

Introduction

Imperialism



Imperialism occurs when a strong nation takes over a weaker nation or region and dominates its economic, political, or cultural life.

This type of foreign policy was practiced by European nations and Japan throughout the 1800s and early 1900s. In every case, a nation would experience **industrialization** prior to practicing imperialism on a foreign nation or region. This was due to the nearly insatiable demand for cheap **raw materials** and the need

for markets to buy manufactured goods.

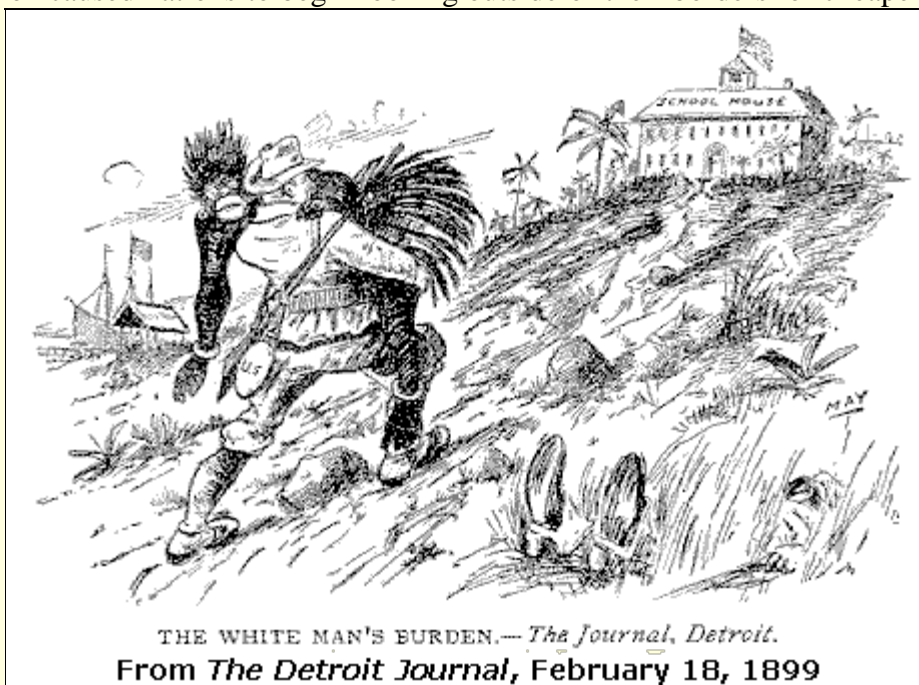
Industrial Roots

Abundant **raw materials** and vast **markets** are needed in order to maintain an industrialized economy. Raw materials such as iron and cotton can be turned into products such as steel and textiles. Finally, these products need to be sold to a market in order to realize a profit.

The forces of industrialization caused nations to begin looking outside of their borders for cheaper and more abundant raw materials. Foreign populations were also viewed as vast markets where goods produced in domestic factories could be sold.

Other Causes

Nationalism, or pride in one's country, also contributed to the growth of imperialism. Citizens were proud of their country's accomplishments, which sometimes included taking over foreign areas. As European nations became competitive with one another, there was an increased pressure to practice imperialism in order to maintain a **balance of power** in Europe.



As Europeans took over foreign lands, they viewed the culture of the native population to be inferior to their own. This concept became known as "**The White Man's Burden**" after a popular



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poem by the same name was published by **Rudyard Kipling** in 1899. Some interpreted this poem to mean that it was the duty of imperializing nations to bring western **culture** and sensibility to the savage native populations that were encountered in far off lands. This is sometimes referred to as **Social Darwinism**, or the belief that all human groups compete for survival, and that the stronger groups will replace the weaker groups. Others saw it as a warning to western nations to stop the harmful practice of imperialism.

Causes of Imperialism	
Economic Motives	The Industrial Revolution created an insatiable demand for raw materials and new markets.
Nationalism	European nations wanted to demonstrate their power and prestige to the world.
Balance of Power	European nations were forced to acquire new colonies to achieve a balance with their neighbors and competitors.
White Man's Burden	The Europeans' sense of superiority made them feel obligated to "civilize the heathen savages" they encountered.

Results

In the short-term, imperialism was a very profitable foreign policy which came at the expense of the foreign regions where it was being practiced. **Cultural diffusion** also occurred, leading to an exchange of ideas between the West and the East. For example, European methods of education were adopted, leading foreigners to study ideas of liberty and **democracy** embraced during the **Enlightenment** and various political **revolutions**. This exchange eventually led to the demise of imperialism and **colonialism** throughout the world after **World War Two**.

Created by Thomas Caswell

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