Pro-Imperialism

Arguments in favor of imperialism:

• Social Darwinism- The European races argued they were superior to all others, imperial domination of weaker races was simply nature’s way of improving the human species.

• The White Man’s Burden- Missionaries, doctors, and colonial officials believed that they had a duty to spread what they saw as the blessings or Western civilization, including medicine, law, technology, and the Christian religion to the natives. They wanted to westernize the natives.

• The westerner colonial powers felt the natives were not using their natural resources effectively and they could and should use them for their industry. Colonies would also provide important markets for their finished goods.

• Colonies were also seen a valuable outlet for Europe’s growing population.

• Colonies were taken for military and political reasons. They served as refueling bases for ships, to keep other industrial rivals from further expanding, or to keep them from capturing these areas first.

• The Colonial powers thought that ruling colonies increased a nation’s prestige around the world. The more colonies they had the more prestige they had.

Anti-Imperialism

Arguments against:

• Some anti-Imperialists argued that colonialism was a tool of the rich.

• They claimed it was immoral.

• Some Westerners pointed out that they were moving towards more democracy at home but were imposing undemocratic rule on other people.

Negative effects of Imperialism:

• The Colonial powers often saw no benefits in the language, culture, or religion of the native people. Boundaries between colonies, especially in Africa, were drawn based on treaties between the European colonial powers and did not take in into account cultural groups. The natives were not present when these treaties were drawn up or even taken into consideration. For example, no Africans were invited to the Berlin Conference even though it affected them. Tribes were sometimes cut between two colonies. The language of the colonial power became dominate language. As a result, millions of non-westerners were robbed of their cultural heritage.

• Often domination of the natives was seen in terms of racism. The natives or were seen as inferior races to the Europeans. Natives were seen as children in need of guidance.
Pro- Imperialism Continued

Positive effects

- The colonial powers brought improvements in medicine and transportation (Steamboats and Railways)
- The colonies were under the protection of their western militaries and protected them from being exploited by other colonial powers.
- They brought stability to the regions they conquered and stopped warfare between tribes and regions.
- The colonial powers introduced new technologies to the natives. Like electricity, lights
- The colonial powers improved communication by introducing the telegraph and postal system
- Education was improved for the upper-class in the country. This provided for a western-educated elite.
- The Europeans brought improved farming methods.

Anti-Imperialism Continued

- Colonies often had a trade imbalance with their colonial power. Colonies often were in debt to their colonial power. Colonies exported raw materials and got back finished goods that cost more.
- Colonies were exploited for natural resources and cheap labor. An extreme case of this was slavery.
- Colonial powers stopped local efforts to start industry. Any industry that competed with a European Industry was stopped. For example, in India the manufacture of cloth was forbidden because this would compete with England’s cloth making industry. Even so the local industry could not compete with the European’s cheap industrial made goods that were flooded into the country. Also, the salt production was forbidden because salt was sold to them by a British company.
- Cash crops like cotton and rubber were grown instead of food crops in order to feed the colonial powers industry. This led to famines.
- The colonial power used their superior weapons and militaries to dominate the colonial countries and protect their investments and interests. The natives did not have weapons equal to the Europeans. Often the colonial powers brutally put down nationalism movements. An example would be how the British dealt with the Sepoy Rebellion. Even so some western-educated Africans and Asians organized nationalist movements to expel the imperialists from their land.