CHAPTER ONE

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For a proper understanding of the various aspects of the diplomacy of Third World freedom struggles, it is important to take into account the historical context that helped precipitate the revolt against colonialism. This chapter strives to provide the historical background against which the diplomacy of the colonial revolts is analysed. The first section deals with the anatomy of colonial systems, with a comparative study of the varying policies of the colonial powers in India, Indonesia and Algeria. The second section discusses the various historical factors that facilitated the process of decolonisation. In the third section, the emergence and evolution of nationalist elites in the colonies that formulated the anti-colonial diplomacy, is discussed.

The revolt against colonialism, co-emergent with the evolution of a national consciousness and nationalism in the colonies, has been one of the most significant political phenomena in the twentieth century. This revolt took the form of increasing opposition to the imperial rule of European powers in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The imposition of colonial regimes, the direct economic exploitation of indigenous peoples and annexation of their territories by Western traders and financiers, the interferences in the socio-political life of the colonized
zones, associated with rapid urbanisation and modernisation were some of the features of colonial power against which the emerging national movements mobilised.

Politically far-reaching in its range and intensity, the revolt against colonialism has presented an altogether unprecedented pattern in world history, that, because of the changing nature of socio-theoretical models, needs further exploring. A primarily political-historical explanation is what has been generally possible. Although not ignoring the advances made in understanding the colonial mind, which has radicalised the whole mode of presenting the problem, the discussion will here mainly relate to the current state of scholarship.

The main colonial empires were dismantled within the twenty years following the end of the Second World War, starting in Asia and carrying over from there to Africa and the Caribbean. By the mid-1960s only a few anomalous colonial territories remained and today these have been further reduced to a group of micro-colonies. At a global level the Second World War produced and reflected a drastic shift in international power and status away from the states of Western Europe and towards two newly-emergent superpowers - the United States and the Soviet Union, both in policy and sentiment opposed to European colonialism. Both superpowers had their own reasons to oppose colonialism in the new international political context.
From the viewpoint of crude realpolitik, the superpowers wanted to extend their influence as the European powers withdrew from the former colonial territories. The Soviet Union saw in the end of empire an opportunity to play a global role. For the United States, weakening of European imperialisms signified the opening-up of new markets and enhancement of its political influence in the decolonised territories, so that it took on something of the world-policing role with the disastrous consequences of the Vietnam war.

Whatever the global reasons for the decline of Western colonialism, the most immediate and significant precipitant of its downfall was the opposition to it by the colonised peoples, manifested in the nationalist movements. The revolt against colonial domination can be comprehended as part of a global process rather than merely a regional or even a continental development.1

Anatomy of Colonialism:

The European Renaissance and the Enlightenment leading to the Industrial Revolution brought about fundamental

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changes in the political situation and the economies of the European countries. This encouraged immense rivalry for overseas trade and later a scramble for territories among the European capitalists. The various colonial settlements in Asia and Africa and the resultant exploitation of the natives led to fundamental changes in the political and economic life of the colonies. In the late nineteenth century, the period of Advanced Capitalism, the pattern of interrelationships between the metropolitan power and the peripheral colony progressed towards further changes in the social, political, cultural and economic life of the colonised peoples.

Large countries like India and Indonesia, with centuries-old systems of agricultural production and settled habits of cultivating specific commodities, were compelled by the colonial rulers to change their modes of production in response to the needs of the European market.

Agricultural products like indigo, rubber, sugar, coffee and tea were the commodities involved in this "commercialisation" of agriculture, the elaborate reorganisation of production according to external needs of the colonies.2

Many of the theories of imperialism which were put forward by men like Hobson and Lenin, illuminated the economic consequences of the colonial connections. Hobson's theory argued that colonies were needed as no social reforms were undertaken in Europe, largely because European capitalism would otherwise generate an overwhelming supply of commodities on the domestic market and a corresponding underconsumption by the working classes. It was therefore essential to find new outlets for surplus exports, and new markets and investment opportunities, to counteract oversaving at home.3

