citizens or become citizens of Surinam.

By this time another, completely different kind of immigration had become even more significant: the coming of the so-called 'guest-workers' from Mediterranean Muslim countries, especially Turkey and Morocco. They (but also workers from southern European countries) were recruited by big companies in the Netherlands, France, Germany, Switzerland, etc. because by the 1960s there was a shortage of labour in the booming economies of Western Europe. In the beginning, it was believed that these Muslim guest-workers were only temporary residents, that they would go home with their savings after they had finished working. But the reality turned out to be rather different. They began to invite their families to Western Europe, not only their wives and children but sometimes also members of their extended families. In this way there emerged a large Muslim population in the European countries, whose cultural and religious traditions were rather different from Europe's Christian and secular traditions. After some time a debate started in several West European countries about the problems of integration, social disintegration, and multiculturalism. The question was: should European societies accept the Muslim population as they were, with their own culture, religion, and traditions, or should they demand that the Muslims would change their culture at least in some respects and assimilate or integrate into mainstream society? In the beginning these questions were hardly asked at all; a good example is the Netherlands. There prevailed a kind of *laissez-faire* liberal attitude, or even an idealisation of cultural pluralism in society. There was also a post-colonial guilt complex in the societies and political cultures of the former colonial powers, mixed with guilt complexes about the Second World War and the Holocaust, when most people were too afraid to join resistance groups against the Nazis and some even collaborated. It was believed by many that it was not right to force the non-Western immigrants to accept the norms and values, the customs and habits, of the mainstream majority and the leading culture in society. However, this attitude became more difficult to maintain when serious problems

arose in some parts of the major cities, where cultural and social differences, de facto segregation, and youth crime became the cause of serious conflicts. The attitude of multicultural liberalism and social indifference, of exaggerated political correctness and naive idealisation of cultural pluralism, caused a reaction among a part of the autochthonous population, who began to support populist, xenophobic, and anti-immigrant political parties. This process already began in the 1980s and 1990s, but after 2000 it really became a major phenomenon, even in countries with a liberal image like the Netherlands and Denmark. By now the reputation of the Netherlands, for example, is not that liberal any more but rather that of a xenophobic and neo-nationalistic country. The change is amazing. After 2000 social analysts and political commentators from the social democratic party and other mainstream parties began to ask more serious questions about the limits of multiculturalism and the dark side of mass immigration. They were asking for example: what does multiculturalism really mean? What is the relationship or the necessary balance between cultural pluralism and the need for social cohesion? How much multiculturalism is a society able to bear? The term multiculturalism almost became a dirty word with some people, though it remained an idealistic slogan with others. But by now the term also has a neutral meaning: it simply describes the fact that present-day European societies are multicultural, in the sense that they contain people of different cultural backgrounds who maintain some of their special cultural characteristics while at the same time having to live together in the same society, some of whose values are shared by all.

We can speak of a new multiculturalism and an old one. The old multiculturalism is well-known in Central and Eastern Europe. For example the old Hungarian kingdom which collapsed in 1918 was a multicultural state; and today's Slovakia can be said to be a multicultural society, because it contains large Magyar and Roma minorities. In Belgium the people were used to the reality of an often problematical multilingualism, with Flemish-speakers (many of who want an independent Flanders) and French-speakers opposing each other with regard to the question of how this multilingualism should function in society and politics. The new multiculturalism is something that came into being as a result of the massive immigration of people from the former colonies and from Muslim countries after the Second

World War. It can be compared with the old European multiculturalism, of course, and in many ways there are similar problems. On the other hand the presence of a large Muslim population is something completely new, and the West European countries have to learn how to deal with it. They have to accept the fact that millions of Muslim people are citizens of the various European societies, that it simply is a reality. They have to define themselves, their own countries, and their own societies in a new way which also includes the Muslim newcomers and other newcomers. In one sense this should not be a problem, because West European countries (Britain, the Netherlands, France, etc.) are used to civic-political definitions of the nation: the nation is the totality of all people, of all citizens, who are all equal and have the same rights and the same duties and who can be held together by a common patriotism based on the political creed (the 'political religion') of democracy and human rights. This may sound good in theory, but in practice it is not always easy to realise.

