

Significance of imperialism in the period before 1914

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Imperialism before 1914 Introduction One of the foremost causes of World War I, 1914, was imperialism. Imperialism is a structure where the powerful nation exploits and rules one or more other colonies, collectively described as empires. In most instances, the imperialist countries establish control over the new territories using coercion. It is possible through annexation, infiltration, war, military conquest, and political pressure. Once the territory conquered, it becomes a colony of the conquering nation, sometimes benevolently denoted to as “mother country.” Therefore, imperialism refers to the subjugation of states and societies of the Africa, Pacific, and Asia by European great powers during the 19th and the 20th century (Wait, 2003).

Spread of Christianity

Many of the Westerners believed that Europe had to civilize their brothers beyond the seas. It was as a moral obligation to civilize the uncivilized. Therefore, the Missionaries ended up supporting colonization believing that European control would be helpful in spreading Christianity to the colonies (Rosenthal & Rodić, 2015).

The spread of Christianity had both positively and negatively influence on the world. On a positive note, the spread of Christianity opened up the rest of the colonies and enabled the advancement of formal education and the civilization of the regions. Christianity ultimately led to the development and growth of the colonies. On a wider scope, the spread of Christianity also contributed to an end to the slave trade in the Pacific Ocean (Rosenthal & Rodić, 2015).

On the other hand, the spread of Christianity impacted negatively as it was one of the key sources of first World War. The imperialist nations scrambled

and grabbed colonies in the name of spreading the “ Good News’ and Evangelism contributing to tensions amongst them. The result of such tensed relationship led to the formation of blocks that fueled the occurrence of World War I (Rosenthal & Rodić, 2015).

Growth of World Trade and Capitalism

The expansion course traced back to the Iberian voyage of the discovery of the fifteenth century. By 1900, the British had a colony on 400 million subjects as well as the quarter of the globe. The French had a possession of six million square miles and fifty-two million people. Germany had acquired six million square miles and had fifteen million people under its authority (Bönker, 2012).

The primary aim for the scramble was for economic advancement, which ultimately led to capitalism. Powerful European nations acquired colonies that had abundant resources. Minerals such as gold and other resources like cash crops grown in these settlements. These materials majorly used for trade that was very lucrative. It was, therefore, prestigious and wealthy to own a fertile territory. The Ottoman Empire as discussed below is a good example (Rosenthal & Rodić, 2015).

The scramble for such rich colonies contributed to tensions and enmity among the European powers. Therefore, the acquisition of colonies contributed positively to the growth of world trade. Imperialism also saw an age towards capitalism. The imperialists such as Britain and France spread the capitalist ideology with civilization and acquisition of property. At the end of the war, nations ended up dividing into capitalists and the socialists (Rosenthal & Rodić, 2015).

Growth of Imperial rivalry and Militarism

The colonial government functioned by the imperial power and by the subordinate puppet regimes. The military presence stationed at the acquired European colonies to control the native inhabitants, deter imperial rivals, and combat the uprisings. The primary significance of imperialism was on economic power, which saw an age into capitalism. The colonies existed to enrich and profit the supreme power. The process involved the supply of the precious metals and other resources like timber, rice, rubber, cotton and other foodstuffs. The colonies were also a vital source of cheap labor, trading ports and agricultural land (Wait, 2003).

The military instability was a significant contributor to the tensions among the major European nations, therefore contributing to the war. For example, the acute problems in Ottoman Empire altered the balance of power in the Eastern Europe. As described as the ' Sick Man of Europe' Ottoman sultanate was in a prompt military, political, and economic decline towards the end of second half of 1800s. His defeat in several battles comprised of the First Balkan War, the Crimean War, and the Russo-Turkish War. The rising revolutions and nationalism together with these conflicts led to a gradual and significance loss of the territory (Rosenthal & Rodić, 2015).

With the shrinking of the Ottoman Empire and a risk of a complete collapse, other Europe's Imperial powers clamored in securing the territory or the influence in the region. In accord, Austria-Hungary hoped expanding its empire towards the Balkans. Russia quickly moved to limit its expansion while securing Black Sea. Similarly, Germany ensured the security and the completion of the Berlin-to-Baghdad railway. France and Britain also had

trade and colonial interest in the same region. It brought about the 'European question.' What will happen to the Eastern Europe on withdrawal of Ottoman? Therefore, these developments drew great powers of Europe into a Balkan sphere, creating rivalry and tensions among the Imperials (Bönker, 2012).

Conclusion

The scramble and seizure of states led to First World War. Through imperialism; the powerful nation countries seized territories outside their borders, after that, transforming, and governing them. Several European colonies had empires by the end of 19th century, British Empire being the largest. The period saw the race acquire last territories that were open to colonization. The scramble for territories for the reason of spread of Christianity, growth of world trade and capitalism, and growth of militarism. Therefore, it fuelled the rivalry leading to some various diplomatic incidents, and ultimately, to World War I (Rosenthal & Rodić, 2015).

References

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