It was Lenin who formulated a Marxist theory of the development of imperialism and anti-imperialism, and who laid the theoretical foundations of the Communist tradition in this area. Taking up Marx's theses that capitalism, as it evolved, tended to concentrate production and wealth, yet also show a gradual fall in the rate of profit, Lenin argued that Europe in 1916 had entered into the era of mature "Finance Capital" dominated by cartels and monopolies in search of new wealth and markets, now that domestic capitalism was in crisis. Inevitably, according to Lenin, the cartels sought to export their surplus capital, as a result, they took on

international dimensions and divided the world into competing economic spheres to control markets and the supply of vital raw materials. This was the real meaning of modern Capitalist "Imperialism".4

In the view of modern scholars in this Marxist tradition, colonialism operated as a single system, in which missionaries, officials, businessmen and settlers participated in various degrees to fulfil the economic requirements of the metropolitan power. It is worth recalling that the primarily political concepts like colonialism and imperialism were given modern economic content by Lenin, thereby bequeathing to modern scholarship a specific frame of reference into which the colonial question could be analysed. This Leninist analytical framework has been successfully used by many modern scholars of colonialism. Thus, for the British sociologist Peter Worsley, as for many others, the essence of the colonial relationships is primarily economic.

It is no ideological assertion, but a simple generalization rooted in empirical observation that the prime content of colonial political rule was economic exploitation.5

Besides the primary concern of economic exploitation, colonialism signified several other features. Worsley lists the following additional characteristics of the

colonial rule: the initial military takeover and pacification of the area; administrative coercion exercised by colonial officials over the colony; a racialist ideology which served to support the coercion and explain the need for authoritarian methods, and finally a process of psychological exploitation, a colonisation of the personality. The last feature was theorised by Frantz Fanon thus:

Colonial domination, because it is total and tends to oversimplify, very soon manages to disrupt in spectacular fashion the cultural life of a conquered people. This cultural obliteration is made possible by the negation of national reality, by new legal relations introduced by the occupying power, by the banishment of the natives and their customs to outlying districts by colonial society, by expropriation, and by the systematic enslaving of men and women. 6

Yet, important and even indispensable as these features of colonialism have been, they were secondary to the fundamental economic content and purpose behind the whole colonial venture, which was the exploitation of native human and natural resources for the maximisation of business profits.

Most of the academic studies on modern Colonialism have concentrated on the differences between colonial powers

and, in particular on their various theories or ideologies of colonial rule. 7

Many of these differences were not unimportant and many of the variations in the political structures and experience of post-colonial states can be traced back to them, but they only became significant within the context of the common features imposed by colonialism on the colonised territories and societies as a whole. The differences between forms of colonialism can only be appreciated within an understanding of the basic similarities. The differences in colonial policies derived from three main sources: the nature and impact of economic change, the structure of the colonised societies, and the policies and practices of the different colonial powers.

After the break-up of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in Latin America in the early nineteenth century, only Great Britain and France were left with substantial colonial possessions. After World War I Germany lost her colonies and Italy was deprived of her colonies after her defeat in the Second World War. Portugal, with its remaining colonies in Southern Africa, was the other European colonial power. Several of the others had only one colony of any significance, notably Indonesia (The Netherlands), the Congo (Belgium), and the Philippines (United States).

For our purposes we shall concentrate on those colonial policies of the British, the French and the Dutch that had a bearing on the making of the nationalist diplomacy in these colonies. A comparative analysis of the working of the colonial systems of Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands would give us meaningful insights to understand the differences of approach as evident in the various nationalist movements in the colonies.8

The French Policy of Colonialism:
The French colonial policies were based on the idea of concentration and assimilation of colonised peoples with the culture of metropolitan France. The French dismissed as worthless the indigenous social and cultural systems of the colonised territories. The colonial subjects were to be offered the chance of assimilation to the ideals of France itself, by acquiring French language, culture and even nationality.

The French Republican principles of 1789 influenced the constitutional relationship between colonies and metropolis. The French considered the colonies as an intrinsic part of the indivisible Republic and expected them to be assimilated to it in every particular.