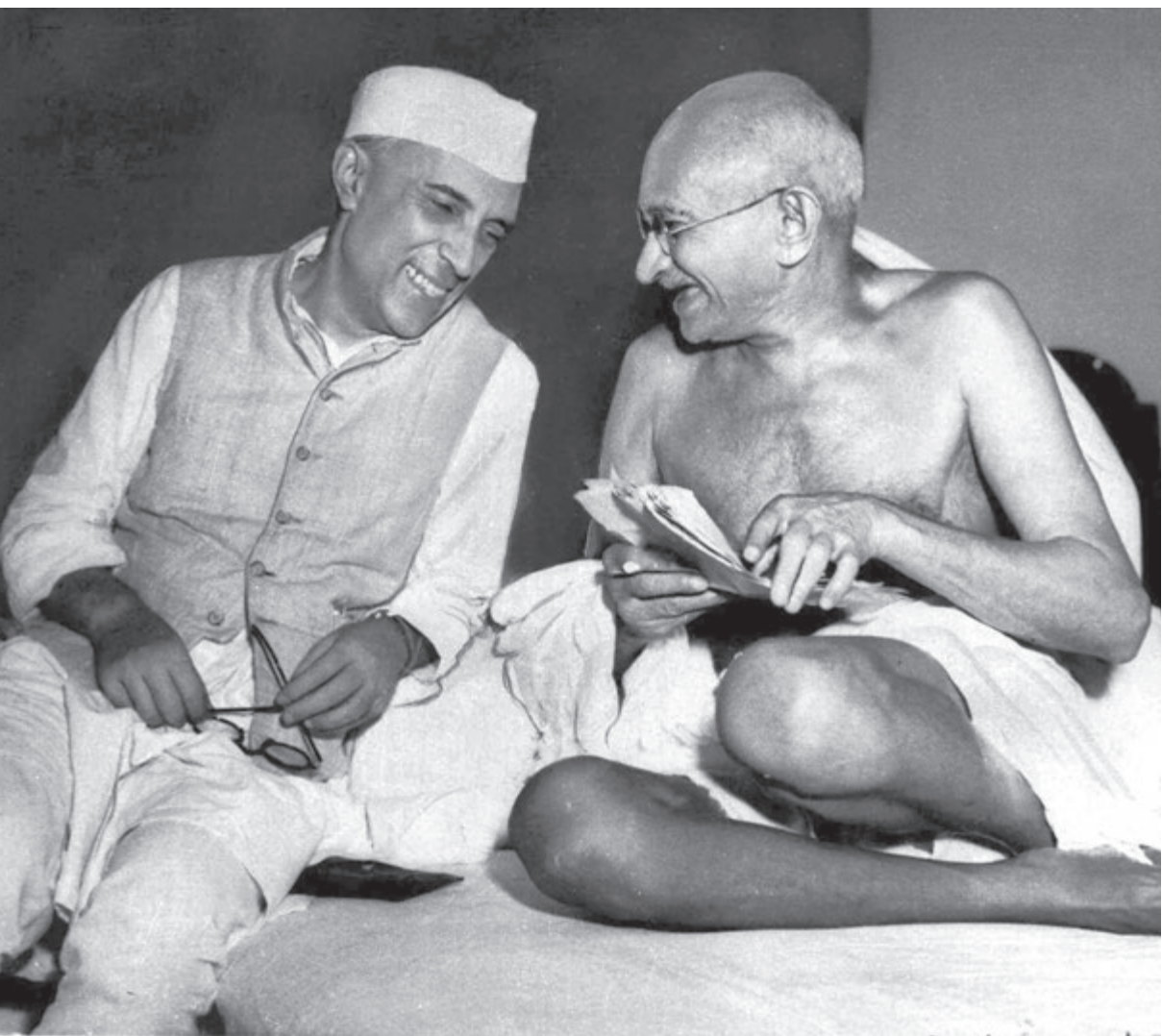
Modern European societies and identities are, perhaps, open to the world, cosmopolitan, globalistic, multicultural, but they are also nativist, that is, they also contain negative reactions by a part of the native, autochthonous population against newcomers and strangers and against the dangers of the world market and globalisation. There is a populist reaction among certain groups of people in West European societies, including lower educated people, people whose jobs and security are threatened by international competition, and more nationalistically inclined, provincial people. Sociologists have identified a new divide in Western societies: a socio-cultural gap separating the higher educated from the lower educated in terms of their attitude to the outside world and multicultural realities. Different types of people are living more and more in separate environments with different life-styles, subcultures, and mentalities constituting different social worlds. In the Netherlands, for example, this is quite clear: there is something going on approaching a cultural civil war between neo-nationalist populists and cosmopolitan progressivists. It looks as though globalisation, multiculturalism, and the new issues in social and political debates have isolated different groups of people from each other. The new means of social communication do not bring people together but separate them and confirm the prejudices, attitudes, and ideas shared within each group, but not outside it. The populist reaction

to multiculturalism, globalisation, and even Europeanisation has indeed also come to include a new controversy about Europe and the European project. The new populists are increasingly critical and sceptical about Europe and want a return to the national state with its full sovereign powers. They argue that there is a difference between Northern Europe and Southern Europe, and between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. For them, the project of the European Union is an illusion. This Euro-scepticism could become a dangerous factor because the unification of Europe is a crucial project and cannot be abandoned.

As we have seen, the history of European colonialism has had profound consequences. The story started with the expansion of Europe into Asia, Africa, and America. A world market was created and after the independence of the former colonies this world market survived and became, or continued to be, the basis of the world economy. After decolonisation millions of people came to Europe, most of them people with a so-called non-Western background: people from Indonesia, India and Pakistan, African countries like Ghana and Nigeria, and people from the Caribbean region (Jamaica, Curaçao, etc.) and the Guyana's (Surinam and the former British Guyana). When they were confronted with Europeans who asked them what they were doing in Europe, why they had come to Europe, some of them answered: 'We are here, because you were there.' In other words: they came to Europe as a consequence of the Europeans' coming to Asia, Africa, or the West Indies. The Europeans created a new world of global multicultural contact and communication, and inevitably one aspect of this was that after independence at least some people from the former colonies would come to Europe to look for a better life. Of course the great difference in standard of living between Europe and the colonies remained after independence, even though at a later stage part of the population in countries like India, Indonesia, or indeed China began to enjoy a higher standard of living than ever before.

Europe has to learn to define its position in the world in a new way, and this is not easy. Europe has also many new internal problems, including the challenge of a stronger integration of the new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe. Europeans cannot ignore the challenges of the world; they cannot escape into a dream world of national existence outside the realities of the wider world. We must hope that Europe can find

politicians who are able to explain what must be done to ensure a future for all Europeans. We must also work together with the nations outside Europe, because there is no other way. And we must try to define the identity and the meaning of Europe in a way that is acceptable to all European citizens, even the populists and nationalists.



Nehru and Gandhi, Indian freedom fighters. Source: Archive of the authors.

