

Imperialism
AP World History
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The period 1750-1900 is often called the “Age of Imperialism.” Imperialism is one country's domination of the political, economic, and social life of another country. A small group of European and North American nations used imperialism from mid 1700's to the early 1900's. There were three motives for European imperialism. European countries were nationalistic, meaning that they had great pride in their countries and wanted to expand and control other countries. European countries were also industrialized, and felt the need to dominate others to exploit resources. Europeans also felt a sense of religious and cultural superiority which made them want to dominate other cultures in order to “improve” them. This belief of superiority is sometimes called Social Darwinism by people today because the idea is similar to Charles Darwin's idea of survival of the fittest. Europeans saw themselves as more advanced, and as such, more likely to survive. In order for other cultures to survive, they had to be more like the Europeans.

Imperialism was imposed on other countries through diplomacy or force (or a combination of the two if diplomacy did not work). One way that Europeans used diplomacy was through the establishment of settler colonies. Europeans did not try to force native populations to accept their rule, they simply sent Europeans to the area, formed permanent settlements, and eventually tried to convert the locals to their culture and rule. If that didn't work, they simply tried to eventually outnumber the locals. Settler colonies were used by the British in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. They were used by the French in Algeria.

South Africa was originally settled by Native Africans sometime during the Bantu Migration period. In the late 1600's, a group of Dutch settlers established a colony in South Africa. These settlers, sometimes called the Boers or Afrikaners, were seeking religious freedom by settling far from Europe. Their colony, Cape Colony, was taken over by the French in the early 1800's when Napoleon Bonaparte conquered the Netherlands. When Napoleon lost control of Europe in 1815, the British took control of Cape Colony and began to settle there in large numbers. The British saw the strategic benefit of controlling the southern tip of Africa and believed the local inhabitants should follow British law. The Afrikaners simply moved north to get away from British, into a region called the Transvaal or Orange Free State.

Australia's first settlers were convicts who arrived in 1788 in Sydney Harbor. Two more shipments of convicts arrived in 1790 and 1791. The first free settlers arrived in 1793. From 1788 to 1823, the Colony of New South Wales was officially a penal colony comprised mainly of convicts, soldiers and the wives of soldiers. The establishment of this settler colony was intended to force the local natives, the aborigines, out of an area of Australia that had vast potential for prosperity. Sheep were raised for wool in early Australia, and timber resources were exploited as well.

New Zealand's settler colonists took over from the indigenous Maoris in the 1700's as well. Exposure to European diseases among the Maori tribes resulted in massive population loss.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the surviving Maoris had begun to establish sedentary agricultural communities based on European technology and domesticated animals. British settlement began in earnest in the 1850s and the Maoris were driven to the interior of the islands. Eventually the settlements in New Zealand succeeded where others failed because the Maori survived by acculturating to British law and government and New Zealand was able to construct a multiracial society in which elements of the Maori culture flourished.

France's first attempts to settle Algeria failed, but eventually peaceful French settlers were sent to convince the Algerians that French culture and the ideas of the French Revolution would be beneficial. Over time Algerians came to accept and embrace these French ideas with little or no resistance.

One additional form of imperialism was through formation of a "gentry class" in a country. Often a colonial power would establish a group of locals as a land-owning elite class called "gentry" and would use this new class of people to control the local inhabitants. The newly established gentry controlled their countrymen because they felt empowered by the status granted to them by the colonial power. The Dutch used gentry class creation in the Indonesian colony of Java after the colony was established in 1607. The Dutch hoped to control the lucrative coffee and cinnamon markets in the Indian Ocean by controlling Java in Indonesia and Sri-Lanka in the Indian Ocean. They ended up creating an elite class that discriminated against lower classes. Resistance to the gentry class built by the late 1700's and the Dutch ended up leaving most of their South and Southeast Asian colonies.

