

## DBQ 14

### The West and the World

Identify and analyze the variety of responses that the colonized peoples advocated toward the European colonizers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Historical Background:** Driven by the pressures of population, the trade economy, and a nationalistic quest for empire, Europeans set their sights on the natural resources of their neighboring continents. The colonized peoples of Asia and Africa responded to the often hostile invasions of their home countries with arguments ranging from cautious optimism to violent outrage.

#### Document 1

Source: Chinese imperial official Lin Zexu, in a letter to Queen Victoria, 1839.

They [British merchants] may not intend to harm others on purpose, but the fact remains that they are so obsessed with material gain that they have no concern whatever for the harm they can cause to others. Have they no conscience? I have heard you strictly prohibit opium in your own country, an indication unmistakably that you know how harmful opium is. You do not wish opium to harm your own country, but you choose to bring that harm to other countries such as China. Why? . . . Since a foreigner who goes to England to trade has to obey the English law, how can an Englishman not obey the Chinese law when he is physically present within China? The present law calls for the imposition of the death sentence on any Chinese who had peddled or smoked opium.

#### Document 2

Source: Statement from the people of Canton, China, 1842.

Behold that vile English nation! Its ruler is at one time a woman, then a man, and then perhaps a woman again; its people are at one time like vultures, and then they are like wild beasts, with dispositions more fierce and furious than the tiger or wolf, and natures more greedy than anacondas or swine. These people having long steadily devoured all the western barbarians, and like demons of the night, they now suddenly exalt themselves here.

Verily, the English barbarians murder all of us that they can. They are dogs, whose desires can never be satisfied. Therefore we need not inquire whether the peace they have now may be real or pretended. Let us all rise, arm, unite, and go against them.

We do here bind ourselves to vengeance, and express these, our sincere intentions in order to exhibit our high principles and patriotism. The gods from on high now look down upon us; let us not lose our just and firm resolution.

#### Document 3

Source: Dadabhai Naoroji, Indian politician, "The Benefits of British Rule," 1871.

The Benefits of British Rule for India: . . .

In the Cause of Civilization: Education, both male and female. . . Resuscitation of India's own noble literature, modified and refined by the enlightenment of the West.

Politically: Peace and order. Freedom of speech and liberty of the press. Higher political knowledge and aspirations. . . Security of life and property. . .

Materially: Loans for railways and irrigation. Development of a few valuable products, such as indigo, tea, coffee, silk, etc. Increase of exports. Telegraphs.

Generally: A slowly growing desire of late to treat India equitably, and as a country held in trust. Good intentions. No nation on the face of the earth has ever had the opportunity of achieving such a glorious work as this. . .

Our great misfortune is that you [the British] do not know our wants. When you will know our real wishes, I have not the least doubt that you would do justice. The genius and spirit of the British people is fair play and justice.

## Document 4

Source: Requests of the Fanti people of Ghana to the British authorities, 1872.

1. [The Fanti Confederation] must have the recognition, . . . support, and hearty co-operation of Her Majesty's Government, and its friendly aid and advice. We do not for one single moment pretend to be able to carry on a Government in the interior without such recognition and assistance. . . .
4. That the courts of the Confederation be recognized as the courts of first instance in matters or disputes between its subjects. . . .
7. . . . [O]n considering the vast improvements to be made in the country, and the great extent of the Confederation . . . the vast efforts to be made to open up the country for traffic and other purposes, the want of good and substantial roads, the backwardness of education, and the immense efforts which will have to be made to spread civilization, and diffuse knowledge over the country inland, we find that the Confederation must have a revenue of some . . . 20,000 [British pounds].

## Document 5

Source: Memorandum from the chiefs of Brass, a city-state on the Niger Delta, to the British Royal Niger Company, June 1895.

The Niger Company are cleverer than we are. We humbly submit that we have a right, confirmed by our Treaty, to go and trade freely in the places we have traded at for all these generations. We are ready to pay to do so, but let us pay a fair duty, and conform to fair Regulations.