9. Globalisation and the meaning of culture and civilisation

In this chapter and in the next we are going to look at the phenomenon, the reality of globalisation, on the one hand, and the idea, the concept of globalisation (which to some extent is controversial), on the other hand. The basic question here is whether globalisation is simply a reality, an economic, political, and perhaps even a cultural reality, or whether it is also, or mainly an illusion – in the sense that international trade and economic co-operation does not necessarily entail political and cultural convergence, let alone global unification. We know that the basis for the modern process of economic and political globalisation was laid by European colonialism, both in an economic, a political, and in a sense a cultural way, because the economic, political, and intellectual ‘model’ of the Western European nations was very influential in the colonial world, even after the former colonies won their independence. Some people speak of a global civilisation, a globalised world in which the differences between the original civilisations are slowly disappearing and in which the Western model of free market economies, democracy, human rights, and so on are triumphing, even though non-Western cultural traditions will continue to exist as well. Other people are more skeptical and argue that the historical differences between the different world civilisations are very deep and profound and that tensions and conflicts between the different cultures, religions, and civilisations will continue to be highly significant. An example of the first, the optimistic and perhaps rather Western-centric view is the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama. An example of the second, more cautious and perhaps pessimistic view is another American political scientist, Samuel Huntington. In the next chapter we will look in more detail at what these two influential men have said about the dynamics of global democratisation (Fukuyama) and the so-called clash of civilisations (Huntington).

In this chapter we will look, first, at what we actually mean by culture and civilisation, so that we are able better to understand the different controversial views on the question of globalisation and cultural differences. The question is if there is really a process of globalisation going on, and if so, of what kind: is it not a rather superficial, pragmatic, mainly economic phe-

nomenon? Does economic globalisation, or world integration in a common market economy, really lead to a greater uniformity, homogenisation, convergence in terms of a universal political culture with democratic values, including the idea of human rights according to the Western model? This is very unlikely if we begin to understand what cultures and civilisations actually are, and how they were shaped by the historical process with its infinite variety and diversity. Perhaps it is simply a matter of realism to say that the historical reality of political and cultural diversity is the strongest argument against a naive expectation of Western-style globalisation and the rise of a universal world culture. At the same time, it can be observed that a certain degree of progress along the path of democratisation and humanisation in the world is not impossible, although it is uncertain if the Western model should be taken as the only model for this.

But, first, let us look at what we should understand by cultures and civilisations, and in particular at the question of what is the special character of Western civilisation, which is obviously different from Islamic, Chinese, or Hindu civilisation. The history of European colonialism was the final outcome of the special qualities – good and bad – of this Western or West European culture and civilisation, with all its consequences of a world-historical character. What is culture, that is, what is a historically shaped, collective, and societal culture? Probably the best way to describe such a historical, social, and political culture is to say that it is a pattern of norms and values, of beliefs and attitudes, of mentality and a particular way of life – which may vary greatly depending on historical circumstances – the predominance of specific religious and cultural traditions, and so on. A civilisation, again, can be defined as the longer-term historical form of this, its systemic and institutional expression, the persistent form in which a culture or society shows its principal features, including a system of political power and political culture. Indeed, the most crucial question about a historical civilisation is probably the way in which it deals with the question of power, which relates to both the religious and the secular sphere. What is the relationship between religious institutions and the state? Are the state, religious institutions, and the structure of political power centralised or de-centralised? Secondly, what kind of social system or social structure forms the core of a historical civilisation? Is there a complex system of social differentiation, or a simple one? Is there a large or a limited degree of autonomy of the dif-

ferent social groups? Thirdly, what precisely is the role in culture and society of religious belief, of religious institutions: are they strong and dominant, are they unitary or fragmented? What is the relationship between the religious and secular spheres? Fourthly, is there in any given civilisation little or much historical change? There is of course always a certain level of social, political, and cultural change but the question is how much, and how fast or slowly it is happening. Historical change is perhaps the engine of progress, but persistence and continuity are very important as well, because social structures and cultural systems can only exist when there is a degree of stability in the main institutions and belief-systems of a culture or society.

If we want to discuss the question of cultures and civilisations, we are by definition speaking about longer-term processes and relatively unchanging historical civilisations. It is remarkable that a civilisation is able to remain traditional in some ways and at the same time change in other ways, for example by adopting technologies from another civilisation while ensuring that religious tradition remains the same. In other cases, the adoption of economic practices from another civilisation may lead to a crisis in the traditional culture, perhaps even the disappearance of the original civilisation. So we see that there are all kinds of historical changes going on, in all kinds of combinations, but that historical continuity and cultural persistence are very important as well. In Europe, for example, Christianity remained the dominant religion, even though economic change and the industrial revolution substantially changed the structure of society. It is perhaps essentialistic and stereotypical to characterise a given civilisation by calling it Christian or democratic, authoritarian or fundamentalist, Hinduist or conservative. The realities of specific cultures and civilisations are always more complicated than can be captured in one such formula. But on the other hand we know that the various cultures and civilisations of the world are different from each other in all kinds of ways, and that certain terms and concepts to characterise them are necessary and inevitable. There is a conceptual need for what we call generalisation, because we have to use a scientific language to describe and analyse the different cultures in world history and the development of relations between them. These relations may be friendly, but they may also be inimical or war-like. Europeans, and those who represented what we call Western civilisation in the course of world

history and during the process of European colonialism, represented certain specific characteristics of their own civilisation, even if some human traits – positive and negative ones – are common to all people, regardless of cultural background.