8 For this section I have been guided by J. S. Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India (New York, 1956); G. Antonius, The Arab Awakening (Beirut, 1955); Bipan Chandra, Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India (New Delhi, 1979).
Assimilation thus signified a single tariff system, the application of the metropolitan pattern of local government and laws, representation of colonists in the French assembly, and full cultural assimilation. In practical terms these principles gave the French empire two of its distinctive characteristics—intense concentration of power in Paris and lack of autonomy in the colonies. The root of French colonial policy had its own political and philosophical tradition. In the words of D. K. Fieldhouse:

Post-revolutionary France inherited egalitarianism and concern for the principles of political liberty from the enlightenment and the revolution; administrative centralization and autocracy from the ancien regime and the First empire; precision in constitutional and legal matters from Roman law and the Napoleonic codes. The modern French empire reflected each of these influences. In theory it was liberal, but in practice centralized and authoritariant; and its administration showed the impress of precise legal thinking and a passion for symmetry.9

After World War I the French policy of colonial rule shifted officially to the theory of "Association" from the "Assimilation" practiced until then. The new theory entailed greater respect for native traditions and ways of life, but a strengthening of their economic and political links with metropolitan France. At the same time general

9 Fieldhouse, n. 7, p. 306.
distinction was maintained between French "citizen" and French "subject" who had no significant political rights. The existence of a substantial French settlers population in Algeria made this distinction all the more complicated and led to bloodshed during the nationalist movement.

The British Colonial Policies:
The British colonial system was far less centralised than the French colonial administration. The colonies were seen as having distinctive characteristics of their own, hence they needed distinct degrees of autonomous administration. The independence given to the colonial governors was reflected at lower rungs of the colonial administration. The British resident was to rely on the indigenous authorities and was expected to adapt to the local environment.

This colonial system was termed as "indirect rule". The indirect rule entailed discarding of those traditional polities that presented any substantial threat to British control. Where the native rulers did not pose a threat to colonial rule they were retained and recreated on indigenous models. This policy of indirect rule was at its best in India where administrative machinery of the direct British colonial possessions coexisted with the various native states under differing degrees of British subordination.10

10 ibid, pp. 298-302.
The British policies were aimed at meeting colonial discontent by reforms that associated the subject peoples more closely with their own governing. The evolution of the dominion system did exert an important influence on the style of British policy toward India.11

The major difference between French and British attitudes to the ultimate development of their colonies was that whereas the French ideal remained assimilation of all overseas possessions, the British possessed in the Commonwealth and the Dominions a model for eventual colonial self-government. The French had aspirations of making fellow citizens out of their colonial subjects ("the Greater France of 100 million Frenchmen"), the British emphasised the idea of Home Rule. The domestic dimensions of the British and the French Colonial policies are also worth noting. Britain had a "loyal opposition", a stable two party system, and a strong executive. France, however was plagued by "disloyal opposition" from both Right and the Left, by multiparty system, and a weak executive. These differences of policy and domestic politics, are relevant for understanding why the revolt against colonialism was largely non-violent in India and violent in Algeria.

11 The economic dimensions of British colonialism are discussed in Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Economics of British Imperialism (Cambridge, 1988), Especially useful are pp. 264-274.
Colonialism, Dutch Style:

Dutch colonial policy was traditionally firm and paternalist. On the one hand an "ethical policy" was formulated in 1901 recognising that the Netherlands had a moral obligation to emancipate the Indonesian peoples she exploited, on the other, there was a corresponding growth of Indonesian nationalist movement.

As a result, demands for elected local and provincial councils were conceded, and the Indonesians were given limited chance to participate in public life and politics. Despite this, the policy of devolution of political power did not take root in Dutch colonial policies and trends towards assimilation prevailed: the Dutch constitution was amended in 1922 and Indonesia was made a part of the Dutch kingdom.

