

country were different from those in another part. Where there were empires, it was common for the ruler of one country to have some parts of other countries also under his rule. The territories of states often changed.

Along with changes in social and economic life, there was the beginning of a big political change. Countries which were divided into a number of states tried to unite themselves. Thus, different parts of a country were brought together as one state. In Europe, England and France were the first countries to emerge as independent and united states.

A country, parts or the whole of which were under foreign domination, began to struggle to overthrow the foreign rule and establish itself as a united nation. In the nineteenth century, there were struggles for freedom and national unification in Poland, Greece, Germany, Italy and other countries of Europe. Many of these succeeded, for example, Italy and Germany, in unifying themselves into nations. Others struggled on and won their freedom in the twentieth century. The struggle for democracy and for national independence from foreign domination and national unification have been the most important factors in shaping the

world during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

### **Imperialism**

While parts of Europe and America were building up democratic and national governments and using machines to develop their industries, what had been going on in India and other countries in Asia and in Africa? You know the story of the European sailors and traders coming to Asian ports from the fifteenth century onwards to buy spices, calico, muslin, tea, sugar, saltpetre, etc. which were much in demand in Europe. These people were mainly from Portugal, Holland, Denmark, England and France—all maritime countries. Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and Indonesia were the places wherefrom the European traders collected their merchandise. To establish their control over trade from which huge profits were made, these traders often fought among themselves. For this they got military help from their respective governments. By the middle of the eighteenth century we find that the East India Company of England has become the most dominant group among the European traders in Asia with India as their most important base. The traders of other European