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**Global 10- Imperialism of Africa**

**Europe's Colonization of Africa**

by [Rit Nosotro](http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/mast/citation.htm)

Roger Casement sat listening to the natives' tales, shocked. " We brought rubber into the white men's stations . . . when it was not enough, the white men would put some of us in lines, one behind the other, and would shoot through all our bodies. . . ." One after another, natives from each village he visited told him of atrocities committed by the colonial military and government. Investigating rumors in the Belgian Congo in 1903, the British Consul would not have believed many of the horrors reported to him but for the confirmation of Christian missionaries who had witnessed the atrocities themselves. Tales of forced labor, a rubber "tax," starvation, mutilation, beatings, murders, and other brutalities came to the ears of those who dared to investigate almost any of Europe's African colonies. What on earth had happened to the legacy of missionaries such as Robert Moffat, [Mary Slessor](http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/bios/b1maryslessor.htm), and [*David Livingstone*](http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/bios/b1livingstonelu.htm) *with his "3 Cs"* *—commerce, Christianity, and civilization*? In Europe's famous "*Scramble for Africa*," they had been left behind in the dust.

Prior to the 19th century, the rest of the world knew very little about [Africa - the Dark Continent](http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/essays/intro/intro_africa.htm). What trade was transacted between Europeans and African traders occurred on the coast. However, beginning in the early 1800s, explorers began to explore the African interior. Many of the first European explorers in Africa were missionaries who felt called to minister to the pagan African tribes. Many of these missionaries also wanted to eradicate the poisonous trade that wrecked havoc on so many poor Africans, the slave trade. After seven centuries of being brutalized by the Arab slave traders, Europeans took great advantage of the existing system of blacks capturing blacks to feed the huge demand of large plantations in the Americas. So Swahili or black traders trekked throughout Africa, capturing blacks or buying prisoners from other native tribes to sell as slaves on the coast.

Led by Christian officials such as William Willberforce, Great Britain outlawed the slave trade in 1807 and slavery itself in 1834. British ships started to patrol the African coast to try to prevent other nations from engaging in the slave trade. Meanwhile, more and more explorers, whether Christian or secular, British or not, began to explore Africa. At first African diseases and hostile natives repulsed most expeditions into Africa. However, as European society made progress with new inventions and discoveries such as the Maxim gun and quinine. Armed with these innovations, explorers began to cut their way through the African jungle — and natives. Great Britain led the way in African colonization with colonies in South Africa. Then France invaded Tunisia in 1881, and Great Britain took over Egypt which Great Britain and France had previously ruled jointly. Henry Stanley and Pierre de Brazza, exploring for Belgium and France respectively, rushed around in West Africa in an attempt to gain the Niger River for the countries supporting them.

To avoid a European war that might arise from the conflicting claims, German chancellor Otto von Bismark held the **West African Conference *(Berlin Conference)*** in Berlin from November 1884 through February 1885 which became known as "*the Scramble.*" Ambassadors attended to talk about African policies, particularly the notification of any new conquest by one signing country to all the other signing countries. Although this conference had everything to do with Africa**, not a single of the fourteen countries represented at the West African Conference was African**. Of the seven European countries that would eventually control most of Africa, Great Britain, France, and Belgium together controlled most of Africa's territory. But what were the motives, policies, and abilities of these nations, and how easily would their colonization of the territory turn into independence?

Numerous motives instigated Great Britain, France, and Belgium's colonization of Africa. For one thing, since Europe felt depleted **of natural resources needed for industrialization, all the nations had an interest in the raw materials found in Africa.** But besides this, the countries' major reasons for interest in Africa differed. After [Napoléon Bonaparte](http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/bios/b2napoleonb_nbv.htm) was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815, the humbled Frenchmen saw colonization in Africa as a chance to gain back some of their dignity and prestige in their traditional competition against the English.

As for **Belgium**, King Leopold II actually supported the idea of a colony in Africa, not the country. All of the king's advisors and council members thought that Leopold, who spent much of his own private fortune into the colony later called the **Belgian Congo**, must have lost his marbles. Leopold II expected great returns from his overseas colony. Unlike the purely lucrative interest in African colonization sought by France and Belgium, Great Britain had a Biblical motive to colonize the continent. Of course many Englishmen looked at Africa as an **economic** opportunity, but some Englishmen also wanted to open up the continent to Livingstone's "3 Cs." They wanted to end slavery, convert the blacks (to Christianity), and civilize the continent.

