

## Topic 6.3 - Indigenous Responses to State Expansion (1750–1900)

### Standards Alignment

Theme	Learning Objective	Key Concept (KC)
Governance (GOV)	Unit 6: Learning Objective C – Explain how and why internal and external factors have influenced the process of state building from 1750 to 1900.	KC-5.3.III.D – Increasing questions about political authority and growing nationalism contributed to anticolonial movements.
Governance (GOV)	Unit 6: Learning Objective C – Explain how and why internal and external factors have influenced the process of state building from 1750 to 1900.	KC-5.2.II.C – Anti-imperial resistance took various forms, including direct resistance within empires and the creation of new states on the peripheries.
Governance (GOV)	Unit 6: Learning Objective C – Explain how and why internal and external factors have influenced the process of state building from 1750 to 1900.	KC-5.3.III.E – Increasing discontent with imperial rule led to rebellions, some of which were influenced by religious ideas.

### Student Learning Objectives

- Explain different forms of resistance to imperial expansion.
- Identify causes of anti-colonial movements.
- Compare religious and nationalist resistance movements.
- Analyze primary sources showing indigenous perspectives.

### Lesson Overview

As empires expanded between 1750 and 1900, indigenous peoples and colonized societies responded in a variety of ways. Some resisted through armed rebellion, while others used religious or nationalist ideas to challenge imperial authority. These responses were shaped by both internal factors, such as cultural identity, and external pressures, such as economic exploitation and political control.

Understanding these reactions helps explain how imperial rule was challenged and how new political movements emerged.

### Essential Vocabulary

- **Millenarian movement:** A belief that a major religious or social transformation is coming soon
- **Syncretism:** The blending of different cultural or religious traditions
- **Guerrilla warfare:** Fighting using small, mobile groups rather than formal armies
- **Ethnic identity:** A shared sense of culture, language, or ancestry among a group
- **Rebellion:** An organized resistance against authority

### Background Reading

Indigenous responses to imperial expansion varied widely across regions. In some areas, people resisted through direct military conflict. For example, the Sepoy Rebellion in India (1857) challenged British rule, while the Zulu resisted British

expansion in southern Africa. These movements often emerged in response to economic exploitation, political control, and cultural disruption.

Religious beliefs also played an important role in resistance. The Ghost Dance movement among Native Americans and the Taiping Rebellion in China both drew on spiritual ideas to inspire resistance. These movements often promised renewal or liberation, reflecting dissatisfaction with imperial or foreign influence.

Nationalism became increasingly important toward the end of the 19th century. Colonized peoples began to develop shared political identities and challenge imperial rule through organized movements. While many of these efforts were unsuccessful in the short term, they laid the foundation for future independence movements in the 20th century.

### Primary Source 1

**Source:** Proclamation of Nana Sahib during the Indian Rebellion (1857)

Full text: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1857india.asp>

All you Hindus and Mohammedans of India, it is clear as the sun that the English have deceived you and taken possession of your country by fraud and force. They have robbed you of your lands, overthrown your princes, and destroyed your ancient customs. They have shown no respect for your religions, your traditions, or your rights as the people of this land. The time has now come for you to recognize the truth and to unite in common cause against those who have reduced you to subjection.

The English have introduced laws and institutions that do not reflect the customs of this country and have disregarded the authority of your leaders. They have seized the wealth of India and carried it away to enrich themselves, leaving the people in poverty and distress. They have weakened your society and brought dishonor upon your nation. These injustices cannot be endured any longer, and it is your duty to restore the rightful order that existed before their domination.

I call upon all soldiers, princes, and citizens of India to take up arms and rise against the foreign rulers who have oppressed you. Let no one remain idle while your country is held under foreign domination. Stand together in unity, regardless of your religion or background, and fight for the restoration of your independence and dignity. The struggle we undertake is not only for our own sake but for the sake of future generations who deserve to live free from oppression and foreign control.

### Guided Questions

1. What is the **historical situation** of this document?
2. How does Nana Sahib appeal to both Hindus and Muslims?
3. What grievances against British rule are identified?
4. What is the author's **purpose**, and how does it shape the language?
5. How does this source reflect broader patterns of resistance to imperialism?

## Primary Source 2

**Source:** Wovoka, Message of the Ghost Dance Movement (c. 1890)

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/ghostdance.asp>

You must not hurt anybody or do harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always. It will give you satisfaction in life. I will give you this dance, and if you do as I say, you will have nothing to fear. The land will be renewed, and all that has been lost will be restored. The earth will soon be covered with new soil, and everything that has died will live again.

When this happens, the white man will disappear, and the buffalo will return to the plains. Your people will once again live as they did before, free from suffering and hardship. There will be no sickness, no death, and no hunger. The old world will pass away, and a new world will take its place, one where your ancestors will return and live among you again.

You must believe in this message and perform the dance faithfully. You must live in peace with one another and avoid conflict. If you follow these teachings, the Creator will bring about the restoration of your lands and your people. This is the way to end suffering and bring renewal to your nation, even in the face of the hardships you now endure under the rule of others.

### Guided Questions

1. What type of resistance is reflected in this source?
2. How does religion shape the message of resistance?
3. What does the document reveal about indigenous conditions under U.S. expansion?
4. How does this movement differ from armed resistance movements?
5. How might U.S. authorities have viewed this movement?

### Types of Indigenous Responses

Type of Response	Description	Example
Armed resistance	Direct military opposition	Sepoy Rebellion
Religious movements	Spiritual-based resistance	Ghost Dance
Nationalist movements	Political organization	Indian nationalism
Cultural resistance	Preservation of traditions	Indigenous practices

### Change / Continuity / Comparison

- **Change:** Increasing role of nationalism in resistance movements.
- **Continuity:** Armed resistance remained a common response.
- **Comparison:** Some movements used religion, while others used political organization.

### Key Takeaways

- Indigenous responses varied from violent rebellion to spiritual movements.
- Religious beliefs often inspired resistance.
- Nationalism became more important over time.
- Resistance movements challenged imperial authority.
- Many movements influenced later independence efforts.

## Practice Section – SAQs

### SAQ 1

- A. Identify ONE form of resistance to imperial expansion.
- B. Explain ONE cause of this resistance.
- C. Provide ONE example of this type of resistance.

### SAQ 2 (Stimulus-Based)

**Stimulus:** Nana Sahib excerpt

- A. Identify ONE grievance against British rule.
- B. Explain ONE way the document encourages resistance.
- C. Explain ONE outcome of the rebellion.

### SAQ 3 (Stimulus-Based)

**Stimulus:** Ghost Dance excerpt

- A. Identify ONE belief expressed in the movement.
- B. Explain ONE way religion influenced resistance.
- C. Explain ONE reaction by U.S. authorities.

### SAQ 4 (Comparative)

- A. Identify ONE similarity between religious and nationalist resistance movements.
- B. Identify ONE difference between them.
- C. Explain ONE reason for this difference.

### SAQ 5 (Causation)

- A. Identify ONE internal factor that led to resistance.
- B. Identify ONE external factor that led to resistance.
- C. Explain how these factors contributed to anti-imperial movements.

### Primary Source Citations

- Nana Sahib Proclamation (1857):  
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1857india.asp>
- Ghost Dance Movement:  
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/ghostdance.asp>