

Foundations of Empire

Motives of Imperialism

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European Imperialism

The British Empire in India

Imperialism in Central Asia and
Southeast Asia

The Scramble for Africa

European Imperialism in the Pacific

The Emergence of New Imperial Powers

U.S. Imperialism in Latin America and
the Pacific

Imperial Japan

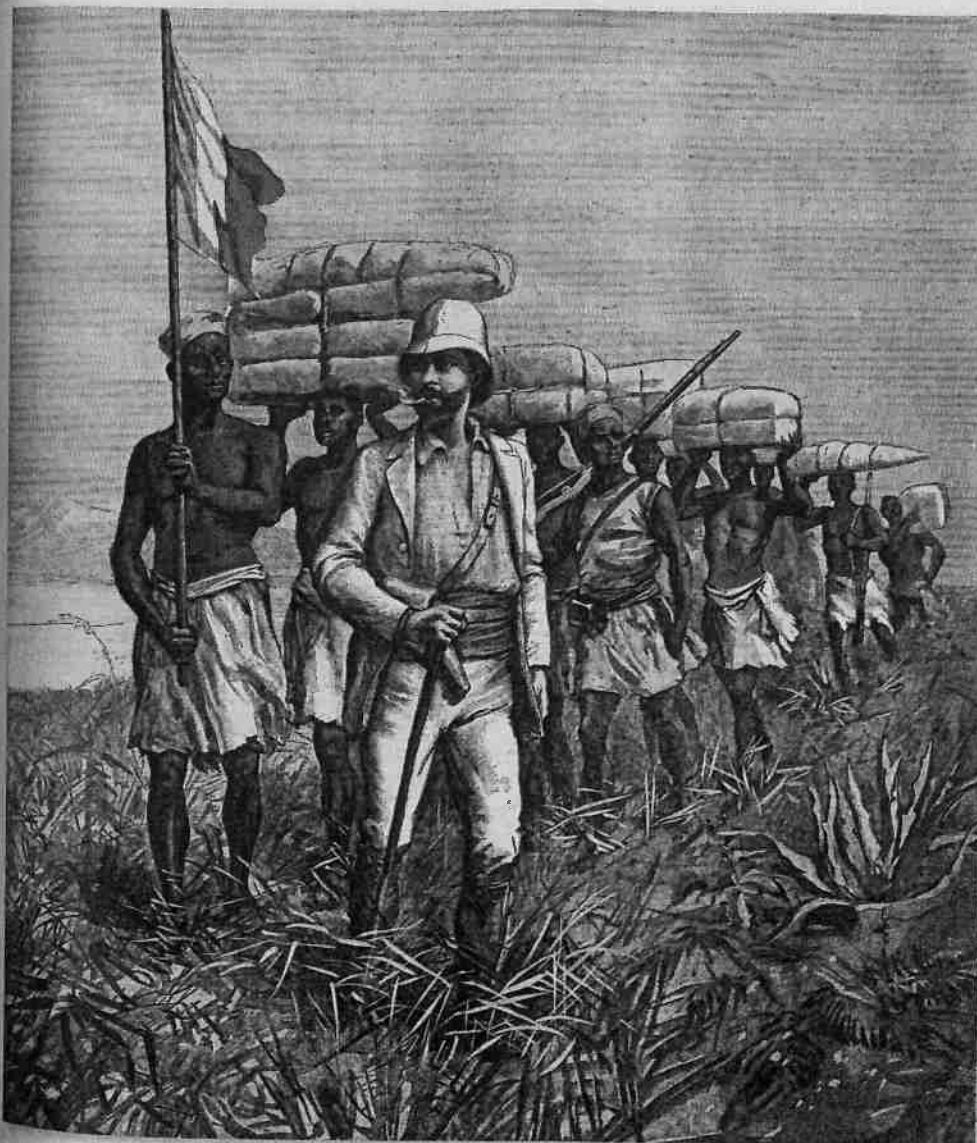
Legacies of Imperialism

Empire and Economy

Labor Migrations

Empire and Society

Nationalism and Anticolonial Movements



The French explorer and colonial administrator Lieutenant Mizon (1853–1899) on his 1892 mission to establish French control over the Adamawa region of northeastern Nigeria. The plan failed because of British opposition.

EYEWITNESS:

Cecil John Rhodes and the Spoils of Imperialism

Few Europeans had traveled to south Africa by the mid-nineteenth century, but the discovery of diamonds and rich gold deposits brought both European settlers and dramatic change to the region. European prospectors flocked to south Africa to seek their fortune.

Among the arrivals was Cecil John Rhodes, an eighteen-year-old student at Oxford University, who in 1871 went to south Africa in search of a climate that would relieve his tuberculosis. After trying his hand at a few endeavors, Rhodes and his brother began buying small diamond mines. By 1889, at age thirty-five, he had almost completely monopolized diamond mining in south Africa, and he controlled 90 percent of the world's diamond production. With ample financial backing, Rhodes built up a healthy stake in the gold-mining business, although he did not seek to monopolize gold the way he had diamonds. He also entered politics, serving as prime minister (1890–1896) of the British Cape Colony.

Sources from the Past

Rudyard Kipling on the White Man's Burden

Rudyard Kipling lived in northern India for the first six years of his life. He grew up speaking Hindi, and he mixed easily with Indian subjects of the British empire. After attending a boarding school in England, he returned to India in 1882 and became a journalist and writer. Many of his works express his deep enchantment with India, but he also believed strongly in imperial rule. Indeed, he wrote his famous poem titled "The White Man's Burden" to encourage the United States to impose colonial rule in the Philippines. While recognizing the unpopularity of foreign rule, Kipling considered it a duty to bring order to colonial lands and to serve subject peoples.

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit,
And work for another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden—
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.

The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go make them with your living,
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden—
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humor
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light;—
"Why brought ye us from bondage,
"Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—
Have done with childish days—
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!

For Further Reflection

- Compare and contrast the sorts of adjectives Kipling uses to describe native peoples as opposed to Europeans; how does his very language usage convey his sense of white superiority?

Source: Rudyard Kipling. "The White Man's Burden." *McClure's Magazine* 12, no. 4 (1899): 290–91.

years for a British correspondent to receive a reply to a letter sent to India by sailing ship. By the 1850s, however, after the introduction of steamships, correspondence could make the round-trip between London and Bombay in four months. After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, steamships traveled from Britain to India in less than two weeks.

The invention of the telegraph made it possible to change messages even faster. Telegraph wires carried communications over land from the 1830s, but only in the 1850s did engineers devise reliable submarine cables for the transmission of messages through the oceans. By 1870, submarine cables carried messages between Britain and India in about