Unlike the British in India, the Dutch made no attempt to codify law or unite jurisdictions. In contrast to the French Colonial policies the Dutch did not make any serious effort to spread Dutch language and culture among the Indonesians.12

A typical plantation economy was developed in Indonesia. The Dutch, exploiting the Indonesian labour in their farms, produced most of the sugar, tobacco, tea, coffee, and rubber which with petroleum and tin, provided the

12 Fieldhouse, n. 7 p. 327.
export staples. Under the exploitative "Culture System", operational in Indonesia between 1830 and the 1870s, the Dutch merchant marine was revived, making Amsterdam again the centre of the European spice market.13

The chief internal source of colonial grievances was the appalling social contrast between the mass of the Indonesian population that lived on the low level of subsistence and the few big Western farming enterprises making huge profits. Racial discrimination coupled with great economic disparities created severe tensions in the Indonesian population. The Japanese occupation of Indonesia during the Second World War fuelled the nationalist movement and led to violence during the last years of Dutch colonialism.14

The colonial policies adopted by the European powers had a bearing on the nationalist movements in their respective colonies. The British policy of indirect rule made it possible for them to leave the colonies in most cases without having to resort to armed struggle to defend the colonial possessions. The French and the Dutch however had a violent decolonisation history. Especially in the case of Algeria, because of a high settlement of French

13 For a discussion on the "Culture System" operating under Dutch colonialism in Indonesia see Furnivall, n. 8, pp. 220-223.

14 For an excellent account of Dutch colonial policies in Indonesia see ibid, pp. 276-290.
population in Algeria who resisted the Algerian nationalist movement, the process of decolonisation was ridden with violence.

Conversely, the nationalist diplomacy also displayed varying degrees of militancy in its objective of freedom from the colonial rule. In India the liberation diplomacy was largely adhering to constitutionalism while the Indonesian nationalist diplomacy had to blend military and political actions in the fight against the Dutch. In the case of Algeria a militant diplomacy was employed to support a war of liberation against a centralised colonial power. In forthcoming chapters a detailed discussion of the diplomacy of the nationalist liberation movements in the three countries in question shall be taken up.

After having considered the nature of European colonial policies in India, Indonesia and Algeria, the discussion shall now move on to the causes that led to the revolt against colonialism in these countries.

NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE REVOLT AGAINST COLONIALISM:

Global Factors Accelerating The Revolt:
From the end of the nineteenth century several political events in various parts of the world contributed to strengthening anti-colonial movements across the globe. Among these were the Ethiopian victory over the Italians in 1896; the Boer war, which resulted in independence for South Africa while at the same time strengthening
anti-colonial sentiment in Britain; The Filipino resistance to Spanish and American rule; Japan's victory over Russia in 1905, signalling the awakening of Asia; Mexican revolution of 1911 with its anti-US content; the emergence of Young Turks in Turkey, and the establishment of the Kuomintang in 1912, the symbol of nationalism in China.

All these developments were far-reaching in their impact on the nascent nationalist movements that were starting to take shape in many countries of Asia and Africa. As a leading authority on the rise of Afro-Asian nationalism has observed:

Once the rising colonial elite had shaken off their awe of the almost magical mastery of power produced by the alien rulers, they demanded that an end be put to the gross discrepancy between the ideals of freedom and equality which the West preached and the colonialism which it practiced.15

The First World War: Wilson's Fourteen Points:

In the First World War (as later in the Second), the Allies often relied on troops from their colonies, with a consequent boost to the self-esteem of the peoples providing the troops. The War accelerated the

15 Emerson, n. 1, p. 54.
process of politicisation among large sections of the colonial peoples who took part in the war. In the words of Panikkar:

The Indian soldier who fought on the Marne came back to India with other ideas of the Sahib than those he was taught to believe by decades of official propaganda. Indo-Chinese labour corps in the South of France returned to Annam with notions of democracy and republicanism which they had not entertained before.

In both the wars the propaganda of the Allied forces to show the justness of their cause naturally promoted new ambitions for basic democratic rights of self-government and self-determination. Politically, a big boost to the nationalist aspirations of the colonised peoples was given by United States President Woodrow Wilson's declaration of the Fourteen Points. The doctrine of the "self-determination of peoples" was being interpreted by the nationalist leaders in the colonies as a doctrine of liberation. Wilson's Fourteen points were accepted by all Allied powers as a 'war aim' in the propaganda campaign against the Germans.