One unfortunate result of the African colonization, however, was the fact that the colonizers often **mistreated** the indigenous inhabitants in African colonies. Officials in the Belgian Congo won first prize as the most abusive of almost any other colonizer in Africa. After Leopold finally got the Belgian Congo running and making a profit, rumors began to reach Europe of atrocities occurring in the Congo River Basin. However, these remote rumors had few witnesses, and fewer who spoke up because Belgium often gave them tax cuts and other benefits to keep them quiet and happy. It was not until 1904 when the British Foreign Office published a report on the Belgian Congo by Casement, that the *skeletons in Leopold II's closet became exposed*. For in reality, Leopold II used the "Belgian" Congo as a private asset rather than a state colony. He did not care what happened to the inhabitants so long as **he profited** from the colony's resources. When the British Foreign Office published the report, France paid little attention to it because France had started to follow the lead of the Belgian Congo, exploiting the land at whatever cost to the natives. British humanitarians and Christians, however, were shocked. Great Britain certainly did not treat the natives in British colonies the best, but at least they did not treat them as slaves or wild animals as officials treated them in the Belgian Congo or French Equatorial Africa.

As for **missionary** work in the French, British, and Belgian colonies, missionaries, either Protestant or Catholic, had freedom to work in any of the British colonies. They gave medical aid through hospitals they built, education through mission schools, worked at translating the Bible into the local dialect, and of course tried to win converts to Christianity. Missionaries in the French and Belgian colonies did not have as much freedom. Around the beginning of the 20th century, the French government fell out with the Roman Catholic Church. As a result, the French government stopped supporting all missionaries in the colonies. Nevertheless, the missionaries had the freedom to remain in the colonies. Ironically enough, the severance did their evangelism a good turn. "The blacks are far from ignoring that the colonial authorities are hostile to us and that our religion is not that of the whites who live in the [French] Sudan," reported one Mgr. Bazin. However, missionaries in the Belgian Congo had the toughest time of all. Before Belgium took control of the Belgian Congo (from Leopold II) in 1908, Leopold II had expressly forbidden any Catholic missionaries to work in the Belgian. Despite this, he did let several Protestant missionaries into the area. But of the three countries, Leopold limited missionary work in Africa the most.

The African colonies eventually gained their freedom later on in the 20th century. Almost all of the British, French and Belgian colonies struggled as independent nations when they gained their liberty, though. Most of the new African nations did not have a capable citizenry. However, some of the former British colonies had more capable citizens than the former French and Belgian colonies because of the importance of the education due to the missionaries.

On the whole, Europe's colonization of Africa underdeveloped the continent. **Europeans had exploited the resources throughout the nation without making much progress in developing the colonies it controlled.** Due to the slave trade and the virtual slavery in many of the European colonies in Africa, the number of inhabitants in Africa **dropped** significantly, leaving an insufficient number of natives to cultivate and develop the country, particularly after the African countries had gained their independence. For example, scholars estimate that due to the cruelties perpetrated in the **Belgian Congo, Leopold II reduced the area's population by at least 50%.** Many Africans were **not** provided with an education sufficient enough to to rule a country in the forced manner of the European model. To complicate matters, the arbitrary boundaries of colonies set during *"the Scramble” (Berlin Conference)* had originally been made regardless of indigenous ethnic diversity, preventing the formation of unified national spirit necessary to start a new country.

1. **Define the following terms:**

**Atrocities:** Wicked and inhumane acts that people commit to each other, typically involving physical violence.

**Missionaries:** Travelers who try to spread their culture and faith when traveling far from home.

**Commerce:** The act of buying and selling, or trading Essentially, business.

**Secular:** Non-religious activities or attitude.

1. **What would be another good title for this article?** Another good title for this article would be “Europe’s Expansion into Africa” or “Europe’s Scramble for Africa”
2. **What is the central idea of the article? Provide 5 supporting details to back up the central idea.**

**Central Idea:** The central idea of this article shows how colonizing the African continent is an exploitation of resources and more from the Europeans.

**Supporting Details:** Some European countries had made the Africans into forced labor and did not have good or any pay at all. Furthermore, Africans would be required pay absurd amount of taxes towards the colonizer. Europeans would have high taxes in the lands that they owned. Then, Europeans do not care about the African’s wellbeing. In addition, Cash-crops were prioritized over food that provided energy. The profits were put first. Moreover, the entire continent was divided up with no care for who lived there. There was no regard towards the African during the split of their home-continent. Also, during the Berlin Conference, no African countries were invited because they had little interest of the opinions of the Africans. Europeans care more about gaining territory over the welfare of the native people. Then, only a couple of nations stayed sovereign during Scramble for Africa.

