

The New Imperialism

Motives

- ~~Western sense of Cultural Superiority~~
(Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden")
- Cultural sense reinforced by technological advantages
- Sense of Religious Mission - Save the Savage souls
- Economic agendas: desire for access to raw materials, new markets for goods
- Inter-state rivalry - the "Scramble for Africa"
- Perception of colonies as symbols of national power & Glory

- New Imperialism focused on conquering relatively populous territories with established cultures & traditions
Example: British in India

Another view - Imperialism in Africa

Pull-up & Discuss

- see also Edward Morel, "The Black Man's Burden"

New Imperialism in Practice: British India

→ The new European Imperialism focused particularly on conquering relatively populous territories that had important traditions of their own. It therefore involved ruling millions of other non-Europeans and encountering considerable resistance in the name of established values. Most of the new colonies received new administrators and some business entrepreneurs, missionaries, doctors, & teachers, but few ordinary settlers.

→ This was certainly the case in Asia, where British control of India, begun under the auspices of a private corporation, the British East India Company, became complete in 1858. It would last less than a century, and in this time period Indian traditions and cultural patterns managed to generate ~~and~~ successful and innovative pattern of resistance. This pointed to a characteristic of New Imperialism - it unwittingly transmits to its subjugated colonial populations the means to remove colonial rule.

→ By the middle of the 19th Century Britain formally controlled most of India through a series of military victories and coerced alliances with local rulers. This process had been achieved largely due to an absence of nationalist sentiment in India, which had precluded any unified opposition to the British advance.

China (cont.)

→ In the wake of the Sino-Japanese war, Western powers and Russia scrambled to tighten their control over China. By 1900, China had become little more than a shell, subject to foreign control.

* Finally these circumstances forced the Imperial Government to call for change and modernization.

In a palace coup, ~~the~~ Tzu-Hsi, the previous Emperor's widow, seized power in 1898 and cancelled Western-style reforms. Instead, she sought to remove foreign influence from China by encouraging local Anti-Western movements, most notably the sect of society called the Righteous Harmony Fists, or Boxers who began killing foreigners and Christian Chinese in 1899. ~~Although~~ The Boxer Rebellion was easily crushed by a combined Euro-American military force, it further weakened imperial prestige throughout the country. It had by now lost the hearts and minds of Chinese youth, who began leaving China to attend schools in the West to gain the knowledge their own country lacked. In the process, they absorbed new political ideas, such as democracy and socialism. When these people returned to China, they joined local forces calling for an end to imperial control. By 1911, these calls had become a flood, and the last Chinese Emperor abdicated in 1911 → 2000 years of history ended, & China faced an uncertain future.

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India (cont.)

→ of the unintended negative effects of colonialism. Indians were used to dealing with intermediaries rather than with ruling powers directly, and they perceived the British administration as both heavy-handed and unfair.

→ The British also imposed a Western-style education system on India, that sought to teach and distribute Western values. This meant emphasizing disciplines such as science and European history. Many schools taught only in English, which meant that English became a second language among India's Hindu and Muslim elites * still the case today *

→ Economic development was another British focus. Between 1850 & 1900, Britain constructed 26,500 miles of rail, telegraph, road & canal systems in India.

→ They also encouraged the adoption of Western agricultural methods, and some industrial development.

Effects: ① Creation of Indian industrial base, particularly in textiles, as well as the emergence of a new industrial elite.

② Encouraged a population explosion in India, which now places immense pressure on land resources.

→ The British also sought to transform Indian society, which was tightly segregated according to birth, or caste. The British ~~sought~~

China (cont.)

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- Western imperialists, despite these gains, remained uninterested in trying to take over China directly. They assisted the government in suppressing the Taiping Rebellion and preferred a weak imperial administration to outright anarchy. For its part, the Qing Dynasty increasingly relied on bureaucratic assistance from the West to maintain basic government functions - * a real paradox for an Imperial Civilization that invented bureaucracy * The use of Western advisors signaled a new awareness of the need for change - many junior Army officers became interested in Western weaponry - as one noted, "learn the technology of the barbarians in order to control them." - ^{UNFORTUNATELY} This commitment was absent from the highest levels of power, where a re-emphasis on traditional practices marked the 1870s and 1880s - For example, the government tore up a railway line in an effort to protect and maintain traditional ways.

