**Berlin Conference of 1884-1885**

The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 ushered in what became known as the ‘New Imperialism’. While the first waves of European expansion had focused on the Americas and Asia, the third one concentrated on Africa, largely ignored since the conclusion of the Atlantic slave trade. In 1876 King Leopold II (1835-1909) of Belgium hired Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) to explore and colonize the Congo River basin of equatorial Africa. Belgian claims to the Congo led to a ‘scramble for Africa’ amongst France, Germany, Great Britain and Portugal, represented at the Conference. They sought to regulate colonial competition by defining ‘effective occupation’ as the criterion for recognition of territorial claims – colonies were recognized if actually possessed. The Berlin Conference remapped Africa without considering cultural or linguistic borders, dividing the continent into some 50 different colonies. Only Ethiopia and Liberia remained independent. The New Imperialism gave rise to new social views of colonialism, including the idea of ‘civilizing’ Africans, as described in Rudyard Kipling’s poem ‘The White Man's Burden’ (1899), while critiqued by others such as Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* (1899). European powers tried to associate colonial rule with the goals of justice and morality, resulting in the rule over tropical lands gaining widespread acceptance.

*Henry Srebrnik*, *University of Prince Edward Island*

**References and further reading**

Boahen, A. A. (1987) *African Perspectives on Colonialism,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Chamberlain, M. E. (2010) *The Scramble for Africa*, 3rd ed., London: Longman.

Hochschild, A. (2006) *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa,* London: Pan Books.

Pakenham, T. (1992) *The Scramble for Africa*, London: Abacus.

Wesseling, H.L. (1996) *Divide and Rule: the Partition of Africa, 1880-1914,* Westport: Praeger Publishers.

**Paratextual material**

Conrad, J. (1899) ‘Heart of Darkness’, *Blackwood’s Magazine* 165 (1000, 1001, 1002), 3 parts. (Available through *Conrad First: The Joseph Conrad Periodical Online* <<http://bit.ly/PinCMF>>, a project sponsored by the Department of English, Uppsala University. All scanned images accessed through *Conrad First* are in the Public Domain and be reproduced. For copyright information, see <http://www.conradfirst.net/conrad/copyright>.)

Kipling, R. (1899) ‘The White Man’s Burden’, *McClure's* *Magazine* 12 (4): [290-291]. (Available online via unz.org <http://bit.ly/RLNd06>. See <<http://bit.ly/tPfpcS>> and <<http://bit.ly/PUSlua>> for Licensing information.)