

# European imperialism in africa and asia

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## European Imperialism in Africa and Asia

The world changed dramatically during the latter half of the nineteenth century mainly due to European imperialism. Western powers expanded their empires to almost all the parts of Asia and Africa. As described by McDougal-Littell, Africa, 'the dark continent' was not much explored until late 19th century. But by 1902, around 90 percent of African continent was under European control. These nations controlled African lands for raw materials, and made them potential markets for their finished goods. Europeans were racist and believed that they were superior to Africans. Moreover Christian missionaries also supported imperialism as they believed that European rule can help them convert Africans to Christianity. Use of technology and weapons, and lack of unity among Africans helped European nations to dominate African countries easily. In 1884, Berlin conference was held which resulted in 'Scramble for Africa,' and the entire African continent except Ethiopia and Liberia was dominated by various European powers like Great Britain, Italy, Germany, France and Portugal. European nations developed several plantations in these colonies, and also collected minerals like gold, diamond, tin etc from African countries.

Asia was under western influence from 16th century although there was no much direct control in any of its territories. As Spielvogel notes, after the industrial revolution which brought increased demand for Asian raw materials, and with the long depression in 1870, the indirect rule was changed to direct colonial rule. India was controlled by British through British East India Company (1750). In 1857, a revolt broke out by native Indian soldiers who were suppressed by the British. Subsequently, India became a colonial subject to the British in every respect. In china, imperialism began <https://assignbuster.com/european-imperialism-in-africa-and-asia/>

with opium war (1839-1842), when Chinese halted the import of opium. In the war, Chinese military forces were destroyed. China was forced to open eleven treaty ports, and to give special privilege for British to trade and supervise in china. Various western nations acquired several territories of china and claimed trading rights.

Social structure of Asian and African countries changed a lot during European imperialism. European nations were not concerned about Africa's social system, and they tried to make the natives European-like. They also created conflicts between various ethnic groups. For example, a civil war occurred between two ethnic groups Hutu and Tutsi (" The Impact of Colonialism..."). As westerners introduced a structured political system, Africans got the idea of nationalism, and this resulted in several conflicts and wars.

In Asia, colonization resulted in cosmopolitan and racially mixed population, and many believed that colonial attitude is something superior. This new thought evoked social tension to a great extent. Also, there was a rise of new middle class which emerged through the new education system developed by colonial rule. Moreover, standards of living in the Asian cities were improved as these cities turned to be the hub of colonial administration.

#### Works Cited

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