Apart from these political developments economic forces unleashed by the war were also helping to undermine the Western supremacy. During the war Japan expanded her trade in Far East Asia. India, as a direct result of the weakened British economic power, took first steps towards

16 Panikkar, n. 1, p. 282.
industrial growth. The Indian national capital was placed in a position of some advantage by investing in such industrial ventures as jute and cotton, hitherto monopolised by the British Finance Capitalism.17

Impact of The Bolshevik Revolution:

Another important factor that had great influence on the revolt against colonialism was the successful Communist revolution in Russia. The Russian revolution gave a new content to the principles which all the Allies had accepted as their objectives. Lenin redefined imperialism and insisted that the liberation of subject peoples from the colonial domination was a part of the struggle against Capitalism.

The policy pronouncements and political actions of the new Soviet leadership were greatly helpful in propagating the cause of the nationalists in the colonies. The Bolshevik’s call for and practice of racial equality, abolition of the special privileges that Czarist Russia had acquired in Persia and China, and their acceptance of the independence of countries which had been previously annexed to Russia, made it difficult for colonial powers,

17 This theme is well analysed in Chandra, n. 8, pp. 144-164. For a more recent account of the anatomy of colonial exploitation in Asia, see Amiya Kumar Bagchi, The Political Economy of Underdevelopment (New Delhi, 1989) especially pp. 69-94.
who had so long claimed to stand for liberty and progress, to deny this freedom to the peoples in the colonies.18

This attitude of the new Soviet government made the anti-colonial elements hopeful of support from one of the European powers. Reflecting this support Lenin wrote in his article; "The Right of Nations to Self determination" that "the bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support".19

To discuss the international dimension of the Proletarian revolution the first Internationalist Communist Congress was held in Moscow in March 1919 with representation from Iran, China, Korea and Turkey. The Comintern congress adopted several documents. It drew attention to the "revolutionary ferment in all the colonies" and reasoned, "the emancipation of the colonies is possible only in conjunction with the emancipation of the metropolitan working class".20

18 For this section my interpretation is influenced by the seminal three-volume work of E. H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution. 1917-1923 (Harmondsworth, 1966) Especially relevant for our discussion is Volume 3 of the series.


The Comintern assured the nationalists that a socialist Europe would render all round help to the liberated colonies. The Bolsheviks also helped found Communist parties in several of the colonies including India and Indonesia thus providing a new ideology to the nationalist movements in these countries. It also held regular conferences, especially in Baku, and Comintern meetings to discuss aspects of colonial revolts.21

The Soviet support for anti-colonial movements has continued in the post-Second World War period. Through its policy of material and moral support the Soviet Union has been a constant source of inspiration to the various liberation movements in the Third World. The Soviets encashed on the anti-Western feeling in the decolonized countries.

Moscow has had an interest in encouraging anti-Western forces in the Third World, although its motives were usually pragmatic than ideological, having more to do with gaining strategic advantages by winning allies in the international politics dominated by the Cold War.

Second World War And The Colonial Revolutions:

With the coming of the World War II the apparent invulnerability of the West was destroyed by the Japanese successes in South East Asia. The final subjugation of the Japanese did little to offset the immense damage done to Western prestige.

Japanese forces occupied all Asian colonial areas up to the Indian border. The Japanese occupation strengthened anti-colonial movements in many other ways. New governing structures were created and the psychological barriers of colonialism broken down. Partly to gather support against the allies and partly as a step towards Japanization, the Japanese promoted nationalism in several areas. Nationalist leaders were given offices, and powers, national languages were encouraged in Indonesia and Burma, and national armies established. Most importantly, the vacuum left in South East Asia as the Japanese suddenly capitulated in August 1945, gave opportunities to nationalists to fill in the political void.