## Document 6

Source: Bal Gangadhar Tilak, leader in the Indian independence movement, address to the Indian National Congress, 1907.

We are not armed, and there is no necessity for arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in boycott. We have perceived one fact, that the whole of this administration, which is carried on by a handful of Englishmen, is carried on with our assistance. We are all in subordinate service. This whole government is carried on with our assistance and they try to keep us in ignorance of our power of cooperation between ourselves by which that which is in our own hands at present can be claimed by us and administered by us. The point is to have the entire control in our hands. I want to have the key of my house, and not merely one stranger turned out of it. Self-government is our goal; we want a control over our administrative machinery. We don't want to become clerks and remain [clerks]. . . . We shall not give them assistance to collect revenue and keep peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts, and when time comes we shall not pay taxes.

## Document 7

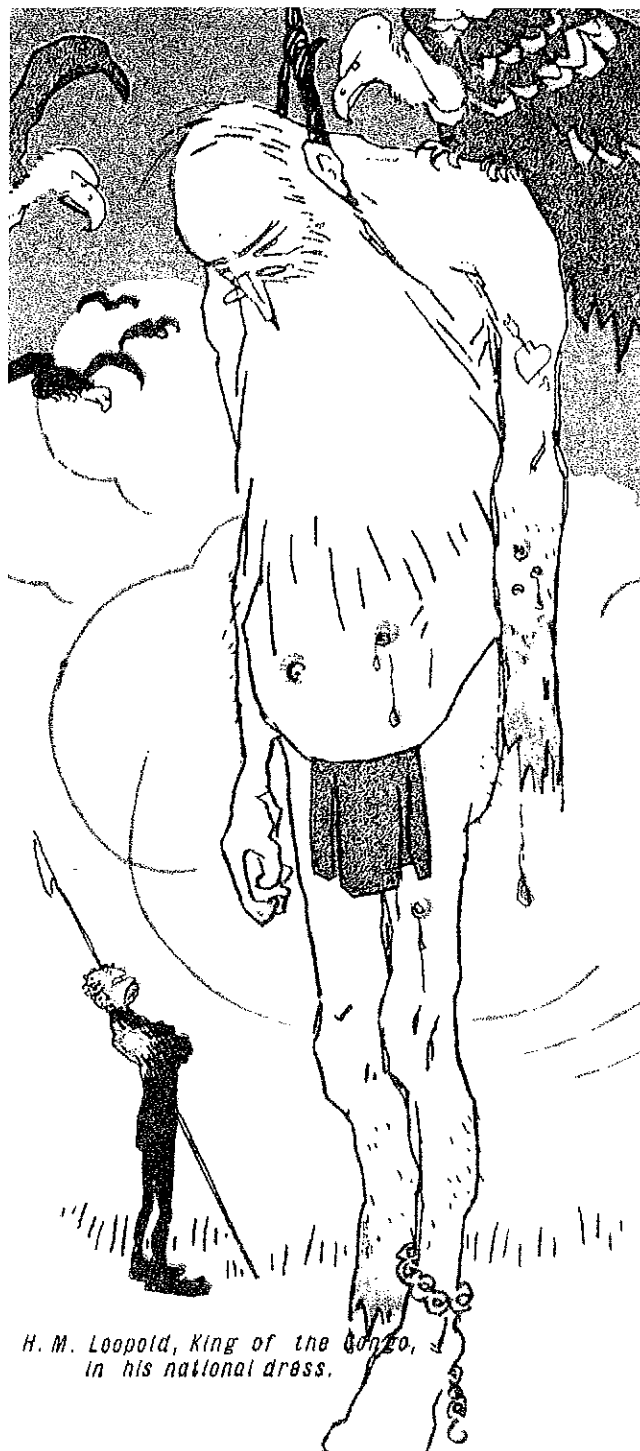
Source: Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948), *Hind Swaraj*, or *Indian Home Rule*, 1908.

