

## Imperialism: A German Viewpoint

The following extract from Friedrich Fabri's book *Does Germany Need Colonies*, published in 1879, makes the German argument for colonial expansion, one similar to those made by English and French writers of the period.

Should not the German nation, so seaworthy, so industrially and commercially minded,.....successfully hew a new path on the road of imperialism? We are convinced beyond doubt that the colonial question has become a matter of life-or death for the development of Germany. Colonies will have a salutary effect on our economic situation as well as on our entire national progress.

Here is a solution for many of the problems that face us. In this new Reich [i.e., the new Imperial Germany] of ours there is so much bitterness, so much unfruitful, sour, and poisoned political wrangling, that the opening of a new, promising road of national effort will act as a kind of liberating influence. Our national spirit will be renewed, a gratifying thing, a great asset. A people that has been led to a high level of power can maintain its historical position only as long as it understands and proves itself to be *the bearer of a culture mission*. At the same time, this is the only way to stability and to the growth of national welfare, the necessary foundation for a lasting expansion of power.

At one time Germany contributed only intellectual and literary activity to the tasks of our century. That era is now over. As a people we have become politically minded and powerful. But if political power becomes the primal goal of a nation, it will lead to harshness, even to barbarism. We must be ready to serve for the ideal, moral, and economic culture-tasks of our time. . . . .

No one can deny that in this direction England has by far surpassed all other countries. ....It has been customary in our age of military power to evaluate the strength of a state in terms of its combat-ready troops. But anyone who looks at the globe and notes the steadily increasing colonial possessions of Great Britain [will perceive] how she extracts strength from them, the skill with which she governs them, how the Anglo-Saxon strain occupies a dominant position in the overseas territories.....

The fact is that England tenaciously holds on to its world-wide possessions with scarcely one-fourth the manpower of our continental military state. That is not only a great economic advantage but also a striking proof of the solid power and cultural fiber of England. Great Britain, of course, isolates herself far from the mass warfare of the continent, or only goes into action with dependable allies; hence, the insular state has suffered and will suffer no real damage. In any case, it would be wise for us Germans to learn about colonial skills from our Anglo-Saxon cousins and to begin a friendly competition with them. When the German Reich centuries ago stood at the pinnacle of the states of Europe, it was the Number One trade and sea power. If the New Germany wants to protect its newly won position of power for a long time, it must heed its *Kultur*-mission and, above all, delay no longer in the task of renewing the call for colonies.

## IMPERIALISM: A GERMAN VIEWPOINT

The passage below is a summary of a passage written by Friedrich Fabri in his book, *Does Germany Need Colonies?* The book was published in 1879 and identifies some of the motives for European Imperialism.

Should Germany begin on the road to Imperialism? I believe we should. For one, we are an industrial nation. In order to maintain our factories and produce our goods we need access to natural resources. Resources like rubber, petroleum, manganese for steel, and palm oil for machinery is necessary and can be found in Africa and Asia.

Obtaining colonies will also benefit our economy. Obtaining colonies in far away lands will open up new markets to trade our goods, and buy items that we do not produce. Colonies will provide our bankers with new business enterprises and projects to invest money in.

Participating in Imperialism will strengthen our military and defend our nation. Our steam powered merchant ships and naval vessels require coal to operate. Colonies spread throughout Africa would provide all of our ships with a place to pick up coal and supplies.

By engaging in Imperialism we can limit the power of our competitors, Britain and France. We can prevent territory from falling into their hands, and halt further expansion. Germany would weaken their trade and keep colonial profits from going to Britain and France.

Lastly, taking part in Imperialism would increase national pride in Germany. If we successfully obtain colonies we will show the world that we are a strong nation. We will provide a place for our increasing population to live and work. By obtaining colonies, we can restore Germany's position as the most prestigious, important, and influential nation in Europe.