

Global flow of silver dbq essay



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The global flow of silver managed to redefine the social structure in many societies, as well as dramatically altered the basis of the economy in many European and Asian countries. Despite the economic change that came from the mass production of silver and its use as a standard currency, the growth of the silver industry brought as much change socially and culturally as it brought economic transformation. Many people viewed the conversion to silver being the standardized currency as a huge hindrance to their daily lives, but the silver industry brought wealth to many societies and became a necessity in trade.

On one side of things, the flow of silver throughout the world brought a wave of economic change, as mentioned in documents 3, 5, 6, and 7, but on the other hand, it brought new social distinctions as silver widened the gap between the rich and the poor, as mentioned in documents 1 and 6. Another aspect of the global flow of silver that influenced many areas was the cultural interactions that entailed, as mentioned in documents 2, 4, 7, and 8.

An example of the passing and interacting of cultures would be the attraction of Asian commodities to Spain which were paid for in a heavy flow of silver as mentioned in document 2, which was viewed as many as the beginning of the end for Spain, as told by the Spanish scholar Tomas de Mercado. It would be helpful to see a document that showed the statistics of the economies of some Asian and European countries before and after the massive rise of silver in their societies, as this would help me to determine the facts of the total economic effects due to the flow of the metal.

Another document that would be helpful would be a document showing the point of view of a peasant that may or may not have been directly affected by the flow of metal into his/her society. It would help clear up the social effects that entailed after the arrival and massive flow of silver. The economic effects that the global flow of silver brought to the world were undeniable; silver itself changed the integrity of how people handle business transactions throughout the world.

Documents 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 all mention how the economy changed dramatically due to the arrival and growth of silver as a currency. In document 3, a Ming dynasty court official writes about how the silver coin is hard to come by because the government is hoarding all of it. They take silver for taxes but do not redistribute it to the people. He is writing this because he is trying to convince the emperor to distribute the silver more appropriately to the people, and because his family is obviously not doing well financially.

He is a court official who most likely has small influence in the government and writes in hopes of getting the emperor to consider spreading the wealth to the lower classes of China, to save his family, and other families like his. Document 5 expresses a different, but somewhat related view about how silver has become a hindrance to regular business interactions, because customers can no longer trade items of their own to purchase goods, they have to go through a lengthy process to pay everything in silver. Document 6 shows a counter point of view about the wealth that the mining of silver has brought to Spain.

Document 7 is a report written to convince the emperor of China that there is much wealth to be found in foreign trade, because of how much silver some countries will pay for Chinese goods. Finally, document 8 examines how European countries are able to purchase Asian commodities freely because of their immense supply of silver, which hints at the fact that silver brought many countries luxury and wealth. Although the economic impact of the globalization of silver was undeniable, there was much unrest among civilians because of the rise of silver as a currency.

Documents 1 and 6 explicitly show how social distinctions were affected because of silver. They show that while silver may have brought good fortune and wealth to some, it caused stirring among many people.

Document 1 explains that silver brings greed, and it only causes the rich to be richer. Ye Chunji, a county official, writes this document because he is appalled at how the rich have become greedy because of silver, and because he wants someone to put an end to the endless, unnecessary amounts of spending.

This document also presents a unique point of view because he also mentions how “the frugal man with only one bar of silver currency can have something left over,” because it leads to more debate about the effect of silver on society. It shows that a man with only one piece of silver can manage to survive, simply because that one piece of silver is valuable, and it is non perishable. It will always be worth the same amount, and this document shows that Ye Chunji notices how silver has brought a sense of wealth to even the poorest of people. Document 6 briefly touches on the fact that many Indians work to mine the silver in some very poor conditions, which

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shows that little regard is shown for these people, that the higher officials that order this mining are simply in it for the wealth, with absolutely no concern for the well being of the men that work hard to acquire this silver. More than anything else that the global flow of silver brought to society was cultural interaction. So much trading came out of the fact that silver is a standard of trade that could be recognized anywhere. Documents 2, 4, 7, and 8 all show the effects of cultural integration and trade due to silver.

In document 2, a Spanish scholar tells of how the high demand for Asian commodities ruined Spain because of how much silver they spent on all of it, even though the goods they were buying were not necessities. Document 4 examines the immense amount of goods that are traded for silver such as silk, gold, perfume, and porcelain. A lot of money is paid for these goods, and it spreads products from many places all around the world. Document 7 gives the best example of the interactions between various cultures and societies. Because of the value of silver and because of the large amounts of it, there could be more trade and more exchange of goods.

The silver could be traded for goods and the goods could in return be traded for silver, and so on and so forth; the possibilities could be endless.

Document 8 touches on the fact that Europeans are reliant on Chinese luxuries and commodities, and that Europeans are reliant on them, and that it would be idiotic to cut off this trading because it would cause outrage with the people who have come to rely on these goods. The author, Charles D’Avenant, an English scholar, writes this to try and convince people that because of the hundreds of years of indulgence of Asian spices and commodities, it would be stupid to sever what they already have.

He most likely uses a lot of these commodities himself, so this document should definitely be approached with caution, but the point of view should also be taken into account because of the wealth of information that it provides on the cultural aspects of Asian societies that Englishmen and Europeans have come to rely on. It is undeniable that the arrival of silver and its massive rise as a currency brought wealth to many societies and countries, but more importantly, it had a more lasting effect in the fact that it spread culture around the globe from different societies far and wide.

Although the benefits that silver brought to many places far outweighed the negative connotations that came with it, the arrival of silver widened the gap between the wealthy and the poor, and it came as an annoyance to some people who were used to the ways of old. In the end, the flow of silver throughout the globe affected the world in so many ways that you can still witness today, and it benefited the human race as a whole to have a standardized currency that could be recognized by anyone around the world.