Now, what must we understand by Western civilisation? What are the main features and historical characteristics of European and Western culture and civilisation? Also when trying to answer this question, we see a combination of continuity and change. History and cultures and societies are changing all the time, but this happens only slowly, so that we are able to discern certain patterns that characterise a civilisation like the Western one. What we call ‘Western’ was originally the Western half of the Roman Empire, that is, the region in southern, western, and central Europe where the Church of Rome became the dominant religious and cultural institution after the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. It is important to understand what were the defining and most crucial characteristics of this Western, Roman Catholic world with its spiritual centre in Italy and its political and economic centres all across western and central Europe. Its specific features become clear when we compare it with the Eastern Orthodox world of Byzantium and Eastern Europe including Russia. In the Western, Roman Catholic world there was no strong worldly power after the fall of the West Roman Empire. There was a certain balance, and often tension, between the different secular rulers in different parts of Europe, on the one hand, and the Church, or the Pope, on the other hand. In other words: the West was a world of political fragmentation with a weak Emperor who had very little power after the death of Charlemagne, and with a large number of kings and other secular rulers in smaller and larger territories. This meant that the Church was more powerful and independent than the Church in the Orthodox world, where there was a ‘caesaropapist’ model in which Church and State were almost the same and the Byzantine Emperor was most powerful. The Eastern Church was subservient to the emperor and was not allowed to pursue its own independent religious and intellectual orientation. The Western Church on the other hand developed all kinds of new ideas and was much more influenced by theological and intellectual debates, even if the dogmatic and intolerant forces in the Catholic Church tried to suppress new and unorthodox ideas. Because the secular rulers were relatively weak and always divided among themselves, none of them could effectively inter-

vene in the intellectual and religious process, which could therefore develop in relative freedom. The result was that the history of the Western Church was characterised by an enormous dynamic of debate, heresy, dissent, religious revolts, etc. This created a tradition of debate, study, and criticism, in other words: a tradition of intellectual ferment and cultural and intellectual dynamism.

At the same time the political development of Western and Central Europe was quite distinctive as well, and rather different from Eastern Europe and the Orthodox world. We have already mentioned the political fragmentation that was so typical of the post-Roman period, but in addition there emerged a new social and economic world of free and autonomous cities, especially in those regions of Europe where trade and commerce were becoming important. In these autonomous cities with their own administration a new class of burghers arose, people who developed a specific culture and mentality characterised by independence and self-reliance. So there emerged an urban culture and a civic mentality that was quite independent of the great territorial lords or the secular power, and, increasingly, also independent of the official Catholic Church with its heavy and tax-levying structures.

The new urban society in Western and Central Europe in the later Middle Ages was the beginning of what we call civil society, that is a society in which the burghers or citizens spontaneously structure their economic, social, political, and cultural affairs. The result was a process of economic and societal development carried out by autonomous social actors. This was undoubtedly a crucial feature of the emerging Western civilisation.

On top of all of this the Western world saw a series of cultural, religious, and intellectual 'revolutions': the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment. These cultural transformations were unique to Western and Central Europe and were largely absent in the Orthodox world, where the old medieval systems and rigid patterns of political power and social structure remained in place for a long time and where intellectual freedom was much more circumscribed than in the West. These cultural and intellectual changes were consolidated by the industrial revolution and the whole process of social, economic, and political change after the French Revolution, which brought something quite incredible: the idea of human equality and democracy. Industrial revolution, economic transformation, and large-

scale urbanisation laid the basis for a mass society with an egalitarian ethos and with a tendency to improve the democratic political process ever more, although social inequalities remained in place as well.

What can we conclude with regard to the character of Western civilisation? The West clearly experienced a combination of change and growing diversity on the one hand, and continuity with certain persistent structural elements on the other hand. The term Western civilisation refers to a historical territory where a specific and unique process of historical development took place, and where a special combination of dynamic change and specific structural features were the defining elements. These structural features were religious, cultural, social, economic, and political ones. In terms of mentality and psychology we may observe that in the West there emerged a strong self-consciousness of relatively autonomous social, political, and cultural actors. Sometimes this self-consciousness was so strong that it bordered on arrogance, for example in the process of colonial expansion. But what is also remarkable is that these Western people tended to be critical and self-critical: they sometimes had their doubts about their own religious traditions, they were questioning some of their own deeds, and in the era of Enlightenment they began to criticise their own society, European colonialism, and slavery. This relatively open and critical mind enabled them to develop intellectually and to keep the dynamics of their culture and society intact, stage after stage. They succeeded in building a society with growing prosperity for larger numbers of people, in creating a political system with a remarkable degree of freedom and democracy, and in developing a pluralist and differentiated intellectual and political culture, a culture of debate, of criticism, and of self-criticism.

This does not mean that Western civilisation is superior to other civilisations in all respects. In fact there is a darker side to it as well: technological manipulation, rationalist coldness, a kind of extreme discipline including work discipline which is not always beneficial for the human spirit, and a kind of permanent social crisis feeling resulting from the fact that everything is changing all the time, and changing fast. It is no coincidence that the highly developed Western societies are also societies with a high percentage of people with psychological problems. We should be aware not to generalise too much, not to be too essentialist when defining Western civilisation. There are internal differences within the Western world and

inside Europe, for example differences between the individual European nations, between different European regions, and between Europe and North America. Nevertheless, the historical, cultural, and political characteristics mentioned above can be taken as defining elements of what we call Western civilisation. It is quite clear that in many ways this civilisation is different from other civilisations in the world.