The Japanese were defeated without the Europeans having reoccupied their former colonies. Vietnam and Indonesia seized their independence and were not willing to relinquish it when the colonial powers were eventually in a position to send troops. This explains the violence in the Indonesian liberation movement and the hardened French attitude towards Algerian nationalism after defeat and humiliation in French Indo-China.
Moreover, at the end of the Second World War the three colonial powers relevant for our discussion were in extremely weakened positions. The French and the Dutch were only by courtesy counted among the victors of the Second World War, with almost total loss of prestige in their respective colonies. Although victorious, as the nationalist leaders in the British colonies had realised, the British military power had been seriously weakened by the tremendous drain of the war, and the anti-imperialist Labour party had won the elections in 1945, promising a more liberalised British colonial policy.22

The World War II had an immense impact on the French empire. In 1940 the metropolis lost control of all her overseas possessions, by 1945 many of them had undergone a transformation. The mandates of Syria and Lebanon claimed independence in 1941 and France was never able to reoccupy them. Indo-China was occupied by Japan from 1941-45, during which period the Vietminh nationalist movement increased its power and influence. In Mediterranean Africa French authority was also sapped. The Allies occupied these territories in 1942-43, and the pre-war nationalist parties revived, extending their demands from greater participation in government to full independence.

It is generally believed by historians that the Second World War marked a decisive stage in the revolt against

22 See, Geoffrey Barraclough, An Introduction to Contemporary History (Harmndsworth, 1967)
colonialism. The war unleashed forces that made decolonisation by even the most reluctant European powers inevitable, hastening a process that was already underway, though in a dormant form. The Second World War created a new international climate in which the leading colonial powers were put on the defensive and in which they were obliged to introduce political reforms in their respective colonies. The nationalist elites in the colonies found support not only in sympathetic political circles within the metropolis but in significant sections of the international community.

**United Nations And Decolonisation:**

The role of the United Nations Organisation in hastening the process of decolonisation cannot be underestimated. Under Chapter XI of the United Nations charter, members with 'responsibilities' for the administration of territories whose peoples had not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognized the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories were paramount. To this end they also undertook 'to develop self-government to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement'.

23 See Article 73 of UN Charter's Chapter XI (U.N., 1945)
Acceptance for such aims as applicable to all colonial territories contained promise of reshaping all colonial relationships.

Another factor which had bearing in the process of decolonisation was world opinion. World opinion as expressed in international conference resolutions, academic seminars, international press, radio and television helped the colonial powers to realise the importance of the nationalist awakening in Asia and Africa. The efforts made by the nationalist elites in widely separated capitals of the world towards influencing world opinion through media and conference diplomacy are discussed in the following chapters.

The successful revolt against colonialism in Asia necessarily had substantial consequences for Africa. With the independence of India, the largest colony of any European power, the floodgates were opened and the pattern of anti-colonial revolt established, not only for the British colonies, but for all colonies.

Against the background of a changed international power balance with universal necessity to redefine colonial relations, there occurred between 1945 and 1965 a series of significant events that made the revolt against colonial rule a political requirement. Nationalism appeared to be an irresistible force which grew in all the colonies.
The failure of the Dutch in Indonesia in 1945-49 and of
the French in Indo-China (1946-54) to suppress nationalist
movements by military actions lent force to the
inevitability of the triumph of the revolt against
colonialism. As country after country gained
independence, the European colonial powers had to stage a
retreat under the twin pressures of the rising tide of
Afro-Asian resurgence and a changed international
power equation. However, the revolt against colonialism
should be perceived not merely as an act of European
withdrawal, but as a new form of political assertion in
Africa, Asia and Latin America.

EMERGENCE OF NATIONALIST ELITES IN THE COLONISED
COUNTRIES:

In terms of ideals and ideology, Western imperialism
carried within itself the seeds of its own failure. The
response to Western influences and ideas of liberty,
democracy, equality was such that the nationalist
elites started to question the right of aliens to rule
their country. In the colonies there emerged a new
perceptive elite, critically looking into their heritage
and questioning the colonial system. It was this
elite that coordinated the anti-colonial diplomacy in
India, Indonesia and Algeria.

The Western influence led to a certain amount of
revivalism at one end of the political spectrum in the
colonies and a surrender to Western values and
institutions at the other. A new elite emerged in the colonies under the influence of Western education. Sun Yet Sen in China, Gokhle, Tilak, Gandhi and Nehru in India, Sukarno and Hatta in Indonesia, Aung San in Burma, Ho Chi Minh in Indochina and Zaighlul Pasha in Egypt were some of the front-ranking names who spearheaded the revolt against colonialism.

