

# Europe's surge of nineteenth-century imperialism

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Europe's Surge of Nineteenth-Century Imperialism Imperialism in Europe peaked during the last third of the 19th century and its effects spread out to the early parts of the 20th century. According to Hunt (730), colonies focused on economic ventures whereby they provided investments and key markets for developing businesses. This led to rivalry and competition among nations for new ventures in Africa and Asia. This kind of imperialism was referred to as new because of the scramble to rule more territories directly and not just controlling the trade they had with them (Hunt 730). This new imperialism had its consequences which included conflicts of nations either with each other or with the native people. One such conflict was between China and Britain which according to Marchant (42), was known as the Anglo-Chinese opium wars. In this paper, I am going to show that I agree with Marchant's implications in her article that the new imperialism in Europe was driven by values central to the rise of progressive trends such as the Enlightenment.

In their trade dealings with China, the British believed that free trade was a way of creating wealth for all nations. This would, in turn, lead to a new world order that maintained peace at all levels. The Chinese, on the other hand, believed that there was no way in which trade could create peace for mankind because they had seen how the Ming dynasty collapsed due to doctrinarism (Marchant 42). The attitudes of the British were based on Enlightenment because they believed that both secular agendas and spiritual changes could improve the human society. They saw ways in which backward nations could gain access to progress even if war was involved. They tried to apply this on China but since China had different views, a war erupted. This was an ideological war that stemmed from differences in the <https://assignbuster.com/europes-surge-of-nineteenth-century-imperialism/>

belief of the two nations in free trade.

Britain's involvement in new imperialism as shown in the way it dealt with China was based on four outlooks. These outlooks were the result of Enlightenment ideas that had progressed over the past century. The first outlook was that God only helped those people who could do something to improve their situation. The second one was that both religious changes and secular agendas established in commerce, science, education, and legislation were a way improving the social status of the human race (Marchant 42). The third outlook was that it was the responsibility of those nations that had already experienced enlightenment to share their ideas with backward nations such as China to help them improve. Finally, the fourth one was based on the events of the Napoleonic War that war might come in handy in order to achieve progress (Marchant 43).

As Hunt (731) notes, the new imperialism intensified international tensions, contrary to promoting peaceful civilization. Other native societies apart from China, such as India also started opposing control by outsiders (Hunt 738). European nations also had conflicts among themselves and so the tension grew over rivalries. At some point at the beginning of the 20th century, colonial powers battled to establish and maintained control. War was an inevitable option and since most of the European imperial powers had amassed wealth and developed weapons (Hunt 781). As a result of the Enlightenment, the new imperialism faced war as solution to the built-up tension. The new imperialism in Europe in a way or the other was driven by values central to the rise of progressive trends, and as we have seen, the Enlightenment played a significant role.

Works Cited

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