We could illustrate this by looking at two other civilisations which are actually not so very different from Western civilisation, yet different in several ways. The first one is the culture and civilisation of Orthodox Christianity, to which we have already paid attention above, when comparing certain religious and political features of the West and the European East. The second one is the culture and civilisation of Latin America, which was created by settlers and colonists from the southern European countries, predominantly Spain and Portugal. The first is an East-West contrast; the second a kind of North-South contrast. The Greek Orthodox world of Eastern Europe experienced a different historical development, which can be seen in various ways. Of course we should try to avoid essentialism and stereotypical generalisations, but it is a historical fact that the Orthodox Christian world is different from the Catholic and Protestant Western world. The Orthodox Church hardly acted as a critical intellectual subject, always obeyed the state as if it was a branch of the state itself, and also in religious matters had a rather different orientation than the Western Church. It was more mystical than intellectual and it was more popular or populist than trying to distance itself from popular beliefs and superstitions.

The world of the Orthodox Church was much less influenced by internal cultural change. There was only a weak influence of renewing, innovating currents such as the Reformation or the intellectual revolution of the Enlightenment. The result was that the Orthodox world was not used to internal differentiation and could not accept the existence of different faiths alongside each other. In the world of Western and Central Europe religious pluralism emerged following the Hussite Revolution in Bohemia, the Reformation of Luther and Calvin, and other reformist religious movements. Western and Central Europeans had to accept the reality of religious pluralism and were used to a culture of debate and criticism. There was also a rich political culture, because there were different centres of political power that were competing with each other, so that it was necessary to

find some kind of compromise and to discuss all the relevant political questions. The level of education of the Protestant pastors and many Catholic priests was much higher than that of most Orthodox priests, who did little to educate the people. In the Orthodox world there hardly existed a political culture or a public sphere at all, and all forms of dissent were viewed with suspicion or even paranoia. In this kind of social and cultural environment it was difficult for something to develop that we call idealism or intellectual enthusiasm, for example promoting the idea of religious toleration, human rights, individual freedoms, or a more critical and open-minded society. Did the Orthodox world get stuck in conservatism and obscurantism? Perhaps it did.

The other comparative case we look at is Latin America. We have described the colonisation of Central and South America when discussing the history of European colonialism and we have already referred to the notable differences between the development of North America and that of Latin America. At the end of the eighteenth century the colonies that became the USA went through a war of independence which laid the foundations for a democratic society, even though, at first, slaves and black people were excluded from this historical experiment. Compared with Latin America, indeed, the USA was becoming a modern society where free individuals could make their own lives, in contrast to the semi-feudal and hierarchical social, political, and cultural traditions of Latin America. Perhaps we can say that the difference between North America and Latin America reflected the difference between North-Western Europe and Southern Europe, but in the American case this difference was more extreme. North-Western Europe was laying the foundations for a modern capitalist society in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, but Spain and Portugal, and to some extent parts of Italy, began to stagnate. They could not abandon the older structures of late-medieval and Renaissance society, which was modern at the time of its heyday but then was replaced in the North by a more dynamic type of mercantile capitalism. But the differences between North America, which until the late nineteenth century was settled mainly by Protestants from North-Western Europe, and Latin America were even more remarkable than the differences between the European North and South. In the colonial territories of Latin America a kind of late-feudal society continued to exist which was marked by huge differences between different social

classes, in contrast to North America with its more egalitarian ethos – that is, among the Europeans themselves, not with regard to non-Europeans – and its Protestant and individualist mentality. In Latin America there was a much lower level of European immigration than in North America, especially from the nineteenth century when the USA became the destination of many millions of Europeans. The result was that the early colonial structures of Latin America survived and that its societies remained remarkably unequal, conservative, and less dynamic than North American society.

The burgher and Protestant mentality of the early North American settlers and immigrants did not exist in Spanish and Portuguese America, which had a more old-fashioned social and political structure and which was dominated by the Catholic Church. The societies of Latin America were paternalistic, clientelist, and almost pre-capitalist. The political culture of Latin America was populist: the charismatic leader, the so-called ‘caudillo’, was the main figure who led or inspired the political process in the various regions of the subcontinent, most of whose colonial territories became independent in the first half of the nineteenth century although the old social and political traditions hardly changed. The rhetoric of populist phrases and simplistic reform promises was accompanied by unrealistic revolutionary expectations among the people. Indeed, there were many revolutions and coups d’état in Latin America, but nothing really changed, and the somewhat naive cultivation of ideological beliefs and expectations seemed often more important than the hard facts or practical politics. Although the Latin Americans were mainly to blame themselves for their many problems and the stagnation of their societies, they began to cultivate an anti-Americanism which apparently had a psychological rather than a constructive political function. It is true that from the late nineteenth century the USA began to intervene in Latin American countries, and not always for the better. But anti-Americanism became such a psychopathic aspect of Latin American political rhetoric that it was sometimes difficult to believe that it was actually expressed the way it was. The mentality underlying this tendency was that others were to blame for the social, economic, and political problems of the Latin American countries. Different populist leaders could always use this political-psychological force to mobilise supporters.

Another aspect of Latin American societies which made their situation rather problematical was ethnic segmentation, especially in countries like

Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, Peru, and Chile, where large Indian populations had survived with their own cultural traditions. This made it even more difficult to create a functioning society which could embrace all people in the country. In the USA there was ethnic pluralism as well, including the presence of an Indian population (which was much smaller than the Indian population in some Latin American countries, though) and a sizeable population of free black people and (before 1863) black slaves. Both the Indian and the black population were subject to policies of segregation, but the fact that the majority of the American people were descendants of Europeans with their Protestant work ethic made the country a functioning whole. At a later stage slavery was abolished, civil rights were given to the ex-slaves, and the Indians were left alone in their reservations where they could lead their own lives. In all American countries, both North and South, ethnic pluralism became a typical feature of the societal scene, and obviously this made them different from Europe. But the difference between North America and Latin America remained as well, and while North America is usually classified with Europe in the category of Western civilisation, Latin America is not but is often seen as a separate culture and civilisation, though akin to Western and European civilisation. The category of Western civilisation also includes Australia and New Zealand and, perhaps, South Africa, which is a special case, a mixture of Western and African culture. The rest of Africa can be seen as a separate cultural world as well, although deeply influenced by European colonialism and Christianity, which is much alive on the African continent.