1. **Before the 19th century many Europeans referred to Africa as the “Dark Continent.” Why?** Many Europeans referred to Africa as the “Dark Continent” because of the European’s lack of knowledge of the continent. Very little was known about the unexplored region of Africa. A lot of trade was done on the coast of Africa, so very was known about the inners of the continent.
2. **What are David Livingstone’s “3 Cs”? Why does the author state that “*they had been left behind in the dust*?” Provide three examples in the article that show Livingstone’s “3 Cs” were not being followed by European imperialists in Africa.** David Livingstone’s “3 Cs” are commerce, Christianity, and civilization. The author states they were not being followed by Europeans. An instance would be other European countries only trying to exploit the resources of Africa and not try to engage in commerce. The Europeans only made an effort to prevent other nations from participating in the slave trade. Then, the Europeans did not try to spread Christianity at all. They only cared for a profit and exploiting Africa. Finally, the Europeans did not attempt to colonize the people in Africa since they only wanted to sell the Africans for their own gain.
3. **What happened after the Berlin Conference of 1884?** After the Berlin Conference of 1884, the scramble of Africa would begin. European countries would begin competing against each other for territory in Africa. Then, Africa would be divided between multiple European nations and territories.

**The author mentions that no African nations attended the Berlin Conference because?** The author mentions that no African nations had attended the Berlin Conference since the negotiations were about Africa, yet no African nations showed up at the Berlin Conference. Out the 14 nations that were at the conference, I believe no Africans were invited because the discussion was about territorial disputes in Africa and was held to set guidelines on African territory. To discuss the territorial disputes in Africa and prevent a war from happening. If African nations were invited to this meeting, it would be very bias.

1. **Why does the author convey that European industrialization was a cause for imperialism?** The author conveys that European industrialization is a cause for imperialism since it shows how Europe was greedy. Europe had felt depleted of natural resources for industrialization, thus they thought of imperialism to solve this problem. They would conquer other nations to get more resources and not care slightly about the native peoples.
2. **From reading the article, the reader can infer that Belgium treated their African colony the worst. Provide supporting details from the text to prove this.** Belgium is the most abusive nation out of any other colonizer in Africa. The indigenous inhabitants were often mistreated and even harmed. Belgium is the one of the only colonizers who used forced labor massively. Belgian officials in Congo made the indigenous people into cruel labor and cut off people’s hands if they did not follow up with it.
3. **From reading the article, the reader can infer that Great Britain treated their African colonies better than other European nations. Provide supporting evidence from the text to prove this.** A supporting piece of evidence that supports that Great Britain treated their African colonies better than other European nations was that they were motivated to colonize the continent. The Englishmen had followed David Livingstone’s Three Cs while imperializing Africa. They wanted to end slavery, civilize the government, and convert the Africans into Christians.
4. **Complete the following graphic organizers using information from the article.**

**Causes of Imperialism:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Political** | **European powers were generally hungry for power and want to expand their power, as well as gain more power. Thus, imperialization is an efficient way of expanding power and growing their influence.** |
| **Economic** | **Industrialization required massive amounts of natural resources, and so Europeans would try to search for more sources to obtain resources. Imperializing other nations is a good way to get more resources to them.** |
| **Social** | **One cause of social imperialism would be spreading a religion or culture. A nation would like to expand their beliefs onto others, and imperializing other nations is a good way for cultural exchange.** |

**Compare and Contrast the British, French and Belgian imperial policies and their impact on Africa:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Great Britain** | **France** | **Belgium** |
| **Great Britain controls a large part of territory in Africa. It stretches from the Cape of Good Hope to Cairo. The regions do not all have the same policies between the areas. The Britain gave their colonies a bunch of independence compared to other colonies of nations. They only cared for the profits.** | **France has the biggest territory in Africa. France wanted their colonies similar to their nation. France had indistinguishable goals to other nations, which is gaining more wealth and power. France wanted to unite all of their colonies into one big France.** | **Belgium controls the Congo and is the only African colony that would explicitly use forced labor for personal gain. The Belgium people would force millions of people of the Congo into cruel conditions and even have threats to harm them if they do not comply to the regulations.** |