Another example of gentry class creation came from the British takeover of India. India was disorganized following the fall of the Mughal Empire in the 1700's. Eventually a new government called the Maratha Empire or Maratha Confederation came to control India. This new government tried to modernize India by bringing the ideas of the Enlightenment, but instead these Enlightenment ideas only fostered so much individuality in India that it failed in unification efforts. By 1757 British companies, hoping to take over control of cotton production in India, moved in and began a period of British domination that lasted until the mid 20th century. During this period Britain grew cotton in India and their factories put Indian manufacturers out of work, leading to the development of an export economy in India that destroyed other forms of agriculture. In order to control India, Britain used the *zamindar* system to create a landed gentry class among the Indian people. The *zamindars* were nobles in India that controlled vast quantities of land. Britain simply put themselves on top of the social hierarchy in India and empowered the *zamindars* to control the local population. The Indian gentry were corrupt and abused their countrymen. Discontent began to grow in India due to the corruption of the *zamindars* and due to British arrogance and contempt of local culture. The British believed they were civilizing India by building infrastructure and forcing Indians to accept English culture. The British increased control of India after the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion, during which a group of Indian soldiers called the Sepoys rebelled against the British. The British sent a governor called a viceroy to control India after the Sepoy Rebellion. Indian nationalism began in the late 1800's with the formation of two national parliaments, the Indian National Congress formed 1885, and the Muslim League in 1906.

The last example of gentry class creation comes from Hawaii. A British explorer named James Cook opened Hawaii to Western development with his discovery of the islands in 1777. The

British decided to take control of the islands by giving a local family clan leader weapons in order to unify the disparate people of the Hawaiian Islands. King Kamehameha united the various clans between 1794 and 1810 and encouraged economic exchange with Western merchants. Beginning in 1819, missionaries from the eastern United States began a vigorous campaign to convert the Hawaiians to Christianity. The missionaries brought in their wake cultural change and Western education. Not only did Western ideas change the Hawaiian Islands, but exposure to Western diseases decimated the population as well. As the population of native Hawaiians decreased, settlers from the United States increasingly immigrated to Hawaii, seeking to grow tropical fruit, sugar, and coffee. Due to the decline in the Hawaiian population, the labor supply was supplemented by importation of Asian workers from China and Japan. By the late 1800's American and European businessmen controlled much of the power in Hawaii. In 1893, seeking to re-establish the power of the monarchy, Queen Lili'uokalani, tried to enact a new constitution and was overthrown by an armed American military force supported by U.S. Marines. In order to protect business interests in the islands, the United States formally annexed Hawaii as a colony in 1898.

Of course, force was often used because it was simpler. The Dutch eventually resorted to force in Indonesia and Britain used force in Southern Africa and India when earlier, more tolerant methods did not work. The brutality of imperial rule often led to so-called "millenarian movements." Millenarian movements often prophesized the coming of a messiah who would free a particular group of people from a time of difficulty. These movements often resulted in violence. The Xhosa Cattle killing of 1856-1857 was led by a messiah-like woman named Nongqawuse. She promoted the idea that if the Xhosa people of Southern Africa would kill their cattle as a sacrifice to the gods, then the British would be forced out by the gods. The Ghost Dance of 1890 was a new religious movement incorporated into numerous American Indian belief systems. According to the teachings of the Northern Paiute spiritual leader Wovoka (renamed Jack Wilson), proper practice of the dance would reunite the living with spirits of the dead, bring the spirits of the dead to fight on their behalf, make the white colonists leave, and bring peace, prosperity, and unity to Indian peoples throughout the region. In China, there were two prominent millenarian movements. In 1796, a group called the White Lotus Movement believed that the Buddha would soon come back to China and lead a rebellion against the unpopular Qing government. When Buddha did not return, an uprising against the Qing began anyway. Later, in the 19th Century, a man named Hong Xiuquan repeatedly failed the civil service examination, frustrating his ambition to become a scholar-official in the civil service. In 1837 he returned home, fell sick and was bedridden for several days, during which he experienced mystical visions. After carefully reading a pamphlet he had received years before from a Protestant Christian missionary, Hong declared that he now understood that his vision meant that he was the younger brother of Jesus and that he had been sent to rid China of the "devils", including the corrupt Qing government and the Europeans who controlled the country. In 1851 Hong went to Guangzhou, where he began a popular uprising.