While Orthodox Christian, Latin American, and African cultures are related in several ways to the dominant Western civilisation, other civilisations in the world are much more different. In the next chapter we will have a look at them too, and discuss the analyses of Fukuyama and Huntington. Here we have to conclude that, although it may be dangerous to speak in rigid and essentialistic terms about the differences between cultures and civilisations, it is a fact that these differences exist. But it is also a fact that the world as a whole is in the process of globalisation, and the core question is what is the relationship between cultural difference on the one hand and global communication and integration on the other hand. One question we have to answer is what is the position of Western civilisation in this globalising world; is this position changing? If the position of the West is weaken-

ing, does this mean that the future of democracy is threatened? Or can we be more optimistic and rely on a political philosophy which argues that the progress of democracy is inevitable as the world economy grows and worldwide communication intensifies? Will China become a democracy? Will the Arab world become more democratic? Fukuyama said yes; Huntington says no – to put it simply.



Samuel Huntington

10. Different views on globalisation

In the previous chapter we have looked at the question of globalisation in a general sense, and as the product of the process of European colonial expansion. We have also tried to define the meaning of culture and civilisation and to describe what are the specific features of Western civilisation. We understand that there are a number of different historical cultures in the world, and that this multicultural reality is likely to complicate the process of globalisation if this means more than just economic co-operation. The question is what is the precise meaning and impact of the globalisation we can observe, and whether it is mainly positive or even unifying in terms of political, human, and cultural values. But alternatively, globalisation may also lead to a world of new forms of competition, rivalry, and tensions between different civilisations and political systems. There are two – by now ‘classical’ – authors whose views on these questions must be analysed by anyone who wants to think about them and form his own opinions. The one author is Francis Fukuyama, the other Samuel Huntington, both from the USA.

They wrote books which appeared in the 1990s and which are still topical and crucial today with regard to the question of globalisation and the direction in which the world is moving. Both books are often misrepresented or misunderstood and are seen in a negative light by the authors’ opponents, for example because they are seen as naive, biased, and one-sided or pushing a particular ideological point of view. It even happens quite often that people who did not read these books, or not properly, do still have an opinion about them, which shows that there are some deep political and ideological emotions involved. It is important, therefore, to have a clear understanding of what these books and their authors are trying to say, and to eliminate false suggestions and interpretations. Perhaps both books show a partial truth: Fukuyama a more positive and optimistic side of the problematic, and Huntington a more realistic or sceptical side.

In 1992 Francis Fukuyama wrote his book titled ‘The End of History and the Last Man’, which is a title that could easily lead to misunderstandings. Six years later, in 1998, Huntington published ‘The Clash of Civilisations

and the Remaking of World Order'. Also this work has led to all kinds of misinterpretations and wrong conclusions. The book of Huntington, because it contains a clear understanding of the multicultural or multi-civilisational character of the world, is perhaps in line with our discussion in the previous chapter of the question of different cultures and civilisations, so that we can easily move to the historical and political framework used by Huntington. Indeed, Huntington's sceptical view on the prospects for a global civilisation is based on his analysis of the world in terms of a system of different historical civilisations, which all have their special cultural and political traditions and their sets of norms and values to regulate the daily lives of the people living in them. According to Huntington there are, broadly speaking, nine major civilisational traditions in the modern world. His book title 'clash of civilisations' does not mean that terrible conflicts or even wars between them are inevitable, but only that it is probable that they cannot agree about several important questions that have to do with fundamental cultural values or with difficult political problems that need to be resolved on an international level. This is even more likely to be the case since the attractions of secular ideologies like socialism and communism have disappeared after 1989. As a result many issues are looked at again from the viewpoint of cultural values in the different civilisations, or from the viewpoint of the non-ideological national interest.

In our 'post-ideological' world the political relevance of cultural identities has returned as there are no influential ideological doctrines anymore to unite people across cultural or national divides. This means that political leaders from the major powers in the world and from countries representing the different civilisations have to find new ways to communicate with each other and to look for pragmatic solutions for their common problems. But the cultural and national differences between them are complicating this and are accompanied by the emergence of a new world order, or the remaking of world order, as Huntington describes it. Which are the nine major civilisations that Huntington is speaking of? They are Western, Orthodox Christian, Latin American, African, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Sinic (Chinese), and Japanese civilisation. It may sound simplistic to argue that the world is divided among these nine civilisations as if there are no other factors playing a role in world affairs. Of course, Huntington understands that there are also other, 'non-cultural' factors which are important

in international relations. But he makes a strong argument for the point of view that many things that happened since the end of communism and the Cold War are the expression of a return to cultural motives in the behaviour of states belonging to different cultural traditions. The post-ideological era has also led to new wars between nations which identify with different cultural traditions, for example in the former Yugoslavia. In Yugoslavia the end of Titoist communism brought the return of nationalism on a horrible scale, and the resulting wars were not only the product of old resentments between Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Kosovars, and others but can be interpreted as conflicts along the geographic 'fault lines' of different civilisational traditions.

