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AP Euro  
Period C  
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## Historical Essay Analysis

**Title:** Europe at its Zenith: 1870-1914

**Author's thesis:** In the years between 1870 and 1914, Europe took up the cause of "progress towards perfection" at the height of its power and prestige in the world.

**Author's evidence:**

- a) Industry was infused with science, resulting in revolutionary inventions, mass-produced luxuries, and technology
- b) Science impacted traditional religious, philosophical, economic, and political ideas
- c) Social Darwinism became justification for a number of ideologies
- d) The call for social reform was common
- e) Europeans thought highly of themselves
- f) Material improvements were a justification for this belief, and the belief in science
- g) Economic and nationalist reasons were responsible for imperialism
- h) Alliances and an arms race led to war

**Author's conclusion of the topic's significance:**

The author believes that it was during this period that Europe reached the height of its power and influence through a dynamic and changing social structure and flow of ideas. He concludes that this ended with the onset of war.

**What questions you have about the reading:**

1. How does a post-WWII Europe compare to Europe at this time?
2. Can we learn any lessons from this period of history that are applicable today?
3. Why did these conditions still lead to a European arms race at all?

**To what extent does your knowledge of the period support or conflict the author's thesis?**

My knowledge of the period supports the thesis of the author, that at this time, there were many advancements being made in science, technology, industry, politics, economics, and other fields of thought. However, it was still a very dangerous period of time in the sense that Europe was reaching the pinnacle of its power and influence.

**Explain the gist of the article, the nature of the evidence, and the significance of the topic:**

Europe had reached its zenith of power and prestige in the years between 1870-1914, as radical new ideas, ideologies, and ways of thinking took hold. Most of these were the result of science and technology, as well as the many theories that were being proposed at the time. Concepts such as Social Darwinism impacted capitalism and the call for social reform, and traditional ideas of religion and philosophy were being challenged. Material improvements were held to be a justification for the belief in European superiority and a blind faith in science. In addition, this period was the height of imperialism, as European nations sought colonies for both economic and nationalist motives.