

SOURCING EXCERPTS: DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES ON IMPERIALISM

Process

As you read these documents, focus on completing the Point of View, Purpose, and Importance sections of the Sourcing Tool. Additionally, as you read, keep this question in mind: *To what extent did ideology impact imperialism?*

Source 1: Jules Ferry's speech to the French Chamber of Deputies, 1884

Introduction

Jules Ferry (1832–1893) was a French lawyer who became mayor of Paris in 1870 before becoming premier (prime minister) of France twice, first from 1880 to 1881, and then again from 1883 to 1885. The following excerpts are from a speech Ferry gave in 1884 to the French Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber of the French Parliament) when he was serving as premier of France.

... a policy of colonial expansion may be justified; ... the policy of colonial expansion is a political and economic system; I wish to say that one can relate this system to three orders of ideas: economic ideas, ideas of civilization in its highest sense, and ideas of politics and patriotism.

In the area of economics, I allow myself to place before you, with the support of some figures, the considerations which justify a policy of colonial expansion from the point of view of that need, felt more and more strongly by the industrial populations of Europe and particularly those of our own rich and hardworking country: the need for export markets ...

Gentlemen, there is a second point, ... it is the humanitarian and civilizing side of the question ...

Gentlemen, I must speak from a higher and more truthful plane. It must be stated openly that, in effect, superior races have rights over inferior races ... They have the duty to civilize inferior races ...

At this time, as you know, a warship cannot carry more than fourteen days' worth of coal, no matter how perfectly it is organized, and a ship which is out of coal is a derelict on the surface of the sea, abandoned to the first person who comes along. Thence the necessity of having on the oceans provision stations, shelters, ports for defence and revictualing. And it is for this that we needed Tunisia, for this that we needed Saigon and the Mekong Delta, for this that we need Madagascar ...

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...something else is needed for France: ... she ought to propagate this influence throughout the world and carry everywhere that she can her language, her customs, her flag, her arms, and her genius.

This text is part of the *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*. The *Sourcebook* is a collection of public domain and copy-permitted texts for introductory-level classes in modern European and world history.

Source: Ferry, Jules François Camille. "Speech Before the French Chamber of Deputies, March 28, 1884." *Discours et Opinions de Jules Ferry*, edited by Paul Robiquet and translated by Ruth Kleinman. (Paris: Armand Colin & Cle., 1897). Accessed June 14, 2019. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1884ferry.asp>

Source 2: Wilfrid Scawen Blunt's diary entries, 1896–1900

Introduction

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1840–1922) was a British poet and diplomat. He and his wife traveled to Egypt, India, Syria, and Algeria before they settled in Egypt to raise Arabian horses.

9th Jan., 1896. ... We have now managed in the last six months to quarrel violently with China, Turkey, Belgium, Ashanti, France, Venezuela, America, and Germany. This is a record performance, and if it does not break up the British Empire nothing will. For myself I am glad of it all, for the British Empire

is the greatest engine of evil for the weak races now existing in the world—not that we are worse than the French or Italians or Americans—indeed, we are less actively destructive—but we do it over a far wider area and more successfully. I should be delighted to see England stripped of her whole foreign possessions ... The gangrene of colonial rowdyism is infecting us, and the habit of repressing liberty in weak nations is endangering our own. I should be glad to see the end. ...

22nd Dec., 1900. ... All the nations of Europe are making the same hell upon earth in China, massacring and pillaging and raping in the captured cities as outrageously as in the Middle Ages. The Emperor of Germany gives the word for slaughter and the Pope looks on and approves. ... The Americans are spending fifty millions a year on slaughtering the Filipinos; the King of the Belgians has invested his whole fortune on the Congo, where he is brutalizing the Negroes to fill his pockets. The French and Italians for the moment are playing a less prominent part in the slaughter, but their

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inactivity grieves them. The whole white race is reveling openly in violence, as though it had never pretended to be Christian. God's equal curse be on them all! So ends the famous nineteenth century into which we were so proud to have been born...

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Source: Blunt, W. S. *My Diaries: 1888–1914*, 2 volumes. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1921). Accessed June 14, 2019.
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1899blunt.asp>