

2.3 Late nineteenth-century Colonialism

Trade flourished and markets expanded in the late nineteenth century. But this was not only a period of expanding trade and increased prosperity. It is important to realise that there was a darker side to this process. In many parts of the world, the expansion of trade and a closer relationship with the world economy also meant a loss of freedoms and livelihoods. Late-nineteenth-century European conquests produced many painful economic, social and ecological changes through which the colonised societies were brought into the world economy. Cattle Show, Illustrated London News, 1851. Cattle were traded at fairs, brought by farmers for sale. One of the oldest livestock markets in London was at Smithfield. In the mid-nineteenth century a huge poultry and meat market was established near the railway line connecting Smithfield to all the meat-supplying centres of the country. Alexandra, Illustrated London News, 1878. Export of meat was possible only after ships were refrigerated. The Making of a Global World Look at a map of Africa (Fig. 10). You will see some countries' borders run straight, as if they were drawn using a ruler. Well, in fact this was almost how rival European powers in Africa drew up the borders demarcating their respective territories. In 1885 the big European powers met in Berlin to complete the carving up of Africa between them. Britain and France made vast additions to their overseas territories in the late nineteenth century. Belgium and Germany became new colonial powers. The US also became a colonial power in the late 1890s by taking over some colonies earlier held by Spain. Let us look at one example of the destructive impact of colonialism on the economy and livelihoods of colonised people. Sir Henry Morton Stanley in Central Africa Stanley was a journalist and explorer sent by the New York Herald to find Livingston, a missionary and explorer who had been in Africa for several years. Like other European and American explorers of the time, Stanley went with arms, mobilised local hunters, warriors and labourers to help him, fought with local tribes, investigated African terrains, and mapped different regions. These explorations helped the conquest of Africa. Geographical explorations were not driven by an innocent search for scientific information. They were directly linked to imperial projects. Box 2 Illustrated London News, 1871. MOROCCO ALGERIA SPANISH SAHARA RIO DE ORO PORT GUINEA FRENCH SUDAN FRENCH WEST AFRICA NIGERIA TOGO CAMEROONS MIDDLE CONGO CONGO FREE STATE (BELGIAN CONGO) ANGOLA GERMAN SOUTH WEST AFRICA UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA NORTHERN RHODESIA SOUTHERN RHODESIA PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA MADAGASCAR GERMAN EAST AFRICA BRITISH EAST AFRICA BRITISH SOMALILAND ETHIOPIA ITALIAN SOMALILAND FRENCH SOMALILAND ERITREA ANGLO- EGYPTIAN SUDAN EGYPT LIBYA (TRIPOLI) TUNISIA MEDITERRANEAN SEA FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA SPANISH MOROCCO RED SEA ATLANTIC OCEAN BELGIAN BRITISH FRENCH GERMAN ITALIAN PORTUGUESE SPANISH BRITISH DOMINION INDEPENDENT STATE GOLD COAST IVORY COAST SIERRA LEONE India and the Contemporary World