Almost from the very beginning of colonial occupation, the national liberation struggle manifested itself in various countries in different forms. Many were minor peasant revolts, military uprisings and outbreak of xenophobia. The present discussion confines itself to the more organised of the colonial revolts. During the first two decades of this century, the national struggle in many colonies prospered among exile groups and overseas communities of emigrant labour. The various nationalist leaders from India who went to the United States, Germany, Japan and later the Soviet Union were the pioneers of this trend.

The students from the colonies who went to study abroad contributed to the emerging nationalist movements led by the new elites. Apart from a sense of self-respect and indignant nationalism with which students from colonies returned to their native country from the capital of the Empire, other European capitals also provided wider opportunities for political education.
The ideological ferment that the meeting of Afro-Asian and Western minds generated, sowed the seeds of the new thoughts which in time synthesized with the traditional learning and placed the countries of Asia and Africa towards political emancipation. The intellectual ferment was directly responsible for the emergence of the nationalist elites in the colonies and also their common perception of global issues and a world view. In each of the colonies the elites which led the nationalist movement belonged to the small fragment of society trained in the West. In India, Indonesia, Indo-china, Algeria, Burma it was the leaders educated in the West— the WOGS (Westernised Oriental Gentlemen), as the Europeans called them, that provided the leadership of the revolt against colonialism.

Equipped as this new leadership was with the tools of modern scientific knowledge, it articulated the feelings and aspirations of the colonised and organised a fragmented society into a powerful anti-colonial struggle. The sections most exposed to the Western intellectual currents of this new elite with wider awareness of the outside world were to formulate the external dimensions of the freedom movements as reflected in the nationalist diplomacy.24

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24 Edward Shils was among the earliest theorists to stress the role of elites, and especially the ideological intelligentsia, in the political emancipation of the new states. See his Political Development in the New States (The Hague, 1966), pp. 19-24.
Nationalist Ferment In India:

In India the modernisation of society leading to the emergence of a nationalist elite took place under British rule largely due to the activities of colonial rulers who established a unified administrative and judicial system over the whole country, introduced higher education, and promoted modern banking and commerce as well as some modern industries. The importance of their rule was not so much that it led directly to the expansion of industry for the economic interests of the ruling power, and the generally inhibited effects of Colonial rule, as that it set patterns for the growth of a modern middle class in India. The Indian nationalist elite grew out of this new middle class. As B. B. Misra observes:

the new middle classes which grew up during the later period of British rule were the products of the growth of secondary and higher education, rather than of the development of industry...the bulk of the Indian middle classes came to consist of the intelligentsia- public servants, other salaried employees, and members of the learned professions.25

Modern education prompted an assimilation of Western liberal democratic ideas among the dominant section of the nationalist elite. This gave the freedom movement progressive democratic forms and aims. The nationalist elites strived for representative institutions based on

democratic principles for independent India, giving a
democratic direction to Indian nationalism.

The study of the English language provided an opportunity
to study the social libertarian, natural and rationalist
philosophical literature in that language. Through
English translation the educated Indians could read other
European thoughts, widening the intellectual dimensions of
the nationalist elites. This imbibing of world culture
helped the elite not only to reinforce its knowledge but
also to develop a world outlook and perspective. As
historian Sumit Sarkar observes:

Western education did bring with it an awareness of
world currents and ideologies, without which it
would have been difficult to formulate conscious
theories of nationalism. 26

The elite exercised great ideological influence on the
people. They translated English books into various
vernaculars thus broadening the vision of the masses. The
English language helped as a medium of communication for
the educated Indians throughout India to exchange views at
a national scale on issues of social and political
significance. The political, administrative, monetary,
and legal unification of India, the introduction of
railways, telegraph and unified postal system enabled
the elite to communicate and develop links.

