What does Imperialism mean?

Imperialism was the aggressive policy of the industrialized nations to gain control over the resources of distant countries, mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At the end of the 18th century, Britain had lost its thirteen colonies in North America. In the latter half of the 19th century, however, a second wave of colonialization took place. Within a short period of time (1880-1900), almost every corner of the Earth was taken over by European powers. Some of the countries became colonies of the Imperialist powers. Africa saw the most aggressive colonization. It was divided between the European powers in a process that became known as "the scramble for Africa." The local native population of a colony was denied civil and political rights. Many natives lost their land as it was taken and given to European colonists. Many natives were forced to pay taxes and to work on the plantations.

At the same time, many places in Asia were conquered by European powers as well. Some countries (for example China) remained independent states, but the imperialist governments controlled and dominated the countries' economic, political and cultural life to a great extent. At the same time, after Spain and Portugal had lost most of their colonies in South America as the South American nations gained independence, these states were coming under the growing influence of the U.S. government.

Some non-European countries were forced to sign trading treaties with imperial powers that explicitly banned the development of a native industry. Within a short period of time, large parts of the world were dominated by European powers. In the year 1830, around 200 million people lived in countries dominated by European powers. In 1880 the number had risen to more than 300 million and at the time of World War I the number was 550 million. Whereas knowledge, industrial production and wealth were concentrated in the "metropolitan" nations of Western Europe and the U.S., the colonies were mainly supplying agricultural products like tea, coffee, sugar and cotton as well as metals and other raw materials. Capital was invested in building an infrastructure (for example rail roads) that was necessary to exploit the resources of the colonies.

What role did Racism play? - Drawing the colour line

Racists argue that humans can be separated into so-called races and that all people of a race have the same innate characteristics. "Inferior" races are attributed with inferior features and characteristics (laziness, lower intellectual capacity etc.) and these features are thought to be natural, immutable and global.

Racism had first developed as an ideology to justify slavery in the modern period. White European people were constructed
**TASK 1**

**What does Imperialism mean?**

Organize the information on the motives for European imperialism in a mind map!

**TASK 2**

**Look at source 1 and answer the following questions:**

How is the French nation presented in the picture? How are the native people presented in the picture? Does the picture promote racism?

**TASK 3**

**Read source 2 and answer the following questions:**

What reasons does Cecil Rhodes give for the British Empire to take control of Africa? Compare and contrast Cecil Rhodes’ arguments with what you know about racism!

**TASK 4**

**European colonies in Africa**

Here is a list of modern African countries. Use the map in your Geography Atlas and the map "Colonies in Africa before 1914" and find out, which European country had been the former colonial power!

Algeria: ______________________

Egypt: _______________________

Cameroon: ____________________

Nigeria: _____________________

Congo: _______________________

Angola: _______________________

South Africa: __________________

Ivory Coast: __________________

**TASK 5**

**Read "The First Globalization" (Die erste Globalisierung) and answer the following questions:**

In what ways was the world “globalized” economically at the time before 1914? Compare the situation described in source 3 with the situation today. Do you think there are similarities with the situation today?

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**SOURCE 3: THE FIRST GLOBALIZATION**


John Maynard Keynes (1919)

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as a superior race of people, superior to people of colour and were therefore "justified" and right to enslave them. Still, it took a long time before this ideology was commonly accepted. In America, the concept of the African race having a lower status was not widely accepted before the 18th century. Many white Europeans had come to America as indentured servants and their status was only slightly better when compared to that of African slaves. Racism was strongly promoted in the 18th century in order to divide white and black people who had originally stood together in fighting for better living conditions against the powerful and rich elite in the Northern American colonies.

The racist ideology was further developed in the course of the 19th century in order to justify the conquests of European imperialist powers. Further, the continued segregation of people of European origin and people of colour in the United States was justified with racist ideology even after the institution of slavery had been abolished in the 1860s.