Many examples can be given in which acts of majorities will be found to have been wrong and those of minorities to have been right. All reforms owe their origins to the initiation of minorities in opposition to majorities. . . . So long as the superstition that men should obey unjust laws exists, so long will their slavery exist. . . .

Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force [*satyagraha*]. For instance, the government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me: I do not like it; if, by using violence, I force the government to repeal the law I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

Document 8

Source: "Leopold, King of the Congo," English cartoon, 1908.



*H. M. Leopold, King of the Congo,  
in his national dress.*

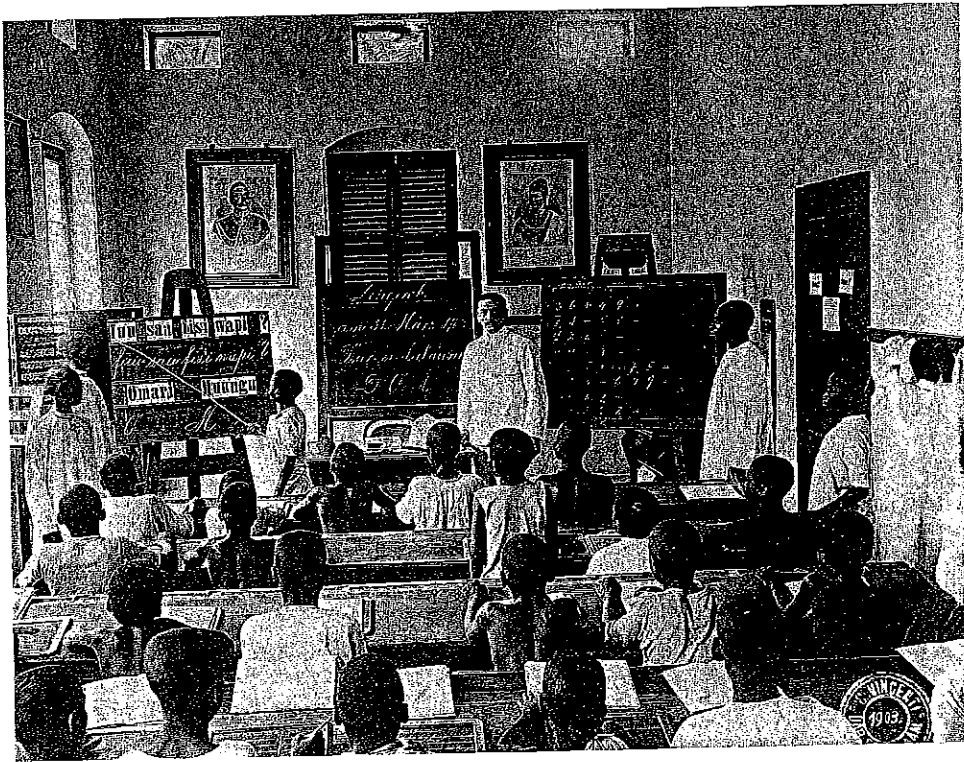
### Document 9

Source: "Announcement to the Arabs," manifesto of Arab nationalists printed in Arabic in Cairo, Egypt, 1914.

O sons of Quahatan [south Arabs]! Oh descendants of Adnan [north Arabs]! . . . When will you realize the truth? When will you know that your country has been sold to foreigners? See how your natural resources have been alienated from you and have come into the possession of England, France, and Germany. Have you no right to these resources? You have become humiliated slaves in the hands of the usurping tyrants; the foreigner unjustly dispossesses you of the fruit of your work and labor and leaves you to suffer the pangs of hunger. How long will it be before you understand that you have become the plaything in the hand of him who has no religion but to kill the Arabs and forcibly to seize their possessions?

### Document 10

Source: A missionary school with portraits of Emperor Wilhelm II and his wife in Dar es Salaam, German East Africa, early twentieth century before 1914.



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