

European Imperialism Causes, Expansion, and Global Consequences

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Introduction:

Imperialism refers to the authority or control of one nation or ruler over the other. The age of imperialism didn't actually begin in the 19th century. It started from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. When European rulers traveled to various parts of the world to establish their colonies and to begin trade with different countries of the world, they started off with their journey towards the Far East. They wanted to establish their settlement and begin trading relationships; however, they wanted to do so in their own interest. Europeans traveled to the Middle East, South and North America, China, and African countries. Although the age of industrialization brought huge changes to European society, imperialism played an integral role in enabling the Europeans to spread their roots around the world in the early nineteenth century. European imperialists established relations with the local rulers and leaders to establish their settlement and to build a trading relationship with them.

The new European imperialists had a different approach and method of establishing colonies and trading relationships with other countries. They didn't rely on methods used by early imperialists to establish their settlement. During the period of 1870 till the time of 1914, another revolution took place in Europe. This was the second industrial revolution. European imperialists had aggressive and somehow greedy intentions. They wanted to expand their roots to other foreign countries to fulfill the rising demands of the Second Industrial Revolution. The Second Industrial Revolution helped Europeans to transform the society they lived in. It upgraded and improved standards of living. Steel production was drastically increased and improved. Science and technology replaced old ways of doing things. Transportation methods and shipment production improved. Power generation helped me do various tasks with ease and speed. Thus, the Second Industrial Revolution came with its own advantages, improvements, and technology while putting more pressure on the European nations to meet the increasing demand of the industrialized society. To meet these demands, European imperialists started traveling around the world. Modern imperialist had an idea of controlling the administrative affairs of native countries so as to strengthen their feet in those countries and to trade for the sake of their own benefits (Stuchtey 2011).

European imperialism was also fueled by political leaders since they wanted to gain control over underdeveloped societies for their own benefit. European imperialism was at its peak in 1914. Great Britain had its colonies spread all around the world, mainly in Asian and African countries. They were so proud of their expansion and control over less developed societies and countries that they believed that the sun never set in the empire of Great Britain. European imperialism had left some

consequences on the nations that were colonized as well as on European nations. Imperialism led to conflicts and disturbed peace among nations of the world.

Early Industrial Imperialism:

European imperialism was fueled by the need for a commercial revolution in Europe in the year 1800. During the revolutions, there was a greater need for wealth, money, and raw materials. European leaders believed that much wealth and raw material could be taken from less developed countries. So, they began to colonize different parts of the world. European imperialists established their colonies in India, America, Africa, and China, as well as along the coastal areas of China and Africa. East Indies was also colonized by European leaders. Political personnel and other European leaders had an interest in colonizing different countries to earn benefits for themselves. Great Britain had the largest number of colonies in the year 1800. Great Britain established its colonies in America, India, and Africa. In Central and South America, Spain established its colonies. French Guinea and Louisiana were colonized by France. Holland established control in the East Indies. Thus, many parts of the world were colonized in the age of imperialism to cope with the needs and demands of the commercial revolution.

During the time of 1837-1901, the great Britain became an industrial giant. They supplied almost twenty percent of the output produced by industries to the world. In the early years of the 19th century, imperialism was not as fast as it was in the latter years. The struggle for control and democracy, as well as war, had drained out the energies of the European leaders. They believed the benefits of establishing colonies and establishment in different parts of the world would be less than the cost of establishing them. Thus, their motives to colonize in the first half of the 19th century were low/. However, in the early years of the 19th century, France and Great Britain began establishing colonies in different countries of the world. During the Victorian era that lasted between 1837 and 1901, Great Britain benefited its economy due to industrialization. They supplied a vast proportion of raw materials to the world.

Motives behind New European Imperialism:

The new imperialism began in the late eighteenth century and lasted till the early nineteenth century. There were various forces that compelled European imperialists to establish their control in other foreign nations. These motives include religious, political, military, humanitarian, and other motives. The acceptance of the Darwin theory also compelled European imperialism (Cleary, n.d.).

Industrialization led to the overproduction of various items and products that could not be sold only in European countries. European imperialists established trading relationships with their countries to sell them. The European nations had huge wealth that could be invested to earn huge returns. European imperialists decided to take a huge risk by investing in less developed societies to earn great profits.

Cheap labor was also available in underdeveloped countries. Thus, the need to magnify wealth forced European imperialists to colonize other foreign nations. Imperialists believed that colonizing foreign countries would depict their power, wealth, and control. Imperialists believe that for nations to be strong, they need to have a strong military, particularly navy power. To establish naval bases in different parts of the world, Europeans began to establish their colonies in various foreign countries (Kiernan 1982). Some Westerners hold the opinion that they must also help their fellow countries to benefit themselves from the age of industrialization. With the motive to help and civilize many underdeveloped societies, western nations began colonizing them. The social Darwin theory initiated and presented the idea of natural selection of traits that result in the survival of the fittest among all. Europeans believed that they were more fit, advanced, and civilized than others. They believed that being white made them superior to others. They started colonizing underdeveloped states because they believed that these countries were inferior. White supremacy forced modern imperialism. New technology possessed by Europeans also geared up imperialism. Europeans had better technology, weapons, and medicines as well as transportation systems to survive and to gain power and supremacy over underdeveloped and less fortunate people (Porter 1994).

Effects of Imperialism:

Imperialism had both positive and negative effects on Western societies as well as countries that were colonized. Western leaders, by establishing colonies in different parts of the world, played an integral and critical role in ensuring that wealth and resources were circulated to different parts of the world. Science and technology are not limited to a few areas or countries, but less developed countries also learn from the latest technological trends. Western countries benefited other countries to learn and live their standards of living. However, colonized countries suffered too. Western countries wiped away local markets and industries. Locally manufactured goods were considered inferior in quality to imported goods. European imperialism played an integral role in ensuring that colonized nations did not prosper. They took advantage of their cheap labor and took away their raw material. Thus depriving colonized nations of their own wealth and resources.

Imperialism affected the culture of the colonized nation in both positive and negative ways. Western people believed that their culture, norms, and values were far superior to those of colonized people. The Western people forced them to adopt their customs and even their language. Some worn-out traditions were replaced; however, imperialism affected the golden values of the people of the modernized nations. For instance, sati was a tradition in India where a woman would also die at her husband's funeral. Such traditions were replaced with modern ones. The Western people came up with the trend of using modern medicines and vaccines to improve the health conditions of colonized people.

Imperialism has also disturbed the peaceful situation in many countries. Imperialism created tension and political conflicts within colonized nations. Several groups were formed in colonized nations that competed with one another. Such a situation created a state of conflict within countries. This is not

only within countries but also creates tensions among countries. It disturbed the peace of the world.

Conclusion:

There were several motives that fueled and geared up imperialism. Imperialism helped many underprivileged states to benefit from the technology of Western nations. However, most of the motives behind colonizing and gaining power in less developed states were driven by selfish interest and the demands of the Industrial Revolution. With the greater need for raw materials, cheap labor, and the need for investment, and to sell different products, western nations had only one option, that is to colonize other foreign countries and to depict their power and wealth (Modern European Imperialism n.d.).

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