CAUSES OF IMPERIALISM

Vocabulary: underdeveloped, manufactured, burden, jealous

Imperialism is when a powerful and industrial nation takes over a weak and UNDERDEVELOPED area. Another name for imperialism is COLONIALISM. This name is based on the fact that many powerful nations took colonies during the 19th century.

What were the causes of imperialism? There were many. Some reasons are listed below.

1. Industrial nations wanted a place to get raw materials.
2. Industrial nations also wanted places to sell MANUFACTURED goods.
3. Colonies gave powerful nations a chance to have military bases all over the world.
4. Many people in the MOTHER COUNTRY wanted to go to colonies to make money.
5. The White Man's BURDEN was another reason. Most Europeans believed that they had to go to Africa and Asia in order to CIVILIZE the people there. They also wanted to make them Christians.

The greatest imperial EMPIRE belonged to Great Britain. The British believed that the sun never set on the British Empire. Countries like Germany and Italy were JEALOUS of England's great empire. They tried to get colonies for themselves. By the time they got colonies, the good areas were already taken.
QUESTIONS:

1. List three reasons why countries became imperialistic in the 19th century.
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2. Which reason do you believe was the most important? Why? ______
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3. Why do you think Italy and Germany did not get the best colonies? ____________________________________________________________________
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4. “The sun never sets on the British Empire.” What does this mean? Why was England able to get so many colonies in the 19th century? ____________________________________________________________________
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5. Look at the map of the British Empire on the previous page. Name four countries on four different continents that were once part of the British Empire.
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EMPIRE BUILDING IN THE 19TH CENTURY

During the Age of Discovery in the 1500s and 1600s, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and France colonized parts of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. As Europeans moved into these new regions, they brought their goods and ideas with them. During the "new imperialism" of the late 1800s, European expansion reached its peak. Industrialization, technology, and military might gave European nations enormous power and influence in the world.

Nations That Held Colonies

In the early 1800s, Great Britain had more colonies than any other Western nation. It controlled Canada, part of India, Australia, New Zealand, British Honduras (now Belize) in Central America, British Guiana (now Guyana) in South America, and islands in the Caribbean. Much of the eastern half of Africa was also under British influence. By 1900, it also controlled much of Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, and islands in the Mediterranean and the Pacific.

It was said that "the sun never sets on the British Empire." At the peak of its time as a colonial power, Britain controlled colonies around the world. Thus, as the earth turned on its axis, some part of the British Empire was always in daylight.

By the late 1800s, France also had a sizable empire. It controlled much of northern and western Africa, Indochina, islands in the Caribbean, and French Guiana in South America. Germany entered the race for colonies after 1870. It took sections of east and southwestern Africa and several islands in the Pacific. After 1871, Italy also acquired pieces of northeastern Africa.

Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain each had a few colonies scattered throughout the world. The United States acquired territory in the late 1800s and early 1900s. From the 1890s to the 1940s, Japan asserted its authority in East Asia.

Directions: Answer the following questions based on the quotation below.

“The Sun Never Sets in the British Empire”

1. How does this statement reflect British pride and nationalism, which in turn, led to more imperialism? 

2. Based on the reading and class discussion create a definition of the term “imperialism” (using your own words)
A White Man Comes Down the River

Chief Mojimba’s Story*

When we heard that the man with the white flesh was journeying down the Congo, we were opened-mouthed with astonishment. We will prepare a feast, I ordered; we will go to meet our brother and escort him into the village with rejoicing! We assembled the great canoes. Presently a cry was heard: He is approaching. We swept forward, my canoe leading, the others following, with songs of joy and with dancing, to meet the first white man our eyes had beheld, and to do him honor.

But as we drew near his canoes there were loud reports, bang! bang! and fire sticks spat bits of iron at us. We were paralyzed with fright; our mouths hung wide open and we could not shut them. Things such as we had never seen, never heard of, never dreamed of—they were the work of evil spirits! Several of my men plunged into the water. What for? Did they fly to safety? No—for others fell down also, in the canoes. Some screamed dreadfully; others were silent—they were dead, and blood flowed from little holes in their bodies. "War! That is war!" I yelled. "Go back!" The canoes sped back to our village with all the strength our spirits could impart to our arms.

That was no brother! That was the worst enemy our country had ever seen. And still those bangs went on. The long sticks spat fire, flying pieces of iron whistled around us, fell in the water with a hissing sound, and our brothers continued to fall. We fled into our village; they came after us. We fled into the forest and flung ourselves on the ground. When we returned that evening our eyes beheld dreadful things: our brothers, dead, dying, bleeding, our village plundered and burned, and the water full of dead bodies!

Now tell me: has the white man dealt fairly by us? O, do not speak to me of him! You call us wicked men, but you white men are much more wicked! You think, because you have guns you can take away our land and our possessions. You have sickness in your heads, for that is not justice.

*Chief Mojimba is describing the encounter of his people with British explorer Henry Stanley in the Congo region in the 1840s.
Directions: Answer the following questions based on the reading “A White Man Comes Down the River”

1. How did Chief Mojimba plan to greet the British explorers? 
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2. What are “fire sticks that spat lead?” 
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3. Why did the Chief believe that “fire sticks” were the work of evil spirits? 
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4. Which side won the battle? Prove your answer! 
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5. Why did the explorers attack the Chief’s people? (besides wanting to kill them) 
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6. “Technology allowed the Europeans to conquer much of Africa.” Why is this true? 
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7. “Only the strongest nations should survive in the world!” Agree? Why? 
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China's Ming rulers cut off contacts with the outside world and their Manchu successors continued this policy. Until 1839, trade between China and the European nations was limited. This changed as a result of the Opium War. British merchants had begun to smuggle opium into China in exchange for tea, silk, and china. When the Chinese government intervened to stop the smuggling and destroyed imported opium, Britain demanded compensation.

The war that followed revealed how far China, once a great technological innovator, had fallen behind. Britain was the world's leading naval power; her gunboats attacked Chinese ports and China's antiquated weapons proved no match for British firepower. Britain seized several coastal cities. The Treaty of Nanking gave Britain the island of Hong Kong, the right to set the tariffs that the Chinese could levy, and the right of British subjects in China to live under British law.

Widespread economic discontent and the unpopularity of the Manchu emperor led to the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64). The rebellion was put down with the help of foreign troops. In return, France and Britain won another concession: the emperor agreed to let the Chinese emigrate. (They were used as labor to build railroads in the US. and South Africa.)

By the 1890's, Europeans were no longer content to have trading rights in coastal towns. Each nation claimed its own sphere of influence where it enjoyed exclusive trading rights. Intervention by the United States prevented the outright partition of China. But China's sovereignty had already been damaged by the many concessions it had made. The angry Chinese organized secret societies to expel all foreigners and punish Chinese Christians. In 1900, a group known as the Boxers attacked foreigners across northern China. An international army of Europeans, Americans, and Japanese suppressed the rebellion. For their help, they demanded and received a large sum of money and permission for their troops to remain on Chinese soil.

17A Which quote is a primary source?

17B What information in that quotation supports your conclusion?

17C Do the events described on this page support the position held by the British Home Secretary?