Imperialism (1800-1914)

You Mean Europe Created Empires in Africa and Asia Too?

Causes and Types of Imperialism
To continue industrializing, Europeans needed more natural resources. They also wanted to sell more manufactured goods. One solution was to take over weaker nations and force trade. This was called imperialism. Europeans had advanced technology and military power that enabled them to control areas in Africa and Asia. Also, nationalism motivated European nations to build empires. Lastly, imperialism spread European cultural beliefs about religion and politics, and language.

There were three main forms of imperialism: colonies, spheres of influence and protectorates. Colonies were areas with no government and completely controlled by a foreign nation. Protectorates were countries which had governments, but whose politics and ideas were guided by imperialist nations. Spheres of influence were geographical areas in which an imperialist nation was very powerful, usually controlling all trade. Some natives of the conquered lands resisted imperialism through armed conflict and peaceful protest.

The Scramble for Africa
Europeans competed with each other through imperialism. In 1884, Europeans met in Germany at the Berlin Conference to fracture Africa. No African leaders were invited to this meeting. The Europeans put little thought into African ethnic groups when sectioning the continent. By 1914, all but two African countries were under European control. Most African nations would not gain independence until after World War II. Dividing Africa also brought Europeans into conflict with one another. They fought over the territories with the most valuable natural resources. One example of this was the Boer War (1899-1902). The British fought and defeated the Boers, Dutch farmers, for control of South Africa.

India: The Crown Jewel
Britain controlled the largest of the European empires. Of all of the British colonies, India was the most valuable because of its abundant natural resources. For this, India was called Britain's “crown jewel.” As the Mughal empire declined, Britain gained more and more control in India under the British East India Company. Indian soldiers called sepoys were frustrated with British control and disrespect towards Indian culture. They rebelled in a violent and widespread revolt called the Sepoy Mutiny. Britain put down the uprising and transferred control of India from the British East India Company to the British government. Though the mutiny failed, nationalism increased in India. Two political groups, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, formed to work for independence. India became independent in 1947.

Imperialism in Asia
Both China and Japan wanted to practice isolationism. However, the European nations and the United States forced the two countries to trade with them. In 1853 on orders from the U.S. president, Commodore Matthew Perry forced Japan to open its
Imperialism in Asia (cont.)

ports to trade. Japan did not have modern weapons and technology like the U.S. and had no choice but to agree. The Japanese government decided to quickly modernize in the hope of fighting off foreign imperialism. Eventually, Japan would become an imperial power and controlled some neighboring countries including China and Korea.

In China, the European nations and Japan established spheres of influence in which they had special trading rights. The Chinese resented this and in 1900 a group of Chinese rebels attacked foreigners in China. This was called the Boxer Rebellion. The rebellion was unsuccessful but did increase nationalism in China. Though not as successful as Japan, the Chinese also made changes to their country in an attempt to end foreign control.

Connection to Today
Can you think of any modern day examples of imperialism? The United States has territories such as Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. Does that make the US an imperialist nation? Must imperialism involve the taking of territory? Explain the differences and similarities in your own words.

Key Vocabulary

- **Colony**: country or area with no government of its own and completely controlled by a foreign nation
- **Protectorates**: countries that have their own governments, but whose politics and ideas are guided by an imperialist nation
- **Spheres of Influence**: geographical area in which an imperialist nation is very powerful, usually controlling all trade in that area

- **Natural resources**: materials such as minerals, oil, or wood that come directly from nature and are used in the manufacturing process
- **Berlin Conference**: meeting in 1884 in which Europeans divided Africa
- **Imperialism**: seizure of a weaker country by a stronger country
- **Isolationism**: policy of avoiding political, economic, or military involvement with other countries

- **Ethnic**: belonging to a certain group which shares culture, religion, or language
- **British East India Company**: British trading company given control of India
- **Sepoy Mutiny**: rebellion of Hindu and Muslim soldiers against the British in India
- **Indian National Congress**: nationalist group in India that wanted self-rule
- **Boxer Rebellion**: 1900 revolt in China aimed at ending foreign influence in the country

Quick Review

1. All of the following were motives for imperialism except –
   A. Christian missionaries wanted to spread religion
   B. European manufacturers needed markets for their manufactured goods
   C. The Europeans wanted to setup large manufacturing plants in Africa and China
   D. Raw materials were needed for European factories

2. What best completes the “?” in the diagram?
   A. The British East India Company is given governing authority over India
   B. Britain gives India independence
   C. There is an increase in nationalism in India
   D. The British begin to build factories in India

3. Based on your knowledge of geography and history, what would be the best title for this map?
   A. Countries of Europe in 1815
   B. Colonization of India in 1898
   C. European Colonies in Africa in 1900
   D. Spheres of Influence in China in 1914

4. One of the most common results of imperialism was an increase in nationalism for the country being conquered. Why do you think this happened? What were some possible outcomes of increased nationalism?

Resources

- **ABC-CLIO**
  - China’s Boxer Rebellion
  - Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The White Man’s Burden”
    http://worldhistory.abc-clio.com/Search/Display/309008?terms=white+man%27s+burden