* By the 1890s, China faced a situation unprecedented in its 2000 year history. Foreign influence had never been seen as a source of inspiration - only as a nuisance to be outlasted through superior Chinese traditions. Most other cultures, including Japan, India and the Ottomans had borrowed selectively from ~~the~~ outside influences. Chinese structures were founded on principles such as tradition and conflict avoidance rather than the promotion of change.

Indian Nationalism

~~_____~~ ①

- The Sepoy Mutiny prompted the British to introduce limited political representation through local governments. Despite these efforts, many Indian traditionalists continued to resent British practices and regulations. The awakening of Indian nationalism represented a clear and coherent response. Beginning among educated Indians, this ideology focused on

- ① concerns about 'Indian national identity' and also
- ② absorbing and using key Western political and educational values.

Several Indian newspapers appeared, encouraging public involvement in political debate. By 1885, circumstances had progressed to the point where an indigenous political movement appeared, the Indian National Congress. Its membership was drawn from both Hindus & Muslims of the bureaucratic & professional classes.

* Efforts of the Congress would lead to the spreading of nationalist sentiment across India, a new loyalty that cut across traditional lines of caste, region, & religion. Nationalism encouraged Indians to think in terms of growing political freedom as well as looking towards developing a new culture free of Western influence. Criticism of the British rule also spread into the economic arena, where nationalists argued for the creation of an Indian state and economic system that could advance to the ranks of industrial nations on its own.

* This resentment toward the Western-dominated

China (cont')

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→ From the 1820s onward, Western traders demanded greater access to Chinese markets & luxury goods, due to increases in domestic demand generated by the vast increase in wealth created by industrial productivity & profits. As they established themselves permanently in other parts of Asia such as India, they gained greater awareness of the enormous profit potential of Chinese trade. Traditionally the Chinese had resisted access to their markets, but a decline in dynastic vigor, a familiar pattern in Chinese history, now exposed Chinese weakness to burgeoning Western strength. Government failures and corruption increased, generating agricultural failures and social unrest.

→ Peasant rebellions began in the 1850s, and a major uprising known as the Taiping Rebellion pitted China's peasantry against the Imperial Army.

Lack of effective revenue collection precluded ~~an~~ ~~effect~~ rapid and decisive response against the rebels, and the Rebellion dragged on for 20 years, costing over 20 million lives and fatally weakening the Qing Dynasty. Against this disintegrating background,

→ Western traders, increasingly sensing Chinese weakness and greedy for unrestricted access to the Chinese economy, made their move.

→ The British struck first; control of India led to the British gaining control of the regional opium economy - frustrated by Chinese disinterest in →

China & the Ottomans (cont.)

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→ particularly among traditional elites, ~~disseminated~~ extended to an aversion toward Western practices and methods and delayed changes in weapons technology and economic priorities. Both systems relied principally on pre-industrial forms of economic organization and revenue collection - both were therefore overwhelmingly agricultural economies, which by the 1850s lacked the ability to support large and complex governmental & military structures. In the Ottoman case, this led to steady losses of territory, as nationalist movements in the Balkans merged with Western colonial initiatives in North Africa, ^{to see Ottoman landholdings reduced by half during the 1800s.} ^{to see Ottoman landholdings reduced by half during the 1800s.} ^{to see Ottoman landholdings reduced by half during the 1800s.} ^{to see Ottoman landholdings reduced by half during the 1800s.} Within the remaining territory, British and French economic interests controlled transportation and foreign trade (lucrative economic sectors now out of the Sultan's reach. By 1878, the Ottoman Empire was known derisively as the "Sick Man of Europe" and ironically only Western support, first from Britain & France, & later from Germany, prevented its internal disintegration before 1914. This proved only a temporary respite: the enormous strain of prosecuting World War One destroyed the last remnants of Ottoman power, and it disintegrated in 1919.

→ In the Chinese case, no comparable territorial losses occurred during the 19th Century, but Western economic demands gradually eroded the 'Qing Dynasty's legitimacy and independence.

→ international economy would echo throughout the last 100 years throughout the non-Western world. ②
* Although Indian nationalism would not achieve its objectives until 1947 it established a precedent for resistance against Western imperial power that would inspire many other nationalist movements across the globe.

China and the Ottoman Empire

→ Although Manchu China (1644-1911) and the Ottoman Empire were never subjected to direct imperial takeover due to ① the strength of their governmental structures and ② because competing Western rivalries cancelled each other out, they found themselves increasingly subject to the whims and demands of the global industrial economy. Although on the surface, they appeared strong enough to resist expanding Western influence and pressure, both the Ottomans and the Manchus suffered from several structural disadvantages that compromised their ability to resist Western demands.

