

## 16.5 Europe Justifies Imperialism in Africa

**Do Now:** Read the stanza from the poem “White Man’s Burden” (1899) by Rudyard Kipling and answer questions 1-4. Kipling believed European Civilizations had a special role in the world in the 1890s. There are key vocabulary words in this poem. A **burden** is something that is difficult to do but that you must do. **Savage** means wild. It is the opposite of civilized. **Famine** means starving because there is no food.

### Questions

1. Based on your understanding of the poem, what do you think Kipling means by sloth and heathen folly?
2. In your opinion, what does Rudyard Kipling believe is the role of Europeans in other parts of the world in the 1890s?
3. Based on this poem, why do you think he believes this?
4. Do you agree or disagree with Kipling? Why?
5. What country do you think Kipling is from? Why?

“Take up the White Man's burden --  
The savage wars and peace --  
Fill full the mouth of Famine  
And bid the sickness cease;  
And when your goal is nearest  
The end for others sought,  
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly  
Bring all your hopes to nought.”

On the right is an advertisement for Pear’s Soap. Pear’s Soap was manufactured in England.

### Questions

1. What is the “pitch” in this advertisement?
2. How does this advertisement use racism and imperialism to sell a product?
3. Can you think of advertisements today that use stereotypes to sell products? Explain.

The first step towards lightening  
The White Man's Burden  
is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness.

## Pears' Soap

is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place—it is the ideal toilet soap.

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**Black Man's Burden (1920):** E.D. Morel was a British journalist and founder of the international Congo Reform Association. His book *The Black Man's Burden* (1920) was a response to the poem “The White Man’s Burden.”

### Questions

1. According to Morel, how does Europe treat Africa?
2. Why does Morel believe resistance will likely fail?
3. Based on this passage, according to Morel, what is the Black man’s burden? Explain with evidence from the text.

“There is no escape for the African. Its [imperialism] destructive effects are not spasmodic: they are permanent. In its permanence resides its fatal consequences. It kills not the body merely, but the soul. It breaks the spirit. It attacks the African at every turn, from every point of vantage. It wrecks his polity, uproots him from the land, invades his family life, destroys his natural pursuits and occupations, claims his whole time, enslaves him in his own home . . . The African of the tropics is capable of tremendous physical labours. But he cannot accommodate himself to the European system of monotonous, uninterrupted labour, with its long and regular hours . . . When the system is forced upon him, the tropical African droops and dies . . . Nor is violent physical opposition to abuse and injustice henceforth possible for the African in any part of Africa. His chances of effective resistance have been steadily dwindling with the increasing perfectibility in the killing power of modern armament . . . Thus the African is really helpless against the material gods of the white man, as embodied in the trinity of imperialism, capitalistic exploitation, and militarism.

**Assessment:** Write a 250-word “Letter to the Editor” of the *Times of London* either supporting or opposing the positions taken by Morel.