The resurgence of Islamic extremism is another example of the post-ideological trend of the 1990s and 2000s. In this case we can clearly see the meaning of 'post-ideological era' as well, that is, the coming of a new era following the discrediting of non-cultural and non-ethnic political ideologies (Arab secular nationalism and modernisation from above). The resurgence of nationalist and religious ideologies could of course be seen as a new chapter in the continuing story of ideological conflict. But these are old ideologies which already existed before the coming of the modern secular political ideologies that have suffered such a terrible defeat. Huntington illustrates the character of the post-ideological era by describing the behaviour of the political elites in non-Western civilisations, for example in India, China, and other countries. After the independence of the former colonial territories in Asia and Africa the new nationalist leaders at first continued to orientate themselves towards the West and its political and intellectual traditions. They were speaking of democracy, socialism, and so on. But after the 1970s things began to change and Huntington speaks of the 'indigenisation' of political language and political symbolism after the attractiveness of the political ideas imported from the West had begun to diminish. Everywhere in the 'Third World' countries political leaders rediscovered their own roots and their own cultural traditions. They now stressed what distinguished them from the West, and they did not accept that the political ideas of the West were automatically valid for them, too. They pointed out that they had their own identity, their own cultural traditions, and that the West should not tell them what democracy was all about.

In India there was a process of Hinduisation of political style taking place, in other Asian countries a similar process of Asianisation, reinvention of Confucianism, and so on. In the Muslim world there was a spectacular process of re-Islamisation going on, for example in Iran, probably the most extreme example of this. This was often a revolt of second generation political elites against the older Westernised elites of the late colonial and immediate post-colonial periods. Among the popular masses their own ethnic, religious, and cultural values and traditions had always remained popular and the new leaders emerging after the 1970s began to use this indigenous orientation to gain legitimacy among the people. In Russia and Serbia there was a post-communist resurgence of Slavophilism, and a resurgence of the Orthodox religion. So it happened that also in Europe the return of older religious and national identities led to a redefinition of the political situation, and in some cases this led to bloody ethnic conflict. But although the end of communism and of the influence of secular ideologies meant in some cases the outbreak of war, this was not necessarily the case everywhere. Huntington does not say that conflicts and wars are inevitable in the post-ideological world, but only that the redefinition of the situation in cultural, religious, and national terms means that the world has changed fundamentally. New forms of tension are difficult to avoid, but it is not impossible for political leaders to look for a pragmatic stabilisation of the multi-civilisational world of today. Even so, the fundamental reality that Huntington points to is a world of different civilisations, and the 'clash of civilisations' is part of this.

China and India are the new powers in the world of today, while Russia, Brazil, and South Africa are important too and are spokesmen for the larger civilisations they represent. The fact that the USA and the West are probably becoming less dominant means that the new world powers are becoming more self-assured in terms of articulating their cultural traditions. They will not always accept the political agenda of the West with its ideology of democracy, individual freedom, and human rights. This means that it is not certain at all that democracy Western-style can further advance across the world, but that other ideas and other systems may become more influential and serious rivals of the Western political ideas. The authoritarian semi-democracy of Russia, the authoritarian state capitalism of China, and other examples may inspire thinkers who are sceptical about Western democ-

racy. But of course we cannot be certain about how these things are going to develop, and it is not impossible that many people around the world will eventually support the Western ideals of individual freedom, free elections and multi-party systems, a free press, etc.

Among those who are indeed more optimistic about this is Francis Fukuyama. The publication of 'The End of History and the Last Man' in 1992 caused quite a stir and was perhaps typical of the optimistic mood of the early 1990s, immediately after the fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Fukuyama is more a kind of political philosopher than a conventional political scientist like the realist Huntington. He is concerned with the meaning of liberalism and democracy and he believes that all people around the world, and all civilisations, are capable and willing to embrace the system of liberal democracy. He gives an overview of all the democratic revolutions in Europe and the world since the Second World War, and he suggests that this global democratic revolution will continue unabated. This is a questionable belief, however. The recent uprisings in the Arab world were at first interpreted as another wave in the worldwide democratic revolution, but in the end the result was highly disappointing. For Fukuyama 'The End of History' does not mean that history stops marching on after the global liberal victory, or that there will not be any historical change anymore. It simply means that the old ideological conflicts of a secular political kind are over, and that liberal democracy has won this war. Fascism and communism are dead, and The Last Man – the people of today – has now the opportunity to establish and consolidate democracy at last. But of course other conflicts continue, including ethnic and racial conflicts, but this cannot threaten the future of democracy, or its triumph, so Fukuyama believes.

Fukuyama illustrates his theory of 'The End of History' and the triumph of democracy by referring to the young German philosopher Hegel in the early nineteenth century, and to one of Hegel's Russian admirers in the early twentieth century, a Russian philosopher who fled to France from the Bolshevik regime and who lectured in Paris in the interwar years, using his new French name Alexandre Kojève. Kojève gave lectures on Hegel in Paris and Fukuyama uses these lectures to explain his view on the course of world history. The Russian-French philosopher Kojève interpreted Hegel's ideas in an interesting way, in particular his idea of world history, which became

famous but changed a bit in Hegel's later years. It was especially the young Hegel who was important to Kojève and also to Fukuyama. Hegel believed that 'history' ended in the year 1806, that is history in the sense of conflicting ideas and fundamental strivings of European mankind. In 1806 the Battle of Jena took place in Germany: Napoleon defeated his reactionary enemies and seemed to represent the final victory of the cause of human freedom and the liberal state. The French Revolution had been exported to the rest of Europe and now it seemed certain that everywhere the Ancien Regime had ended and that the cause of freedom had won, which meant in the eyes of Hegel – and other political thinkers of the time – the end of history, since civilised mankind had reached its final destination. Thus the idea of the end of history – the final triumph of freedom and democracy – was born in the political thought of Hegel, one of the most influential thinkers of the nineteenth century, and a man who decisively influenced a figure like Karl Marx, although Marx developed his own theory of historical evolution based on the struggle of social classes rather than political ideas. As Kojève explained: the French Revolution meant the triumph of the principles of liberty and equality, which were embodied in the 'universal and homogeneous state', that is the modern state with equal citizens which now could be realised everywhere in the world. This meant the end of human ideological evolution; it meant a worldwide liberal revolution.