① Conservative, traditionalist leadership structures discouraged reforms during the crucial period of the 1800s. Both the Manchu Emperors and the Ottoman Sultans either ignored or resisted reform efforts within their domains until they lacked the power to direct change. Both systems would be swept aside by pressures from below.

② Negative attitudes towards foreigners in the Chinese case, and toward Westerners in the Ottoman,

China (Cont)

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Western products the British began exporting large quantities of opium into Chinese ports as a means of breaking the deadlock. By encouraging opium addiction, the British solved two problems at once:

- ① By encouraging opium addiction, the British now possessed a medium of exchange that allowed them to trade with the Chinese with a commodity other than gold.
- ② In time opium would itself become a profitable commodity, thus further increasing profit margins.

→ Not surprisingly, the ^{Chinese} government objected to the opium trade. Opium use was not traditional in China, and its harmful effects were well-known.

The British practice of handing out the narcotic for free in Chinese towns & marketplaces as a blatant attempt to encourage dependency angered local governors, particularly in the harbor city of Canton. Government efforts to seize all opium in the harbor led to conflict, the Opium Wars of 1839-1842 and 1857.

→ Lack of an effective navy meant the Chinese were powerless against British military technology, and in a series of humiliating concessions the Chinese surrendered trading rights & coastal territory to the British. Other Western powers followed with their own demands, & by 1850 foreign colonies existed in ports along China's coast. ~~and~~ The Imperial Government was increasingly forced to rely on Western military advisers to maintain its sovereignty.

forcefully desegregated public spaces such as train stations and prisons and also sought to improve women's circumstances by inspiring Western-based family models that discouraged women working. * This actually had the reverse effect, as reduced access to the workplace considerably worsened Indian women's economic options *
*① These ^{These reforms failed on 2 fronts} measures generally failed to reach the majority of India's populations, who remained illiterate and wedded to traditional family & religious practices. The caste system remained largely intact.

② British actions served as a focal point for elite resistance, and their political & administrative reforms combined with educational access to generate a wholly new type of ideology, indigenous Indian nationalism. This new political force first revealed itself at the Sepoy Mutiny of 1858 (426.)

China (cont.)

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→ ② Chinese bureaucrats saw no need to implement western-style efficiency, since they defined bureaucratic talent more in terms of cultural interests and the promotion of social harmony.

③ The expansionist, profit-seeking values of western-dominated trade were also at odds with traditional Chinese values. An old Confucian adage was: "Acknowledgement of limits leads to happiness." This was hardly the capitalist spirit, and meant that economic activity was sluggish and sporadic. Unlike in India, where a new entrepreneurial class was coalescing, China moved only slowly towards the new principles of world commerce.

→ Combined with dynastic weakness and increased corruption, ^{this meant} China was vulnerable to imperial attack. Russia moved into Northern China in the 1860s, but the biggest blow was struck by China's smaller neighbor, Japan, in 1894-5.

→ This war was triggered over a revolt ~~against~~ in Korea; China traditionally regarded Korea as a vassal state, while Japan, ~~but~~ now rapidly industrializing - we will discuss this next week - sought to flex its muscles. To the astonishment of all observers, Japan's modernized military easily crushed much larger Chinese forces. China was forced to cede control of Korea and the island of Taiwan to Japan.

* Japan's victory revealed China to be a hollow power, unable to fend off its much smaller rival.

→ Many minorities who had been traditionally marginalized in India, such as the Gurkhas of Nepal and the Sikhs of the Punjab, willingly joined the British military and fought their former local rulers. These elite units soon formed part of a larger whole, a British led Indian Army composed of Indian soldiers known as sepoys. Their role in Indian history we will examine shortly.

→ As the British tightened their grip on India, much of the respect they had held for Indian traditions and culture evaporated. India now became a place to change, to Westernize. Thus, like the Mughals before them, the British sought to limit or abolish practices such as child marriage and religious sacrifices; Hindu converts to Christianity were rewarded with government jobs.

→ British rule had an enormous political impact. The political unification of the entire subcontinent was a major development, as was the imposition of a uniform legal code. * Both these circumstances were unprecedented in India *

→ Administration became larger, more efficient, and more visible than ever before. Direct land taxation replaced indirect, traditional systems. The British regarded this as a fairer and more equitable system than its predecessor, but locals viewed it as unfair and onerous due to its arbitrary ^{nature} and increasing value. * This was a classic example →