

The Economics of Imperialism Student Worksheet

Introduction:

Economic concerns formed another major part of the foundation upon which imperialist arguments were founded. The Industrial Revolution had changed the way people viewed the roles of foreign markets and international trade, and imperialist viewpoints reflected this change. In this lesson, you will analyze two opinions on the economics of imperialism, then compare and contrast the two.

Directions:

All Web links for this lesson can be found at:

<http://www.socialstudies.com/worldlinks.html>

Leroy-Beaulieu on the Desirability of Imperialism, 1891

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/beaulieu.htm>

1. What does Leroy-Beaulieu mean by “European capitalists”?
2. Why does he say that Europeans should invest in colonies rather than in “industrial, agricultural or social improvements” in their home countries?
3. What are the two “incontestable results” of imperialism that Leroy-Beaulieu envisions? Why does he see these results as beneficial?
4. Leroy-Beaulieu later says “Thus it is a great illusion to found colonies in the hopes of revenue.” Why does he believe this? Do you think this statement contradicts his earlier arguments? Explain your reasoning.
5. How convincingly do you think Leroy-Beaulieu makes his argument in favor of imperialism? Support your conclusion.

John Hobson: Imperialism, 1902

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1902hobson.asp>

Begin reading about one third of the way through, starting with the sentence “No mere array of facts and figures adduced to illustrate the economic nature of the new Imperialism.” Answer the following questions:

6. Why does Hobson claim that “So long as England held a virtual monopoly of the world markets for certain important classes of manufactured goods, Imperialism was unnecessary”?
7. Why does he then say that “After 1870 this manufacturing and trading supremacy was greatly impaired”?

8. What connection does Hobson see between imperialism and increasing industrialization?
9. What is the main problem Hobson has with imperialism as being practiced by Great Britain at the time?
10. Regarding the nature of imperialism, on what points do you think Leroy-Beaulieu and Hobson would agree? On what points would they disagree?