

UNIT 4: IMPERIALISM

A WESTERN-DOMINATED WORLD

The New Imperialism and Its Causes

imperialism - the domination by one country of the political, economic or cultural life of another country or region

- the "new imperialism" - aggressive European expansion in the 1800s

- 4 causes of the new imperialism:

1. economic interests - Ind. Rev. created needs/desires that spurred overseas expansion - manufacturers wanted access to natural resources - hoped for new markets where they could sell their factory goods - colonies offered a valuable outlet for Europe's growing population
2. political and military interests - merchant ships, naval vessels needed bases around the world to take on coal and supplies - industrial powers seized islands, harbors - nationalism and prestige - Western leaders claimed colonies were needed for national security - ruling a global empire increased a nation's prestige
3. humanitarian goals - missionaries, doctors, colonial officials believed they had a duty to spread western civilization (medicine, law, Christianity)
4. Social Darwinism - many Westerners believed in their racial superiority - idea that Europeans were superior to all others - imperial conquest/destruction of weaker races was nature's way of improving the human species

The Success of Western Imperialism - 1870-1914 - imperialist nations gained control over much of the world - reasons for their success:

Weakness of Nonwestern States - older civilizations in decline (Ottoman Middle East, Mughal India, Qing China) - in West Africa, slave trade undermined empires, kingdoms, and city-states

Western Advantages - strong economies, well-organized govts., powerful militaries, superior technology, medical advances

(for example: quinine - medicine to fight malaria, maxim gun - early machine gun)

Resistance - Africans/Asians strongly resisted western expansion - many western-educated Africans and Asians organized nationalist movements to expel the imperialists

Criticism at Home - some argued colonialism was a tool of the rich, some said it was immoral - greater democracy at home, but imposing undemocratic rule on other people

Forms of Imperial Rule

Colonies - direct rule - officials & soldiers sent to administer colonies (French)

- indirect rule - sultans, chiefs, other local rulers - urged leaders to get education in Britain to become westernized (British)

Protectorates - local rulers left in place but expected to follow advice of European advisers - cheaper than running a colony

Spheres of Influence - areas in which outside powers claimed exclusive investment or trading privileges (Europeans created them in China, U.S. in Latin America)

THE PARTITION OF AFRICA

Africa in the Early 1800s

North Africa - Muslim and part of the declining Ottoman empire

West Africa - Islam had grown in this region as well

- the Asante kingdom - a strong state that had arisen in the forest regions - they traded with Europeans and Muslims, controlled several small states - these states worked with Europeans in an attempt to exploit the kingdom's lack of unity

East Africa - Muslim, African slaves sent from here to Middle East

Southern Africa - Shaka - leader of united Zulu nation - his conquests led to migrations and wars - in the 1830s, the Zulus fought against the Boers (Dutch settlers in the region)

The Slave Trade - by early 1800s, Europeans had outlawed transatlantic slave trade, but East African slave trade continued - 1787 - British organized Sierra Leone in West Africa as colony for former slaves - 1847 - Liberia became an independent republic (settled by free blacks from the U.S.)

European Contacts Increase - Africa known as the "dark continent" because little was known about its interior (difficult to maneuver rivers, disease kept many Europeans from venturing far)

Missionaries - tried to spread Christianity, spoke out against slavery - built schools, churches, medical clinics - paternalistic - saw Africans as children in need of guidance

Dr. David Livingstone - best known British explorer-missionary - explored the continent for 30 years, wrote about native cultures he'd encountered, opposed the slave trade

- 1871 - journalist Henry Stanley tracked him down in Tanzania (Livingstone hadn't been heard from in years - asked, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?")

A Scramble for Colonies - Belgian King Leopold II - hired Henry Stanley to explore Congo River basin, arrange trade treaties with African leaders - hoped for conquest and profit - his activities in the Congo set off a scramble by other European nations

Berlin Conference - 1884 - to avoid bloodshed, European powers met in Germany to decide how to carve up Africa - no Africans invited - recognized Belgium's claim to the Congo Free State but called for free trade on Congo and Niger rivers - European powers couldn't claim any part of Africa without first setting up a govt. office there - within 20 years, most of the continent had been partitioned by European powers

Horrors in the Congo - Belgium exploited the people of the Congo (as forced laborers) and its natural resources (copper, rubber, ivory) - laborers were beaten, mutilated

- intl. outrage forced King Leopold II to turn control of colony over to Belgian govt.

French Expansion - 1830s - France invaded, conquered Algeria (1000s of French, many more Algerians killed in fighting) - late 1800s - Tunisia under French control, much of West and Central Africa - French empire the size of continental U.S.

Britain Takes Its Share - 1815 - British took Cape Colony from the Dutch - Boers (Dutch settlers) moved north - when they found gold and diamonds, British fought them for control of the riches - led to the Boer War (1889-1902) - guerilla warfare - the British won, but at great cost - 1910 - Britain formed the Union of South Africa - govt. run by whites - complete racial segregation (apartheid) until 1993 (Nelson Mandela became pres.)

Africans Resist Imperialism

Ethiopia Survives - Emperor Menelik II - late 1800s - reforming ruler who modernized his country (roads, bridges, western school system) - imported latest weapons, hired Europeans to train his army - 1896 - Italy invaded Ethiopia - Ethiopians defeated Italian forces at the battle of Adowa - aside from Liberia, Ethiopia was the only African nation to preserve its independence

New African Elite - western-educated elite (upper class) emerged - some admired western ways and rejected their own culture, others condemned western societies that upheld liberty and equality for whites only - by early 1900s, many African leaders were pursuing independence from European control/rule