26 Sumit Sarkar, Modern India, 1885-1947 (New Delhi,
This, coupled with the inequality and exploitation of the masses under the colonial economy, played a significant role in growth of nationalism. As a well-known sociologist has remarked:

The role of the intelligentsia in the history of modern Indian nationalism was decisive. They integrated, to a great extent the Indian people into a modern nation and organized various progressive socio-reform and religio-reform movements in the country. They were the pioneers, organizers, and leaders of all political national movements.27

**Emergence Of Indonesian Elite:**

In Indonesia, as in India, the introduction of Western education with the help of colonial language helped to provide the country with an educated nationalist elite which was to lead the country to independence. As part of the ethical programme, mentioned earlier, the Dutch government broadened educational opportunities for the Indonesians. This was reinforced by an expanding colonial governmental structure that required the services of educated Indonesians. Moreover, the Netherlands government believed that an educational programme would turn the Indonesians away from a growing Islamic movement that was perceived by the Dutch authorities as a threat to their power.

The Western education exposed the Indonesians to the ideas of self-government and independence. It was natural for the Indonesians to draw parallels between the history of Dutch opposition to outside control and subjugation of its own people. Mohammed Hatta, who with Sukarno led the freedom movement in Indonesia, explained this process thus:

In the schools of the ruler himself Indonesian students were told about the Dutch freedom fighters and learned to appreciate them. They were also taught that the Netherlands are indebted to those courageous heroes for the independence of their country then and now. They could not help thinking of their own heroes who only wanted to do what the heroes of the ruler himself had done: liberate their country from the foreign yoke and keep it free from foreign blemishes.28

The whole tradition of Western political and social thought seemed to justify the inclination of nationalistic students to oppose Dutch political and economic subjugation. In European Schools, Indonesian students in the Netherlands, were exposed to the writings of Marx. To many of them Marxism seemed to explain the plight of their homeland. Some of these students came to equate capitalism with imperialism and became convinced that true independence would have to be economic as well as political.29


Certainly the common background of Western education did represent a powerful unifying factor in the fashioning of nationalist outlook among the nationalists in the colonies. The Indonesian intellectual like his counterpart in India, Algeria and other countries, was brought into touch with existing currents of European liberal and radical thought, which fed his nationalism and gave to his political philosophy a secular, democratic and socialist flavour. Liberal views of the role of the state and the nature of the political authority provided a justification for opposition to an authoritarian and alien colonial government.

The Algerian Elite:
The emergence of the nationalist elite in Algeria reflected the more radical nature of African and Arab nationalism. Because Algeria was the most intensely colonised country in the Third World, the emergence of a nationalistic elite believing in democratic protest was neither sociologically nor politically possible there. It was not sociologically possible because under severe French colonialism the traditional Algerian elite and its Islamic traditions were virtually obliterated. Politically it was impossible because the French stakes, with eleven percent of French settlers in Algeria, were too high to tolerate an organised radical elite.30

The indigenous group to spearhead a radical confrontation with the French colonialism were the Algerian intellectuals - graduates of French lycees and universities - for this stratum was the most exposed to political values of the metropolitan France and potentially the most capable of appealing to French audiences and so mobilizing their support for colonial struggle.31

In the Algerian society the French presence induced what Karl Deutsch calls "social mobilization" or "the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological communication are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behaviour".32

The critical precipitating factors were education and the creation of modern economic sectors. The colonial economy uprooted millions and made them available for new patterns. These uprooted Algerians became the backbone of the FLN.

The nature of the conflict with the colonial power also has a bearing on the diplomacy of the nationalist movement. The protracted anti-colonial conflict in


Algeria led by a radical elite was very violent. The French stakes in Algeria were too high, settler influence too pervasive, to permit the political kind of confrontation. Hence the Algerian nationalist movement became a war of liberation. The diplomacy of the nationalist elite was thus geared to amass arms and seek military training from friendly nations to fight against the French. Frantz Fanon and Pierre Bourdieu have suggested that the Algerian revolution fundamentally altered the society. The war of liberation emancipated and politicised youth and banished the veil among Algerian women.33

It is possible to discern striking similarities in the emergence of nationalist elites in India, Indonesia and Algeria. The emergence of a nationalist elite and the evolution of an anti-colonial world view among its members in different colonies accelerated the struggle against colonial domination. They became instrumental in propagating the ideas of freedom and liberty through a number of political and diplomatic actions employing nationalist media and global conferences. In the next chapter an attempt is made to discuss the diplomatic and quasi-diplomatic activities of these nationalist elites in their fight against colonialism.