

# Historiography primary sources project

[History](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ Every empire tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires and that its mission is not to plunder and control but to educate and liberate” is a quote by Edward W. Said. During the 19th century, Western nations started expansion into territorial imperialism to collect resources from colonies to benefit economically, politically, and socially. Jules Ferry, a former French prime minister, created a colonial policy to colonize territories for France’s benefits and to civilize the people in those territories. His biased views may affect the historical impact and people should not believe everything they hear.

One should analyze a document and take past knowledge on the issue into consideration before making any decisions. “ The French Colonial Expansion” is a modernized text of the “ Speech Before the French Chamber of Deputies” by the former French prime minister, Jules Francois Camille Ferry, on March 28, 1884. Jules Ferry made this speech to show his support for imperialism and that it was the only way, at the time, for a nation to be powerful. He believed that the colonial expansion policy consisted of economic ideas, the most far-reaching ideas of civilization, and ideas of a political and patriotic sort (Watts, Int. ).

He backed his argument up with some statistics of how other nations, like Germany or the United States of America, have outlets, or colonies to export goods to, and this helped expand their market. Colonial policy will allow for France to compete against other powerful nations and help solve problems like the freedom of trade and supply and demand (Arkenberg, Int. ). Not only did Ferry want to maintain France’s power, he also believed that Europeans were the “ superior race” because they were civilized. A social issue he

wanted to overcome was to civilize the “ inferior races” because it was the higher races’ duty to do so (Arkenberg, Int. ). In addition, Ferry made a good point that France needs colonies to support its navy with harbors, defenses, and supplies that can only be obtained overseas. Ferry was for imperialism because it had many benefits to the nation. However, many socialists and conservative critics were against his policy for different reasons (Jules, Int. ). He was addressing his speech to those that opposed imperialism and the French Chamber of Deputies. His motivation was to spread the ideas of imperialism and point out the benefits of it to the people of France. Obviously, he has a lot of pride in his country because he believes that they are the superior race,” so he wants to spread the feel of nationalism by gaining power to France (Watts, Int. ). The power of a nation is gained by the amount of land it has. The colonial policy led France to annex Tunis, Madagascar, Indo-China, and explore the Congo and the Niger region (Jules, Int. ). Based on all of the exploration done by France, one can conclude that France is a powerful nation and its colonial policy went into effect. They were great competitors with other Europeans and the United States because they took over many rich African and Asian countries.

With all of their new territories, they would have a better market because they would have raw materials sent to them from those countries, and they would sell them back (Arkenberg, Int. ). In addition, the French have a lot of pride in themselves because they believe that they are the “ superior race,” so they would try to civilize the people in many of their territories. Therefore, the local culture of those countries probably went down and there was a lot of

hatred towards the French for the change of their way of living, style, and religion.

Because Jules Ferry believed that the Europeans were a “superior race,” this proves that he was biased because he only looked at the European view of imperialism. He only sees that the colonial policy will benefit and solve France’s economic, social, and political problems. However, he doesn’t look at the view of the African and Asian countries being claimed. To them, imperialism is a horrible thing because their way of life is being taken away and replaced by a different life style.

Also, imperialism would stop their learning curve and affect their nation’s development. New problems would arise as well. For example, after the division of African territory between each European nation, African tribes were moved and this created more fights between them. Ferry also leaves out the conflicts between the European nations and the U. S. Imperialism is not always beneficial to a nation because there would always be arguments between two or more nations over land, and war would erupt if the issue is non-negotiable.

Edward W. Said’s quote, “every empire tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires and that its mission is not to plunder and control but to educate and liberate” shows that Jules Ferry is biased because he is only presenting the benefits to France and not the problems that it could do to the colonized territories or to Western nations all together. One should never completely believe everything they hear and analysis is needed to see both sides of a story.