

The impact of european imperialism in africa assignment



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There are several reasons why the European nations competed with each other to gain colonies in Africa. They all wanted to gain power and prestige. The more territory that they were able to control in Africa the more powerful and important they thought they could become. Africa was tremendously rich in natural resources, which could be brought to Europe and turned into manufactured goods. Europeans also needed markets for their manufactured goods. These goods could be sold in Africa for large profits.

Often a European nation would take over territory in Africa simply to prevent another European country from taking it. European rule came to Africa in many different ways. Sometimes a European trading company made agreements with African chiefs permitting the company to trade and keep order in the area. The traders then put pressure on their government in Europe to take over in order to protect them. In a few cases tribal chiefs voluntarily asked for the protection of one European nation in order to avoid being taken over by another European nation.

Sometimes the Africans even asked for European protection against other African tribes. The African chiefs in whom they gave the European company or overspent the right to keep order and to take over the land and resources in their area signed treaties. Thousands of treaties were signed by African rulers giving away most of their rights to Europeans, but the Africans never really understood these treaties and did not realize what they were giving away. By 1815 the world had known some four hundred years of continuous European Imperialism.

In a sense this was the outward expansion of European power over other continents. Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, British colonial empires had followed one another throughout these four centuries. Always these extensions of control over non-European territories had involved, in varying proportions, trading, missionizing, adventure, settlement, loot, national pride, conquests, and wars between rival powers. The very list of countries emphasizes the lead taken in this expansion by the western, maritime peoples.

But it is not necessary to cross-sea, rather than land, to become an imperial power. The creation of the great dynastic empires of the Hapsburg and the Ottoman Turks, the traditional drive eastward of the Germans in quest of lands for settlement and, the continental conquests of Napoleon, the rapid advance of Russia into southern and central Asia during the nineteenth century, even the expansion westward of the United States during the same period, are all examples of the same process carried out, it so happened, wealth continental land areas rather than across oceans.

By 1875 European possessions in Africa consisted of some forts and trading posts along the coast and a few tiny colonies. Between 1880 and 1910, however, Africa was divided up among the Europeans. For the next 50 years decisions affecting Africa and African people were made not in Africa, but in London, Paris, Lisbon, and other European cities. Morocco, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Mali and other areas in West Africa came under French rule. Britain's colonies were scattered throughout the continent. Although the French controlled the most territory, Britain ruled the greatest number of people.

Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Nigeria, South Africa, Rhodesia, Uganda, Kenya, Egypt, the Sudan and others were taken over. Reiterate, a large part of Assimilation and Libya. Southwest Africa, Tanganyika, Togging and Cameroon were ruled by Germany until Germany's defeat in World War I. By 1914 there were two independent countries left in Africa-Liberia and Ethiopia. And even Ethiopia was taken over by Italy in 1935. What was most strikingly novel about the new imperialism was its intense concentration upon two continents: Africa and eastern Asia.

These were the only two important areas of the still not brought under European influence before 1870. The decades between 1870 and 1914 speedily completed the expansion of European influence and civilization over the whole of the earth; and it was accomplished in an era when the realism, ruthlessness, and rivalries of European national governments ere exceptionally great. It therefore had a temper uniquely masterful and remorseless, brooking no obstacles and push fully self-assertive.

This quality came as much from the nature of European politics as from the urges of European economic development. There was no international organization fitted to exercise any kind of control or regulation over the scramble for territories in which the great powers now indulged. The naked power politics of the new colonialism were the projection, onto an overseas screen, of the interstate frictions and rivalries of Europe. It was this ambitions of novel economic conditions with anarchic political relations, which explained the nature of the new imperialism.

Among the economic forces behind it, the urge to find new outlets for the “glut of capital” and fresh markets for industrial output were in general more important than either the quest for raw materials or the factor of overpopulation. The special attraction of Africa and Asia were, indeed, that they offered many of the raw materials needed by the multiplying factories of Europe: including cotton, silk, rubber, vegetable oils, and the rarer minerals. The products of the tropics were especially welcome to Europe.

But many of these raw materials could be, and were, got by trading without political control. The pressure of population in Europe was becoming great by the early twentieth century, but it still found free outlet in migration to the traditional areas of reception in the United States and Australia. Neither Africa nor eastern Asia offered climatic or economic conditions inviting enough to attract large-scale white settlements, and the pressure of population within Japan, China, and India was now itself so great as to exert a steady demand for fresh outlets.

It was against Asiatic immigrants, not European, that the main barriers began to be raised. Political circumstances that the urge to exploit backward territories by the investment of surplus capital could make so much headway. It began especially after 1880, and gained rapidly in momentum until 1914. By then the main industrial countries had equipped themselves with an abundance of manufacturing plants, and the openings for capital investment at home were more meager.