All this, of course, is a matter of political philosophy, or 'philosophical history', and historians and political scientists are often quite sceptical about it. Moreover, there followed another round of ideological struggles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with new threats to democratic evolution. New authoritarian regimes, communism, and fascism made the triumph of liberal democracy questionable, but it is true that at the end of the twentieth century, especially after 1989, it looked as if liberal democracy was triumphing. This historical victory had begun with the American and French Revolutions, and despite all setbacks political liberalism could finally triumph on a world scale, so it seemed. This is the real meaning of 'The End of History and the Last Man'. But Fukuyama also uses another theory to explain his political philosophy. This is the theory of 'thymos', a theory situated in the sphere of philosophical anthropology. The Greek term thymos means as much as self-esteem, self-respect, sense of self-worth. It refers to the human desire to be respected by others, the demand that one's own sense

of self-esteem should be recognised by other people too. Thymos refers to the fact that in a social setting the human mind reaches a higher social and individual level when the demand for recognition is satisfied, enabling man to move beyond the level of the old 'untermensch' (the unfree subject, the serf, the slave, the man without rights). Thymos is the driving force and the basic motivation underlying the human march of progress towards a more dignified existence, which must eventually lead to the building of a decent, free, and democratic society in which all individuals are treated as equal and respectable people. Fukuyama believes that the dynamics of this principle is of fundamental importance in the course of history and social evolution. It is this principle of human development which makes the global democratic revolution possible and which is more powerful than cultural differences, because in all civilisations this craving for dignity and freedom must eventually triumph given that on this level all people are the same.

Fukuyama then analyses the different waves of democratic revolution in the world after the Second World War, illustrating the power of thymos in all people and nations concerned. There were democratic revolutions in Greece, Portugal, and Spain in the 1970s; also in Latin American countries when the dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile came to an end; in Turkey when a democratic way was found out of the old dilemma that the country was to be ruled either by Islam or by the military; in Asia when Indonesia and other countries began to democratise; and in Eastern Europe and Russia when the communist regimes collapsed. In some countries in Africa, including South Africa, democracy triumphed as well, and perhaps she even had chances in parts of the Muslim world as the young generation refused to accept the old authoritarian regimes any longer and felt less attracted to Islamist radicalism. Fukuyama's ideas are sympathetic and inspiring, but we must remain critical. He argues that nationalism or religious radicalism are not really a fundamental problem, nor are issues of ethnic or cultural friction in or between societies. He believes that such problems and barriers are broken down by an integrated world market. And that proper democratic procedures may help to solve such problems, even if national or religious conflicts are at times quite threatening. He also believes that in the end democracy may become irreversible, that the clock cannot be turned back once democracy has been consolidated. Civil society and the ideals of individual and social citizenship must prevail. People will learn to work for

the benefit of all, not just for their own personal interests. This is a form of 'self-interest rightly understood', because to work for the public interest, for the common good, is also in the individual citizen's own interest in the longer term. Democracy does not mean pursuing a short-sighted self-interest, but cultivating a broader social consciousness; it is the functioning discipline of broad-minded citizens. Fukuyama believes that all civilisations of the world are capable of developing such a democracy, even if in some cases it would take a longer time to realise than in other cases. This is the creed of the liberal optimist in the best sense of the word. But is it also true? Is it also realistic?

Fukuyama is certainly right that the process of globalisation is moving on, and that there was democratic change in many parts of the world. Yet it is hard to say how deep this political change went, or how much it had to do with globalisation. Economic globalisation, perhaps the most spectacular aspect of globalisation, is not the same thing as political globalisation, and cultural globalisation is even less likely to happen despite superficial signs of Westernisation in the non-Western world like modern dress, mobile phones, etc. It is up to ourselves to decide what we think of this process of globalisation. Perhaps we do not even feel attracted to the idea of political and cultural globalisation, but rather like the differences between the various cultural spheres of the world. Even between the different countries of Europe there are considerable differences in cultural values and in the way democracy works. In some countries it works better than in others, and democracy can be a very superficial thing if decision-making processes are not really transparent or if corruption is something that cannot be effectively fought with democratic means. This may weaken democracy in the West, but however this may be, in some respects globalisation sounds like a slogan rather than a reality, because the world of pragmatic economic realities is something quite different from worldwide political or cultural unification.

We may conclude that the process of European colonial expansion did indeed lead to the creation of a world economy, and to a strong influence of Western civilisation all across the world. But perhaps Huntington is right to stress that the world in which we live is still a world of different civilisations, with all its unpredictable consequences. It is also a world of different political regimes and philosophies, with authoritarian nations like Rus-

sia and China proposing an alternative political system to Western liberal democracy. Political culture and political principles are perhaps the hard core of the various civilisations, having deep historical roots. Authoritarian systems may be attractive both to political elites and part of the broader population. This holds true even for a certain proportion of Europeans and Americans, as recent developments have shown. These right-wing populists and nationalists can be mobilised by a charismatic leader, who may try to introduce an illiberal form of democracy. But as yet liberal democracy keeps the upperhand in the West, and in a few countries in other parts of the world.



Francis Fukuyama

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